

Maritime History of the Coromandel Muslims

**A Socio - Historical Study on the
Tamil Muslims 1750 - 1900**



Dr. J. Raja Mohamad

Maritime History of The Coromandel Muslims

*A Socio-Historical Study on the
Tamil Muslims 1750 - 1900*

Dr. J. RAJA MOHAMAD,

B.Sc., M.A (His) M.A. (Arch) M.A. (Anth), B.GL., Ph.D.,

Assistant Director of Museums

Government Museum, Chennai

Published by

DIRECTOR OF MUSEUMS

Government Museum

Chennai - 600 008.

First Published : 2004

Government Museum
Chennai

New Series General Section Vol. No. XIX-2004

All rights reserved. No part of the book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical including photo copying or any information storage or retrieval system without written permission of the author.

Wrapper Backside

Top: An Arab ship carrying horses

Painting in the temple of Narumpunatha Swami (Siva) at Thiruppudaimarudur, Ambasamudram taluk, Thirunelveli district. (16th century A.D.)

Bottom

Arrival of a ship and unloading cargos, horse, camel, elephant. Sculptures in the gateway in the Alagianambirayar (Vishnu) temple at Thirukkurungudi, Nanguneri taluk, Thirunelveli district. (16th Century A.D.)

Price : Rs. 200/-

Printed in : Sarma's Sanatorium Press
Ganeshnagar, Pudukkottai - 622 001
Ph : 04322 - 221659

Contents

Acknowledgements	v
Foreward	x
Maps	xx
Key to abbreviations	xii
I. Introduction	1
II. The Coromandel Coast	29
III. The Political background	47
IV. The Muslims of the Coromandel	58
V. Europeans on the Coromandel and their impact on the Muslims	99
VI. Maritime Activities of the Coromandal Muslims	147
VII. Society	257
VIII. Conclusion	329
Appendix	336
Slect Glossary	338
Bibliography	343
Index	367

Acknowledgements

The concept of this book took shape some time before I took up the research study on the 'Maritime History of Tamil Muslims', as a research fellow in the Pondichery University between 1989 and 1995. In the midst of my official duties as Curator, Government Museum, Pudukkottai, I could profitably utilise my leisure time in pursuit of this research. I thank the former Director of Museums Thiru. N.Harinarayana for permitting me to undertake this research. I register my hearty thank to Dr.L.S. Vishwanath, Professor and Head Department of History, Pondichery University for his valuable guidance and suggestions and foreword note. I am deeply indebted to Prof. K.S.Mathew, former Professor and Head, Department of History, Pondichery University for having encouraged me to undertake this study on the maritime Muslims of Coromandel. I am thankful to him for having gone through the draft of this book and suggesting significant changes. I am really fortunate to get a preface note from him.

A few noted scholars in this field of study Dr. S.Arasaratnam (Australia) M.N.Pearson (Australia) Dr. Susan Bayly (U.K.) Dr. G.V.Scammell (U.K). and Dr. Sanjay Subramaniyan, readily responded to my request for their suggestions and my thanks to all of them. Dr. M.Abdul Rahim, Prof. in History (Retd.) Trichirappalli, a noted research scholar on the Muslims of Tamil Nadu was kind enough to offer many suggestions from his rich experience. My sincere thanks are due to him. I convey my thanks to the authorities of the Tamilnadu Archives for giving me access to all the records and books during my study. I thank Dr.Sundararajan, Tamilnadu Archives for his assistance.

In the course of my reasearch on this theme, I was awarded the U.K. visiting fellowship and Small Study Reasearch Grant (1995) by the Nehru Trust For Indian Collections at Victoria and Albert Museum (London) at New Delhi to undertake research study on 'Coromandel English Trade'. With this, I was able to visit the Archives and major libraries in the U.K. and collect materials on the maritime history of the coromandel Muslims. My heart felt thanks are due to the Trustees of the Nehru Trust, particularly Dr. D.A. Swallow, Chief Curator, Indian Department, Victoria and Albert Museum, London and R.L. Pipalani, Secretary of the Trust New Delhi. Their continuous encouragement enabled me to remain in the field uninterrupted. During my visit to U.K. I was able to consult a large number of records in the India Record Office, London and published materials in the libraries of Victoria and Albert Museum London, British Museum, London, Oxford University, Oxford, Cambridge University, Cambridge and the Centre for South Asian Studies. I convey my sincere thanks to the authorities all of these institutions.

I thank the authorities of the following libraries for permitting me to consult their holdings: University of Madras, Tamil University Thanjavur, Institute of Objective Studies New Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia University New Delhi. Pondichery Univerity, Bharathidasan University Tiruchirappalli, Nehru Memorial National Library New Delhi, Saraswathi Mahal Library Thanjavur, Islamic Studies and Cultural Centre, Chennai, French Institute of Indology Pondicherry, World Tamil Reasearch Centre Taramani, Chennai, the Mussalman Library Chennai, District Central Library Chennai, District

Library Pudukkottai and Connemara Public Library Chennai. I express my thanks to the former Collectors of Ramanathapuram, Madurai, and Tirunelveli for permitting me to peruse the old records in their respective offices. My thanks are due to the Secretary, Transport Department, Government of Tamilnadu and the Inspector General of Registration, Tamilnadu for having permitted me to peruse the records in the Ports and Registration offices in the State, respectively. I express my thanks to Dr. Victor Rajamanickam of Tamil University for his valuable suggestions.

During my field studies along the stretch of the Coromandel coast from Pulicat to Colochel I interviewed and discussed with a cross section of Muslims, especially a large number of Marakkayars. It will be too long a list to give the names of all such persons. However a few among them deserve mention here and I express my thanks to the following persons: Capt. N.Amir Ali, Mohamed Sherieff, Advocate, Chennai, Dr. S.M.Kamal Ramanathapuram, M. Abdul Jabbar Marakkayar, Vedalai, Syed Ibrahim Marakkayar, Vedalai, Dr. Thaika Shuib Alim, M.M.S. Syed Ibrahim Marakkayar, S.M.A. Basheer Marakkayar, Asharf Abdul Rahman Buhari, Kilakkarai, T.S.M. Thummani Marakkayar, Rameswaram, Prof. M.Sayabu Marakkayar and Prof. Naseema Banu Karaikkal, Prof. M.Mohamed Nazar, Thirunelveli, M.Jaffar Muhaiyadeen Marakkayar, Nagore, Dr. M.Abdulkareem, Dindigul, Mohamed Kasim Marakkayar, Mandapam (Mandapam Marakkayar), Syed Ali (Ee) Tondi, Jinna Marakkayar, Sulaiman Marakkayar, M.L.Shaikuna Lebbai, Kayalpattanam, Maruff Marakkayar, Kulasekarapattanam and A.M. Sayeed, Advocate, Mayiladuthurai, S. Anvar, Chennai.

A number of my friends and wellwishers in India and abroad insisted that I should publish this work. I had to wait for a better time. During his visit to Pudukkottai Museum in 2004 Mr. Sumith Nakandala, SriLankan Ambassador and Deputy High Commissioner at Chennai had a look at the manuscript of this research study. He expressed his joy over the findings on the Coromandel-SriLankan maritime Muslim communities and advised that early publication of the work will lead to further research on the age long bilateral cultural relationship between these two nations. My hearty thanks for his encouragement and interest in the subject.

At the fag end of my service in the year 2004, I had the opportunity of being appointed as Assistant Director of Museums at Chennai Museum. An young Indian Administrative Service officer assumed charge as Director of Museums. He is Thiru M.A. Siddique, I.A.S., an Engineering graduate from IIT, Chennai. I found in him immense potential for accomplishments and a scholarly mind for the study of the history and culture of India particularly Tamilnadu. When I showed this research work to him, he studied it patiently and urged me to publish it. When I approached him for help he readily accepted to bring it out as publication of the Department of Museums. But for his patronage this publication would not have been possible. My hearty thanks are due to my patron Thiru. M.A.Siddique, Director of Museums, Chennai.

I am thankful to my wife Mrs. Abeetha Begum for her continuous encouragement in my studies and research work. My sons R.Rahamathullah, R.Salim Ahamed and my daughter R.Jahanara Begum were always helping me in my studies and they were at my service

even at late hours. My affectionate thanks are due to them.

I express my thanks to Tmt. V.Vanjula, Typist Government Museum, Pudukkottai for her help in the preparation of the script of this book. My thanks to Thiru C.Govindaraj, Assistant Curator, Government Museum, Pudukkottai (at present Curator) MK. Mohamad Abdullah and Prof. S. Navaneethan for helping me in correcting the proof. My hearty thanks to Thiru. M.Muthusrinivasan, former Assistant, Government Museum, Pudukkottai who was my co-worker for about 30 years, for his valuable suggestions. I thank the Proprietor of Sarma's Sanatorium Press, Pudukkottai for Printing this book attractively with in a very short time.

Chennai.

J. Raja Mohamad

30-11-2004

(1/107D, Jeeva Nagar 1st Street,
Pudukkottai -622 001
Tamilnadu)

M.A. SIDDIQUE, I.A.S.,
Director of Museums,
Government Museum,
Egmore, ,
Chennai - 600 008.



Ph : 044-28193238
Fax: 044-28193035
email: Govtmuse
@ md4 vsnl.net.in

Foreword

The study of the History of India is very fascinating. It is my wish that the social history of the people and cultural anthropology should be given a new thrust. The maritime history of India particularly that of the east coast of peninsular India constitutes an interesting study which covers the maritime heritage, techniques, ship building and navigation, coastal trade, overseas trade and cultural interaction through trade contact. When I happened to go through the research work of Dr. J. Raja Mohamad, Assistant Director of Museums, on the maritime activities and social life of the Muslims of the Coromandal coast, I found in it a good historical and anthropological study on the people of a particular region. When I learnt that this study is the first of its kind, it occurred to me that it should be published for the benefit of students and researchers. Further, such original works will enhance the publication value of the Department of Museums.

Dr. J. Raja Mohamad has undertaken an indepth study on the subject and has brought out many new facts in this work, hitherto not known to the scholarly world. I congratulate Dr. J.Raja Mohamad for his excellent contribution to the history of Tamil Nadu through this research work and for his keen interest

in bringing it out as the publication of the Department of Museums. I hope that this book will be well received by students and scholars in maritime history.

I wish Dr. J. Raja Mohamad should continue to work to bring out more such research publications.

Chennai.

30-11-2004

M.A. Siddique

Pondicherry University Department of History

Dr. L.S. VISHWANATH

PROFESSOR & HEAD

Phone: (0413) 2655 991

Fax : (0413) 2250 203

PONDICHERRY - 605 014

INDIA.

Foreword

Till India's independence in 1947, political and dynastic history held center stage. Given the long history of the Indian sub-continent, social and economic history is a relatively young field of research and enquiry. Within this field, maritime studies which focus on the Indian Ocean, its coastal towns, merchants and related themes is still younger. If maritime studies have come to the fore as an important area of socio-economic studies in the last few decades it is largely due to the significant contributions of Arasaratnam, Ashin Das Gupta, Sanjay Subramanyam, Om Prakash and other scholars. Raja Mohamad's study of the world of the Tamil Muslim merchants of the coromandel coast is an important contribution not only to maritime studies but also to community studies. We are told of the role of the Tamil Muslim merchants in the urbanization and economic development of the coromandel coastal towns such as Kilakarai, Kayalpatnam, Nagore, Pulicat and Nagapatnam. Moreover, since they had a significant number of Tamil speaking Muslim population, these towns "came to be known as formal centres of Islam in South India". We learn from this study that the well todo Tamil Muslim merchants in the coastal towns did much else besides ship building and overseas trade. They were patrons of the dargahs which had tombs of mostly Tamil Sufi saints, encouraged development of

Arabic Tamil (ie., Arabic in Tamil script), lexicon, prose and poetry in that language and were philanthropists. Some more areas of cultural fusion besides Arabic Tamil evidenced in Raja Mohamad's study include construction of the dargahs in the Dravidian-Islamic style.

The major focus of the study is on the maritime trading activities of the Tamil Muslim merchants. We learn that the maritime activities of the Tamil Muslim merchants with south east Asian ports, Ceylon and Malabar thrived till about the 17th century. The 18th century witnessed a decline in their fortunes due to "monopolistic tendencies" of the European trading companies. The author maintains that by the middle of the 19th century, the trading activities of the Tamil Muslim merchants in the coastal areas almost "collapsed". The reasons attributed for the decline include: lack of cohesiveness of the community, their failure to grasp the concept of modern capitalism, their limited resources which could not match that of the European trading companies, neglect of modern English education, old traditional sailing methods and so on. The decline of trade was in terms of quantum and tonnage. Two things are of interest here. First, as Ashin Das Gupta has noted, much of the Indian Ocean trade was in the hands of small traders. Big merchants were few. If this is so, even when the maritime trading activities of the Tamil Muslim merchants was thriving, the bulk of it must have been in the hands of small merchants. Second, so far as modernization is concerned, the role of the bigger Muslim merchants who were shipping magnates seems to have been more traditionalizing than modernizing. Moreover, in the coastal towns of the coromandel and also in the south east Asian ports, Islamic missionaries and mystics who

followed the Muslim traders, have contributed to conversion of the coastal communities. Often, the traders themselves were missionaries. Significantly, the author notes that the trade contacts of the coromandel coast with Islam goes back to at least the 8th century A.D. due to the Arab traders who brought their horses and merchandize. This was prior to the Muslim incursions in north India and the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. Also interesting is the information that in the 18th century when the Tamil Muslim merchants of the coromandel faced a decline in their fortunes due to the monopolistic tendencies of the European trading companies, the representative of the English trading company in Kedah and Acheh had to reckon (in 1772) with the influence of the coromandel Tamil Muslim merchants in the Court of the Sultans in the respective states.

Comparing the maritime trade of the Tamil Muslim merchants with that of the Gujarati Muslim merchants, the author notes that the Gurajati Muslims "handled much of the trade to Aden, Malacca, Sumatra and Bay of Bengal. The Tamil Muslim merchants were active in trading with the south east Asian ports though not to the same extent as the Gujaratis". Further, on the role of the Tamil and Gujarati Muslim merchants in conversion, the author speculates that though the Gujarati Muslim merchants were active in converting others to Islam, the Tamil Muslims comprising scribes, mystics and missionaries "may have converted the Malay and Indonesian world to Islam". Regardless of whether the Tamil Muslims contributed to the Islamic conversions in the Malay and Indonesian world, the fact is that due to their trading and missionary activities, they had a marked presence as a community in places

like Penang and Ache where they were known as Cholia Muslims. (Cholia from Chola). The Tamil Muslim presence in south east Asian coastal towns and Ceylon increased due to migration, a consequence of the decline in their maritime trade in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Raja Mohamad's account of social stratification among the Tamil Muslims of the coromandel is interesting but equivocal. On the one hand he refers to the brotherhood in Islam and says that the Tamil Muslims followed this principle and "are not hierarchically ranked". On the other hand, he notes that the Urdu speaking Deccani Muslims regarded themselves as socially higher than the Tamil Muslims i.e. Marakkayar, Labbai and Rawuthar. The Deccani Muslims claimed descent from Muslims who came to the sub-continent from central Asia and Persia. The author has argued that intermarriage and interdining are seen among the Muslims and inclusions and exclusions arise due to the social prejudice. An important factor, which governed intermarriage among the subdivisions of the Tamil Muslims, was wealth and social status of the groom and the bride. Among Tamil Muslims, the Marakkayars claimed higher social status and even produced a document (which the author rightly points it as unhistorical) claiming descent from Prophet Mohamed. The other Tamil Muslims aspired for social mobility and tried to claim Marakkayar status.

The information provided by Raja Mohamad suggests that the influence of Hindu customs on the Tamil Muslim community of the coromandel was considerable. The borrowing of Hindu customs ranged from planting of the muhurthakal to tying of the thali on the bride's neck, which consisted of a string of black

beads. Though Islam sanctions mehar where the groom makes payment to the bride and her family, Raja Mohamad tells us that the "evil" Hindu custom of dowry had come into vogue among the Tamil Muslims. He refers to an inscription from Kayalpatnam dating to the 16th century which says that even the rich Muslim residents of the place found it difficult to give in marriage of their daughters due to the high dowry demands by the grooms side and so the girls remained unmarried. According to the inscription, the residents of Kayalpatnam decided to fix a ceiling on dowry demands. It is obvious that the ceiling was not observed.

Raja Mohamad's contribution to the rich collection in the Pudukkottai museum when he served, as its Curator is known. His study certainly provides a wealth of detail on the maritime activities of the Tamil Muslim merchant, his society and his world. Yet one is tempted to look at some more interesting possibilities and ask for more. What for example was the viewpoint of the rich and poor Tamil Muslim merchants? I am raising this query because Raja Mohamad says he interviewed some of them and scrutinized their family records. Also, the treatment of the life of the leading 18th century Tamil Muslim merchant, Periathambi Marakkayar popularly known as Seethakathi of Kilakarai, is rather brief. I hope Raja Mohamad will provide the gaze from the other side through the viewpoint of a cross section of the Tamil Muslim merchants and also sketch Periathambi's career in greater detail in the next edition of his work. I am happy place this research work before the scholars.

20-11-2004

L.S. Vishwanath

Dr. K.S. MATHEW

Former Professor and Head
Department of History
Pondicherry University.

Director
Institute for Research in
Social Science and
Humanities
Thalaseri - 670 101
Kerala, India.

Preface

Studies in Maritime history have made considerable strides in the recent past in India and a sizeable number of publications have seen the light of day. Good many of them are concerned with the sea-borne trade and commerce. The works of Fernand Braudel, Tapan Ray Chauduri, Ashin Das Gupta, Pamela Nightingale, Niels Steensgaard, Holden Furber, D.S.Richards, M.N. Pearson, K.N.Chaudhuri, Sinnappa Arasaratnam, Meilink-Roelofsz, Walter. J. Fischal, S.D. Goitein, Genevieve Bouchon, Anthony Disney, Jan Kieniewicz, R.B.Serjeant, Vitorino Magalhaes Godinho, K.S.Mathew, Sanjay Subrahmanyam and M. Manickam throw considerable light on Indo-European trade.

Some of the scholars have entered into other aspects of maritime activities like the techniques of navigation and ship building. The studies of Radha Kumud Mookerjee, B.Arunachalam, Jean-Francois Salles, Himanshu Prabha Ray, Jean Deloche, Y.Subbarayalu, Victor Rajamanickam, Sadashiv Gorakshar, Kalpana Desai, Baldeo Sahai, Alberto Iria, Inacio Guerreiro, Teixeira da Mota, Luis de Albuquerque, Domingo Contente, K.M. Mathew and K.S. Mathew have enriched us with interesting information on navigation, ship building and also life on board the ships from Europe to India and back.

Port-towns and coastal settlements also have attracted the attention of scholars of maritime studies. The life styles of the coastal society and their psychology have been recently studied with a view to distinguishing them from the inland society. The works of Kenneth Balhatchet, John Harrison, Peter Reeves, Kenneth McPherson, James Bird, Narayani Gupta, Indu Banga and Kanniah deal with port-towns. The relation between port towns and their hinterland also forms an interesting aspect of maritime studies.

Merchants especially those involved in sea-borne trade did a yeoman service to the rulers in various ways. The land revenues were collected chiefly in the form of products in pre-industrial period and the kings and rulers would like to convert these goods into cash. This was done with the assistance of merchants. The significant role played by the merchants in the medieval and late medieval periods cannot be overlooked. But in the caste-ridden Indian social hierarchy merchants did not occupy a noble status. The scholars distinguish between peddlers and large scale merchants who played an important role during the pre-colonial era. The Portuguese had greatly depended on indigenous merchants like Malik Gopi and Marakkars of Cochin and even Khwaja Shams-ud-din Giloni of Cannanore. The merchant financiers of Germany and Italy were indispensable for the trade conducted by the Portuguese. Similarly the English and the Dutch owed a lot to the indigenous merchants like Vriji Vohra, Kasi Viranna, Malai Chetti, and Periyathambi Marakkar and so on. The French were closely associated with Ananda Ranga Pillai, Sheshachala Chetty, Sungu Rama Chetty and a host of merchants from different castes and creeds. Ashin Das Gupta M.N. Pearson, Sanjay Subramanyam,

Baswati Bhattacharya and K.S. Maththew have thrown considerable light on some of the merchants involved in maritime trade. A comprehensive study on the role of the Marakkayars or Muslim merchants in general with emphasis on various aspects of their life remained till now as a *desideratum*. The work of Raja Mohamad has to be viewed against this background.

Raja Mohammed in his study has gone back to the early period of maritime trade to situate the Muslim merchants in their historical back drop. His major emphasis is on the Marakkayars of Coromandel coast. His work will definitely encourage scholars to go deeper into the study of the role played by local merchants in the sea-borne trade. I wish the book a wider reading.

25-11-2004

K.S. Mathew

Maps

1.	Tamilnadu	31
2.	Coromandel Coast and its Ports (17th - 18th cent).	35
3.	Fishery coast	108
4.	Ports and Trade in the Indian Ocean	239

Key to Abbreviations

- ARE - Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy
- ARP - Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai
- BOR - Board of Revenue Proceedings
- FSG - Fort. St. George
- JRAS - Journal of Royal Asiatic Society - Bengal
- JRASMB - Journal of Royal Asiatic Society -
Malayan Branch
- M.C. - Military Consultation
- M.C.C. - Military Country Correspondence
- QJMS - Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society
- TNA - Tamil Nadu Archives.

Chapter - I

Introduction

A study of writings on Indian Muslims and their attitudes reveals that various analyses concerning them have always been attempted only within the perspective of their religion.¹ Only a few scholars have concerned themselves with the study of the social and economic activities of Muslims. Even such works concentrate more on the North Indian Muslims. Mrs. Meer Hussain Ali's *Observations on the Muslims of India*, Jaffur Shureeff's *Qanun - i - Islam*, Shaik Akbar Hussain's *Marriage Customs Among the Muslims in India*, and Dr. Imtiaz Ahamed's recent works and Shaik Rahim Mondal's works on West Bengal Muslims may be cited as examples. However the customs and practices of Muslims in peninsular India particularly the Coromandel coast, have been practically ignored. The Mapillas of the Western coast have received scholarly attention but not the Marakkayars, Labbais and Rawthars of the Coromandel. Hitherto no serious attempt has been made to study the societal conditions of the Muslims of the Coromandel coast.

In the recent past, Mattison Mines² has produced some articles about the economic life of the Muslims in a suburb of Madras. But it is a study at the local level in an isolated pocket. Susan Bayly³ has brought out a

good monograph on the Muslims of Tamil Nadu, which is a first hand study on the social and cultural characters of the Tamil Islamic society. But she devotes most part of the study to the religious aspects.

As rightly pointed out by Stephene F' Dale⁴ the most striking omission of all the studies on Indian Muslims is the lack of interest in their mercantile activities. Neither historical nor economic study has been done on the founding and operation of the Muslim mercantile community nor is there any good study of their trading centres, nature and scale of their maritime trade and other related activities.

Fortunately the obscured maritime history of the Coromandel coast was brought to light by a few scholars, where we find references about the maritime activities of the Coromandel Muslims. Sanjay Subramaniyan's⁵ work on the Economic History of Coromandel coast between 1500 to 1650, refers to the trading activities of some Marakkayars amidst the Portuguese and Dutch dominance. Sinnappa Arasaratnam⁶ has produced a wide range of monographs and articles about the mercantile activities in the Coromandel coast in 17-18th centuries. The works of this pioneer scholar shed new light on the dark passages of the Coromandel commerce. In his writings we find many interesting references about the maritime activities of the Muslims of Coromandel coast, of course at a macro level. A few dissertations submitted to various Universities by research scholars give some scattered information about the mercantile activities and social customs of the Muslims of Tamil Nadu. Abdul Rahim's M.Lit. thesis on Nagapattanam, and Ph.D. thesis on Muslims of Tamil Nadu 1800-1900⁷, Jayarajan's M.Phil, thesis on the Marakkayars of

Adirampattanam⁸, Syed Abdul Razack's M.Phil. thesis on the Social life of Nawabs of Arcot⁹ are a few works to cite.

The Muslims who settled on the coastal towns of Coromandel speak Tamil and Tamil is their mother tongue. The progenitors of these early Muslims were the Arab Muslim merchants and navigators who settled in the port towns of the Coromandel region right from the eighth century A..D. From here they continued their mercantile activities, for which the local rulers willingly extended all facilities. The Coromandel coast was studded with ports like PortoNovo, Nagapattanam, Nagore, Karaikkal, Adirampattanam, Mandapam, Vedalai, Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam and they served as passage or crossing points to ceylon, Malacca and other Southeast Asian lands. Guided by the previous experience, the Arab Muslims continued their trade for which the local authorities offered facilities and concessions in view of the enormous profits from such trade contacts. The Arab Muslim settlers on the Coromandel region married the native women. Their offsprings continued the Arab sea-faring tradition as navigators, shipowners and overseas merchant princes. This mercantile population further swelled to make the Coromandel Muslim society, by conversion due to the efforts of these merchants and the influence of the zealous Sufi missionaries. The Coromandel Muslim communities mingled with the local population and lived in peace.

The Muslim mercantile community wielded enormous power in the courts of the local rulers and performed yeomen service as mariners, administrators and guardians of the sea coast. They were the merchant

princes in the real sense. They ruled the waves of the Indian Ocean till about the fifteenth century and they also established a network of overseas depots and branches in Ceylon, Malacca and other Eastern countries.

The Vasco da Gama epoch inflicted a severe blow to the commercial activities of the Tamil Muslims in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Misfortunes came to them in succession in the form of the Dutch and the English which proved fatal to their maritime activities. The monopolistic and restrictive trade policies of the colonial European powers and the unsettled political condition of the Coromandel hinterland pushed the Muslim mercantile community to a second rank. Bearing the brunt of all these developments the Muslim maritime community adjusted themselves to the changed situation and continued their activities with their available resources, eventhough the profits were less.

However the Muslims were no match to the newly emerged colonial power, the English, who became the masters of Coromandel by 1800. The English adopted an ambivalent policy towards Coromandel Muslims and their maritime activities declined gradually to insignificance by 1900. Till then the maritime activities of the Muslims did have a significant impact on the economic development of the Coromandel coast.

When the Muslims lost opportunities in maritime activities in their homeland many of them migrated to Ceylon and Southeast Asian countries and settled as traders, peddlers and labourers. With the closure of doors for seaborne trade by 1900, the Muslims with the spirit of Tennyson's Ulyses, "To find, to seek, to strive and not to yield", searched for new fields and spread themselves into the interior parts of Tamil Nadu where

they established various business houses in wholesale and retail trade.

The Tamil Muslims share many customs and practices in common with their co-religionists, the Hindus. At the same time they identify themselves with their own customs and manners. They practise endogamous marriage. Matrilocal residence, house gift to the bride etc., are some of the unique customs among the Marakkayars. As great fortune seekers, the material minded Muslims strictly perform their duties as expected of devout Muslims. Charity, hospitality and philanthropy are their inborn character.

Apart from the policies pursued by the European powers, the neglect of modern education and technologies, limited capital resources, the non-cohesive nature of trade among themselves, the lack of interest in joint ventures and the absence of political patronage were a few causes for the economic breakdown of the maritime Muslim community.

As the socio economic profile of the Coromandel Muslims has not so far been studied adequately, a sincere attempt is made here to unfold the matrix of the maritime activities, the economic and social customs of this community during the period from 1750 to 1900. This study is to bring to light the role of the community in maritime activities on the Coromandel coast in various capacities, in overseas and coastal trade as traders, ship owners, shipping professionals and part played by them in pearl and chank fishery and other maritime activities and also their social organisation and customs at a micro level.

Sources and Methods

The sources for writing this book are mostly primary in nature. The original records include both published and unpublished documents and literary works. Tamil Sangam works like Ahananuru, Pattinappalai, Nedunalvadai, Silappadikaram, Manimekalai, Seevakasinthamani and inscriptions found in various places such as Kilakkarai, Tiruppullani and Kayalpattanam, the travel accounts of Marcopolo, Ibn Batuta shed light on the antiquity of the Arab and Muslim settlements on the Coromandel Coast.

Islamic Tamil literary works are authentic source materials on the Tamil Muslim society. Hitherto they have not been utilised suitably. Islamic literary works such as Palsandamalai, Saithakkathiru Marakkayar Thirumana Vazhthu, Seethakkathi Nondi Natakam, Yakobu Siddhar Padalgal, Deen Vilakkam and Seerapuranam, are really social documents of the Coromandel Muslims.

The archival materials relating to the trading companies of the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English and the like in the Tamil Nadu Archives constitute the prime sources of data on maritime activities. English Records such as District Records of Madurai, Thirunelveli, South Arcot, Thanjavur, records like Diary and Consultation, Marine Consultation, Judicial Consultation, and Commercial departments are data banks. A few records from the India Office Library London were also consulted for this study. They are mine of information.

The Census Records and Reports, the District Gazetteers particularly those of the coastal districts like Thirunelveli, Ramanathapuram, Thanjavur, South Arcot,

books, monographs and periodicals published prior to 1900 were also consulted.

The famous Tamil Bell in the Wellington Museum, New Zealand (bell with Tamil inscription, reading, the bell of the ship Mohideen Bux) is considered as a source for the Tamil Muslims' trade intercourse in the Indian Ocean region in the eighteenth - nineteenth centuries. Literature and photocopies on this bell were scrutinised.

Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston is a magnum opus in seven volumes. The fifth volume contains a sketch on the Muslims. But for some inaccuracies and abrupt endings, this is a varitable mine of source material. M.R.M. Abdul Rahim, a noted Islamic scholar, writer and publisher, has brought out the Islamic Encyclopaedia in Tamil in three volumes. These volumes give particulars about the Tamil Muslims their social customs and Islamic centres. But the information contained therein had been collected from informants many of whom were without historical sense or perception, source materials have not been cited rendering verification difficult and the whole approach has been from a religious angle and some times religious fervour has stolen a march over historical facts and realities. Modern writers on Muslims of Tamil Nadu have utilised these materials scrupulously as source materials. But here, it is carefully utilised wherever they are found to be authentic.

A few popular books and articles have been published by a few Muslim scholars in the recent past on Muslims of Tamil Nadu. Kavi Ka.Mu.Sheriff's, *Vallal Seethakathi Varalaru*, Captain Amir Ali's, *Vallal Seethakkathiyin Vazhvum Kalamum*, Dr. S.M.Kamal's,

Islamum Tamilagamum, A.K. Rifayee's, *Tamilagathil Islamiyar Varalaru*, Idris Marakkayar's *Keerthi migum Kilakkarai*, K.S. Abdul Latheef's, *Kayalpattanam Varalaru*, J.M. Sali's, *Tamilagathu Dargakkal* and some articles published in different magazines and souvenirs can be cited as examples. Many of these works are short of historical facts, making it difficult to use them as authentic source of information. However references are cited wherever data are accurate.

Published standard works on travel accounts of European travellers; writings on trading activities of the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes, French and the English in India by learned scholars; unpublished M.Phil and Ph.D., thesis by research scholars in various Universities, articles published in standard journals, periodicals and magazines and papers presented in various seminars and conferences are also profitably utilised in this study.

A cross section of leading Muslims-Marakkayars, Labbais and Rawthars in the coastal towns of Tamil Nadu were interviewed and relevant information thus gathered incorporated wherever appropriate. Members of the leading trading Marakkayar families of the past in places like Pulicat, Nagapattanam, Nagore, PortoNovo, Adirampattanam, Muthupet, Tondi, Mandapam, Vedalai, Rameswaram, Kilakkarai, Kayalpattanam and Kulasekarapattanam were interviewed and information collected from the family records in their possession. Though such materials were few in number, they were very useful for filling up the gaps in the study of the maritime activities of their forefathers.

The methodology is one of the case study, partly historical and partly sociological. Data were collected



மொகிதீன் புகழ் அகில உலகப் புகழ்பெற்ற மொகிதீன்

Bell with Tamil Inscription
(Bell of the ship Mohideen Bux)
Wellington Museum, New Zealand
(Courtesy : Wellington Museum)

from literary works, inscriptions and archival records for the historical studies. For sociological studies, extensive field survey was undertaken to study the age long significance and relevance of folklore traditions, customs, practices and ceremonies. The materials thus collected are analysed and synthesised. The sources are allowed to speak for themselves.

Design of the Study

The work is presented in eight chapters. The opening Chapter introduces the space, time, theme, sources and objectives of the study. The objectives of the study are to focus on the facts about 1. the antiquity of Muslim society in the Coromandel region, 2. Vital role played by them in the maritime activities in the coast and their economic life, 3. The interesting features about their social organisation, ceremonies, customs and practices.

The geographical position of the Coromandel coast and its features, the nature of the ports of ancient renown, major and minor ports in the middle ages and modern times are discussed in Chapter Two. The majority of the ports had settlements of Muslims (Marakkayars and Labbais). The commodities of export and import in these ports and the economic viability and prosperity of these port towns due to the settlement of Muslims are analysed in this chapter.

The subsequent chapter is a brief survey of the political conditions of the region since it was closely linked with the trade of the region. Prior to the beginning of the period of our study, the political condition of the Coromandel hinterland was very confused. The Europeans and the native powers were

engaged in bitter contest for supremacy. A few important political events in the region from the victory of Kumarakampana, the commander of the Vijayanagar in 1370, to the proclamation of the English East India Company as masters of the land in 1800 are also included here because each and every course of operation affected the economy, trade and traders of the coast. The events that lead to the disruption of the local ruling houses like the Nayakdoms of Ginjee, Thanjavur and Mudurai, the Marathas of Thanjavur, the Sethupathis of Ramanathapuram and the Nawabi of Arcot are also narrated. The position of the Tamil Muslims in the respective political background is outlined here.

A bird's eye view on the milestones in the Arabs' contact with South India, later the spread of Islam and development of Islamic society on the Coromandel coast are discussed in chapter Four. The age-old trade contact between South India and Arabia from the Sangam period (2nd cent A.D.) got strengthened further after the birth of Islam. The spread of Islam was closely linked with the expansion of the wide ranging maritime trade network. These merchant missionaries also spread the message of Prophet Mohamed among the local population and people were attracted towards Islam. The social inequalities and the rigid caste system then prevalent in South Indian society were favourable for this process and thus Islamic society swelled by such conversion. The antiquity of Islam, the earlier names of the Muslims of the Coromandel coast are traced with the help of literature, inscriptions and tradition. Definitions of nomenclature of the titles of the people constituting the different segments in the Tamil Muslim society such as Rawthar, Labbai, Marakkayar and Deccanis are given in detail.

Chapter Five is a short account of the trading and political activities of the various European Companies on the Coromandel coast, and their effect on Muslim maritime community. The footing of Europeans on peninsular India shattered the monopoly of the Arabs and the native Muslims in maritime activities. For a better understanding of the circumstances in which the Muslims of the Coromandel coast entered into the period of our study, a preview of their economic activities during the dominance of the Portuguese and the Dutch are given in a nutshell. The Portuguese who arrived first in the South Indian coast were very hostile towards the Muslims and used force to prevent their commercial activities. The native rulers like the Nayaks, Sethupathis and Vijayanagar kings supported the activities of the Portuguese. In due course, the Portuguese interfered in the internal affairs of these kingdoms and gained political importance along with commercial monopoly. The Muslims and other native traders were forced to trade only with the permit (Cartaz) issued by the Portuguese. Due to their religious bias towards the Muslims, the Portuguese encouraged the Paravas (the local Hindu fishermen community), baptised them in large numbers and prepared them as a local force against the Muslims and their maritime activities. PortoNovo, Nagapattanam, Kilakkarai and Kayal were the important ports where the Portuguese were concentrated. In all these places their trading activities were aimed against the Muslims. This is the beginning of the economic downfall of the Muslims of the coast and it continued in the succeeding periods.

The Dutch-Hollanders commenced their trading activities on the Coromandel coast from 1605 A.D. onwards and they also considered the Muslims as their

prime competitors. The Dutch appeared on the Coromandel when the native rulers were in search of a strong power to counter the Portuguese. Now the local powers were in support of either of these powers and these aliens freely acquired territories in our land and obtained economic concessions at the cost of the natives. Pulicat, Nagapattanam, Tuticorin, Manapad, Alandalai, Virampattanam, Pinnaikayal, Vaipar and Vembar were important ports of Dutch trade. The Dutch also used force to curtail the maritime activities of the Muslims and patronised the Paravas. During seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Dutch continued their economic suppression on the Muslims. The French came into the Coromandel trade in 1672 and their main concentration was at Pondicherry. They rose as opponents to the English East India Company. However they met with failure in the Anglo-French wars in the middle of the eighteenth century and they were confined to some limited pockets in South India. The French were helpful to the Muslim traders at PortoNovo and Karaikkal. The Danish settlement was founded in 1620 at Tranquebar. Their trading activities were limited due to the lesser resources with them and the absence of support from their home government. They were very cordial to the Muslim maritime traders and freighted goods for them in their ships during the time of wars in Europe and their consequent reflection in the Indian ocean area.

The English East India Company entered into Coromandel trade in 1614. Throughout the period of our study the English East India Company - British power-continued as a powerful force in the political and commercial history of the Coromandel coast. The Dutch power was vanishing, the Danes were weak and the French were behind in the race. When the English

became the political masters of the land the maritime activities of the Muslims suffered further.

During the earlier period of their ascendancy the English East India Company encouraged the Muslim merchants and extended concessions for their trade. They appointed Muslim crew in their vessels. The English ships freighted the commodities of the Muslim traders to far off countries whenever possible. Some of the rich Muslim merchants lent money to the Company. But when the economic ambitions of the English grew, they showed conflicting feelings towards Muslims. They favoured the Chettiar merchants. The racial discrimination followed by the English in shipping and trading activities were much against the Muslims and affected all their maritime activities, i.e., overseas trade, interportal trade, pearl and chank fishing, salt manufacture etc. Besides encouraging their own white race private merchants, the Nabobs, they also encouraged the Paravas much to the detriment of the Muslims. The stand taken by the English was against the economic interests of the Muslims. Thus the economic onslaughts inflicted by the political activities and trade policies of the various European powers pushed the Muslims of Coromandel coast down never to rise again.

Chapter Six outlines the various maritime activities of the Muslims of the Coromandel coast. They were ship owners, ship crew, maritime merchants, pearl merchants, pearl and chank divers, boat builders, fishers, salt manufacturers and merchants in other marine products. The Tamil Muslim traders took over a dominant role in Indian Ocean trade in the 13-14th centuries. Spread of Islam in Southeast Asian countries and the consequent religious ties extended them new

avenues. On the Coromandel Pulicat, PortoNovo, Nagapattanam, Nagore, Muthupet, Mandapam, Tondi, Kilakkarai, Kayalpattanam, Virampattanam, Kulasekara pattanam etc., were busy ports where the export and import trade and other maritime activities were in the hands of the Muslims. In fact the records of Europeans call these ports "Moor Ports" and Susan Bayly names them "Marakkayar Ports". Horses were imported from Arab countries and it was an important side of the trade of the Muslims. The Muslim traders of Coromandel were influential in the ports of the Southeast Asian countries and Ceylon and were kingmakers in the courts of the Sultans of many countries in the Far East.

The challenges and economic competitions and hostilities of the Portuguese and the Dutch during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries brought down the maritime activities of the Muslims gradually. However they avoided the competitive routes and picked up the favourable areas and continued their overseas trading and other activities to the extent possible. Their ships were on trade with Ache, Johore, Perak, Pegu, Arakkan, Burma, Malay Peninsula and Ceylon. Interportal and coastal trade were in their hands.

When the English gained the upperhand, they wanted to grab every thing into their fold. They plied their ships in all the traditional routes where the Muslims were trading. They began to procure commodities directly from the producers thereby eliminating Muslim traders with limited capital who were dealing in commodities for export and home consumption. They interfered in pearl and chank fisheries, salt trade and tried to introduce the people of their own race replacing the Muslims. The records of

the English give the list of Muslim ship owners and maritime traders in the Coromandel coast during the 18-19th centuries. However by about the third quarter of the eighteenth century the Muslim merchants had lost much ground to the East India Company which was then concentrated at Madras. The Chettiar merchants were closer to the Company.

At the beginning of nineteenth century, PortoNovo, Nagore, Nagapattanam and Kilakkarai were in the mainstream of oceanic trade and the Muslims carried on brisk trade with Ache, Burma, Malacca, Ceylon and the west coast but the quantum was much less. The wars among the European nations who had interest in Indian ocean trade affected the prospects of the Muslim shippers. The ships of many Muslims were captured by enemy nations and they lost their ships and commodities. Many active traders withdrew from sea-borne trade. By about the third quarter of nineteenth century the English records show only a few ship owners at Nagapattanam, PortoNovo, Kilakkarai, Mandapam, Kayalpattanam and Kulasekarapattanam. The Conquest of the Malay Peninsula and Ceylon by the English decimated the maritime enterprises of the Coromandel Muslims. The English private merchants replaced most of the prominent Muslim merchants in the ports of these countries. The decline of shipping activities along the coast forced the Muslims to search for better avenues. A large number of them migrated to Southeast Asian countries, Burma and Ceylon. The cargo vessels of the Muslims freighted such passengers in their vessels. At latter periods, many migrated to Penang and Singapore as plantation workers.

At the close of nineteenth century there was only handful of Muslim ship owners and a few maritime traders on the Coromandel Coast. Interportal and coastal trade had slipped out of their hands. The data found in the archival records show that the Muslims were let down by the English administration. The Muslim maritime traders could not withstand the economic challenges of the period and only a few survived the storm.

The Muslims of Kilakkarai, Nagapattanam, Kayalpattanam and other coastal villages were renters of salt pans. Introduction of monopoly on salt by the English drove the Muslims away from this field and English private merchants dominated the scene. The Muslims in the lower strata of the society in the Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli coasts were living on pearl fishing. They were expert divers and used a special type of vessel for pearl fishing. Wealthy Muslims of Kilakkarai, Vedalai, Mandapam and Kayalpattanam owned fleet of such fishing vessels. They owned chavadis (Muthuchavadi - godown cum market place for pearl) in all these places. Like all maritime activities pearl trade also got muddled in the European and native power struggles. The Portuguese and the Dutch favoured the Paravas better than the Muslims in pearl fishing. There was a lot of conflict among the Europeans and the native powers with regard to pearl fishing and hence it was conducted at irregular intervals. By 1900 the pearl fishery of the Coromandel coast had deteriorated. Muslim divers, who were depending on pearl fishing were thrown out and had to seek alternative jobs.

Chank fishing was another important activity of the Muslims. Kilakkarai was a prosperous centre for chank trade. There was good market for chank in Bengal. The chank fishery also met with ups and downs like the pearl fishery. But it was not affected so badly as the pearl fishery. When the English introduced the rentel system for chank and pearl fishing, the Muslims of Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli districts became rentiers. In due course, the English private merchants also entered this field. It is interesting to note the available data that the pearl and chank fisheries have contributed a considerable share to the economic development of the region. In that the role of the Muslims was primary.

A considerable population of Muslims, particularly in the lower strata of the society on the Coromandel coast were engaged in fishing for a very long time. Their fishing vessels and nets were different in different areas. Rich Marakkayars controlled a large number of such people under them. At the close of the nineteenth century, many of the Muslims who were engaged in shipping activities as labourers and crew and in pearl and chank fishing, had to take up fishing as an alternative job.

Muslim maritime professionals had good knowledge in astronomy, geography oceanography and the weather condition and followed them as handed down by tradition. The different practices followed by them in calculating the distance in the sea, identifying the nature of winds, waves etc., were gathered during the field study for this work and are recorded in this chapter.

The Muslims were experts in building ships and boats. Cuddalore, PortoNovo, Nagapattanam, Tuticorin and Kilakkarai were important ship building yards. The archival record attest to the fact that Muslims built ships for the Sultans of the Far East, the English and for themselves. They were skilled crew members of the ships. The Marakkayars hold appellations like Nagudha, Sukkani, Thandaiyar, Malumi etc., prefix with their names even today, which shows their age old expertise in the shipping profession.

There were Muslim weavers in large numbers in Ramanathapuram, Thirunelveli and Thanjavur districts who were supplying textiles to Muslim traders who in turn brought them to the port towns for export. Textiles were an important commodity of export from the Coromandel coast till the middle of the nineteenth century.

The maritime enterprises of the Muslims of the Coromandel coast slowly declined by about 1900 due to various reasons. The violent attack and the monopolistic policies of the Portuguese and the Dutch shattered their economic activities. The general policies of the English were no better to them. The English started feathering their own nest. During the first half of the nineteenth century import of English textiles sealed the fate of thousands of south Indian weavers, small traders and exporters among whom there were a considerable number of Muslims. The English administration supported the white race in every field of economic activity in which the Muslims were too engaged. The Chettiar merchants were closer to the English because of their money power. The English

private merchants, the Nabobs, with their vast resources encroached on the trade of the Southeast Asian countries and pushed back the Muslims to second rank. On the coast itself the English nurtured the Paravas and made them compete with the Muslims. The Muslims could not withstand all these competitions.

The pearl and chank fisheries were left unexploited. Many of the busy minor ports, where Muslim maritime traders were concentrated, decayed and were reduced to finishing outlets. Muslims who lost employment on all these counts, either went in search of other trades or migrated to Southeast Asian countries, Ceylon and Burma. The introduction of Railways scathed the interportal and coastal trade to some extent. Coming to their own faults, the Muslims of the region never acted as a cohesive force. They failed to understand the concept of modern world capitalism. The Muslim shipowners and maritime traders in the Coromandel coast operated with limited capital resources. Such being the case they did not rise up to organise joint ventures (like the joint stock companies of the Europeans) to avoid economic misfortune. Further, the Muslims of the Coromandel coast (Tamil Muslims) had no political patronage. They failed to pick up modern navigational technologies and were dependent on the old fashioned traditional sails. Hence the Muslims were lagging behind in overseas trade. They neglected modern English education. Not knowing the technological and economic revolution around them, they were in slumber. At the dawn of the twentieth century, the masters of maritime commerce of the premodern period met with a drastic economic downfall and their enterprises collapsed.

The social organisation, manners, customs and practices and religious life of the Muslims of Coromandel coast are dealt in the seventh chapter. Much has not so far been written on this subject, leading one to needless speculations. Hence a brief account on the principles of Islam and the social life of the Tamil Muslims is given in this chapter.

The Divine Commands of the five pillars of Islam are 1. Confession of the faith (Kalima, that, there is no other God but Allah and Mohamed is His Prophet) 2. Five time prayer for a day. 3. Fasting for 30 days during the Ramzan month. 4. Zakath or alms giving, 5. Haj or Pilgrimage to Mecca for those who are able to do so. In Islam the sacred law is one for all. There is no distinction of caste or class. There is no priesthood in Islam. Islamic brotherhood is an institution. The prayer in the mosque is on equal terms without any difference of colour, rank or social superiority. When Islam stepped into India some of these principles of Islam clashed with Indian culture but the assimilative power of India, particularly that of the quiet Tamil society, fusing the new culture into unity, made Islam a product of assimilation, as it stands today.

Though Islamic society is one and an indivisible social organisation recognised by the Canon law there arose some divisions on the basis of Khilafat (Political) movements. The two main religious sects of Islam are the Sunni and the Shia schools. The Muslims of Coromandel belong to the Sunni school which is divisible into four sub-sects, Hanafi, Shafi, Hanbali and Maliki. The Sunnis follow the Sunna, (tradition) a term used to denote customs and manners of Islamic life. The traditions which record either the sayings or doings

of Prophet Mohamed are the traditional law, Sunna, which were later compiled and called Hadeesh. The Hadeesh and the Canon law of the Holy Quran are the basic laws governing Muslim society. Among the people adhering to various sub-sects (of Sunnis) the basic concept and principles are the same and there are only some minor differences in celebrations, customs and practices. Among the Tamil speaking Muslims, Rawthars and Labbais follow the Hanafi sub-sect and the Marakkayars the Shafi.

There is no place for caste or class in Islam. Social incompatibility with regard to either intermarriage or interdining whether due to difference of race or occupation is the essential element of caste. There is no prohibition for interdining and intermarriage among the sects and subsects of Islam. The appellations like Marakkayar, Rawthar, Labbai and Deecani are not caste names. But the Muslims of Coromandel region will look as if affected by the caste system (Jathi) as in the Hindu society. But socially all subsects of Muslims are equally ranked. The Tamil speaking Muslims of the Coromandel identify closely with Hindu culture in many respects.

Marriage in Islam is a social contract entered into by the parties on a footing of equality and free consent. Islamic marriage is a simple process. The consent of the bride, a man to give in marriage the girl (usually father of the bride), payment of dowry (mahar) by the groom to the bride, two witnesses and a khazi to recite holy verses are essentials and with these the solemnisation of the marriage can be complete. But very elaborate celebrations and rituals are followed in the marriage of the Tamil Muslims due to the influence of Hindu manners and customs.

The birth of a child is well celebrated and the naming of the child takes place with pomp and show. Kathna or circumcision is traditionally performed to the male children. Circumcision is neither a Quranic law nor a religious injunction. But it is a tradition followed from the time of the Prophet Mohamed. To the converts and to those who embraced Islam it was kept as optional. The circumcision ceremony is celebrated as "Marak kakalyanam", by the Tamil Muslims, i.e., as an initiation ceremony in to the religion as in the Hindu society. When a girl attains puberty it is also celebrated with a number of ceremonies and rites. The dead are buried and elaborate ceremonies are performed before and after burial and on the succeeding forty days. In all these celebrations the influence of Hindu culture can be seen in many aspects.

Muslim women are very fond of jewellery. During marriage the quantity of jewels given to the bride is an important offer. Apart from the common jewels that are in use in Tamil society, Muslim women have some special types jewellery also. The names of such jewels are to be found in Islamic Tamil Literature and inscriptions.

The position of women in Islamic society is always a subject of interesting debate. This is also one of the most misunderstood subjects. Islamic law more than any other religious laws, protects the rights of women. A true picture about the position of women-as given in the Holy Quran and the Hadeesh and their rights and privileges etc., is given in this chapter. It is a fact that the law of divorce is misused on occasions but such misuse is not universal. A woman can also divorce her husband if she so desires. Polygamy is not

an institution in Islam and it is an allowance made to accommodate human needs. Polygamy and divorce are met in low percentage. Veiling or the purdha system is an accepted custom among the women in Islamic society. The origin, practice and scriptural message on the system are outlined in this chapter. In spite of all these laws, the position of the women during the period of study does not seem to be enviable. Except the right on property, other rights and privileges were granted only minimally. They were ignorant and illiterate. But they were trained to read Arabic thereby to read the Holy Quran and other religious books. They were also trained to read and write Arabic Tamil (Tamil in Arabic character). This helped them to manage their household accounts. There were even a few women Sufi saints.

Muslim scholars have rendered yeoman service to Tamil literature by producing a number of literary works in Tamil. Due to the contact with the Arabs and the Persians thousands of Arabic and the Persian words came into use along with Tamil words. Some of the kinship terms of the Muslims are also given. A few words that are in common usage among the Muslims due to the influence of European contacts are also listed. The Muslims also introduced new techniques and designs in the architecture of Tamil Nadu. They have also contributed their share in medicine, mathematics, astronomy and music.

Muslims of the Coromandel coast were influenced by the Dravidian form of worship as we can see in the dargahs or the tomb shrines of the Muslim saints. The Muslims, particularly women, visit the dargahs regularly. Though worship in dargahs is not sanctioned in Islam, it has come to be accepted as a

part of the religious life of Muslims. In dargahs, the method of worship, offerings made etc., are much in the Hindu fashion. It is no surprise that the orthodox Islam has bent itself here to accomodate folk tradition. People of diverse culture meet in the dargah shrines. A large number of Hindus and Christians also visit and worship in the dargahs. Nagore is an important dargah shrine in Tamil Nadu. A detailed study about the worship in dargahs and the various festivals celebrated there are discussed in this chapter.

The concluding Chapter is a discussion on how the Muslims of the Coromandel coast could not continue their operations in maritime activities in an unfriendly environment and at heavily increased risk. Data were collected from all possible sources and they have been pooled together to present a micro study on the maritime activities of the Muslims of the Coromandel region. An overall analysis shows that the policies of the European companies combined with the absence of awareness among the Muslims and their satisfaction with the residual opportunities at their disposal were responsible for their economic failure.

The study of the social behaviour of the Tamil Muslims proves that their customs and practices are continuing over very long periods to the present day. Many of the customs are handed down by tradition. The present day Tamil Muslims-Rawthar, Labbai and Marakkayars-are living in peace as Tamils in the true sense, as an integral part of the Tamil society. Their sails that steered the winds of oceans have embraced cold storage but the pages of history reminds us their past glory.

The study is confined to the maritime activities and social life of the Tamil speaking Muslims during the period from 1750 to 1900. The leading Muslims who were approached for information and materials lauded the project but pleaded ignorance on accurate details about their ancestral maritime activities. Being a member of a segment in the Muslim community, I had the privilege to knock the doors of many leading Muslims and many attempts were not fruitful. Some of the Marakkayar families at Kilakkarai (like that of Habib Arasar) and Marakkayarpattanam claim ownership of the Tamil letter inscribed bell at New Zealand Museum. But they could not produce evidence. Available shipping records show that there were many ships by name Mohideen Bux (Bux-ship) on the Coromandel. However the bell belongs to the ship of a Tamil Muslim which was in Indian Ocean trade.

Even the archival materials for the study were found to be insufficient on many points. Only the published source materials about the Portuguese, the Dutch and the Danes could be utilised.

However, this study is the first of its kind, which sheds some new light on the hidden historical facts about the Tamil Muslim maritime community of the Coromandel coast, which dominated the sea borne trade of the region for centuries. Thus this study is a voyage in to unchartered seas in the true spirit of the maritime Muslims.

Notes and References

1. A.R. Sayeed, "Indian Muslims and some Problems of Modernisation", *Dimensions of social changes in India* (ed) M.N. Srinivas, (New Delhi, 1977) P.217.
2. Mattison Mines, "Social Stratification among the Muslims in Tamil Nadu, South India," *Caste and Social Stratification, Among Muslims in India* (ed) Imtiaz Ahamed, (New Delhi 1978); "Muslim Merchants" - *The Economic Behaviours of the Indian Muslim Community*, Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human resources (New Delhi, 1972)
3. Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings-Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society* (Cambridge, 1989)
4. Stephen F'Dale "Recent Researches on the Islamic Communities of Peninsular India", *Studies in South India* (ed) Robert E. Frykenbers and Paulin Kolenda (Madras 1985)
5. Sanjay Subramanian, *The Political Economy of Commerce, Southern India 1500 - 1650* (New York 1990)
6. Sinnappa Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and commerce on the Coromandel Coast 1650 - 1740*, (New Delhi 1986); *Maritime India in the seventeenth century* (New Delhi 1994); *Maritime Commerce and English Power (Southeast India), 1750 - 1800* (New Delhi 1996); "Dutch East Indian company and the Kingdom of Madura 1650 - 1700", *Tamil Culture* Vol. I, 1963, pp-48-74; "A Note on Periathambi Marakkayar, 17th century Commercial Magnate" *Tamil Culture*, Vol. 10, No.1 1964 pp. 1-7; "Indian Merchants and the decline of Indian mercantile activity, the Coromandel case," *The Calcutta Historical Journal*, Vol. VII No. 2/1983, pp. 27-43; "Commerce, Merchants and Entrepreneurship in Tamil Country in 18th Century", paper presented in the 8th world Tamil conference seminar Thanjavur - January 1995:

7. M. Abdul Rahim, "History of Nagapattanam and surrounding from 16th century", unpublished M.Lit. thesis, University of Madras - 1971; "Muslims of Tamil Nadu, 1800 - 1900", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Madras.
8. T. Jayarajan, "Social and Economic Customs and Practices of Marakkayars, of Tamil Nadu - A case study of Marakkayars of Adirampattanam," unpublished M.Phil Thesis, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli - 1990.
9. Syed Abdul Razack, "Social and Cultural life of the Carnatic Nawabs and Nobles as gleaned through the Persian sources", unpublished M.Phil thesis, University of Madras - 1980.

Chapter II

The Coromandel Coast

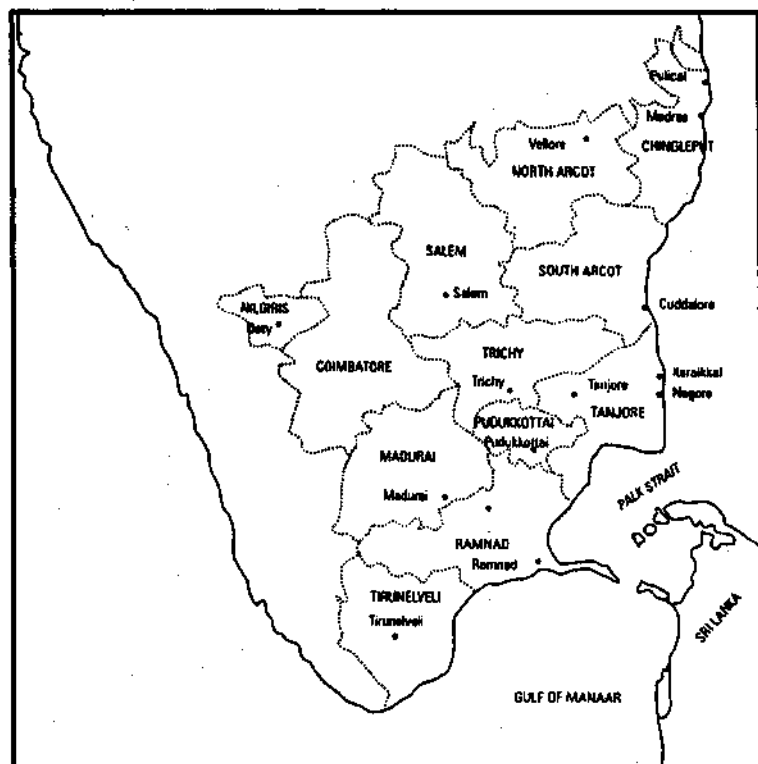
The east coast of peninsular India was called as the Coromandel coast by the European writers and the European trading companies have adopted it in their official documents. The Portuguese were the first to apply the term "Charamandel" to the coast of the present day Tamil and Telugu countries. Barbosa wrote it as "Choromandel" as against the original printing of the term Charamandel, and it stayed during further periods.¹ Yule and Burnel and other modern historians adhere and accept the etymology of this term from Cholamandalam, the country of the Cholas².

Coromandel had no well defined limits and often was held to extend as far as the Krishna river or even to the coast of Orissa. Barbosa defines the limit from Point Calimere to the Krishna delta³. Some modern writers follow this. Nachinarkkiniyar in his commentary on Tholkappiam, a classical Tamil work, mentions the limit of the east coast as Verkadu (Pulicat)⁴. Arasaratnam bifurcates the area north of Pennar as Northern Coromandel and south up to Point Calimere as Southern Coromandel⁵. A modern research scholar bounds the Southern Coromandel from Cape Comorin to Madras⁶. Arasaratnam names the coastal territories from Point Calimere to Tuticorin as the Madura Coast and beyond

south of it as the Fishery Coast. To Burtan Stein, the Coromandel Coast corresponds more or less with the territory of the Imperial Cholas of the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, extending to the southern tip of the Peninsula to the Krishna deltaic region⁷.

The east coast of South India was known to the Arab geographers, travellers and traders as *Mabar*. *Mabar*, the Arabic word, means a ferry or a crossing place⁸. The Arabs might have named the coast as *Mabar* since all the vessels habitually touched the ports of this coast before they crossed over to Ceylon and other Eastern countries. The word *Mabar* was used first by Yakut, the Arab geographer (1179-1229) in his Geographical Dictionary to denote the east coast of the peninsular India. It is not possible from the accounts of Yakut and other Arab geographers to locate the boundaries and the area it comprises. Abul Fida, another Arab geographer says, "the first locality of *Mabar* from the side of Malabar is Cape Comorin". Diminisque, yet another geographer says, "after Quilon comes the country of Sulyans (Chola) the *Mabar*"⁹.

It will be seen from the above that different authors have followed different standards as they fancied or to suit their convenience. In this study on the Muslims of Coromandel, the Tamil Speaking Muslim community of Tamil Nadu, we have referred to the area from the shores of Pulicat to Cape Comorin, since it is well within the limits of the former Cholamandalam and the later Coromandel. Thus the Coromandel Coast of our study consists of the present districts of Chengulpet, South Arcot, Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli and Tuticorin, the last four being called maritime districts.



1. Map of Tamil Nadu

Throughout the stretch of the eastern coastline there had been many ports even from ancient times. The Sangam Tamil classics of the second century A.D. have references to the ports of Cauverypoompattinam (Puhar), Tondi and Korkai. Silappadikaram, the Tamil classic of the second century A.D. gives a very realistic description of Puhar. Immense quantities of goods of various descriptions were brought here from distant lands and exchanged for gold. In this port one could see sailors from all countries¹⁰.

Korkai, the pearl port of ancient Tamil Nadu, was at the mouth of the river Tamiraparani. It is Kolkhoi and Colchi respectively of Ptolemy and the author of Periplus. Korkai became an inland city due to the accumulation of silt at the mouth of the river Tamiraparani and was abandoned and it gave birth to a new port namely Kayal¹¹.

Some of the modern writers have identified Korkai with Kilakkarai, in the present Ramanathapuram district¹². A correction is needed here. Caldwell has rightly identified Korkai with the small village at the mouth of the river Tamiraparani in Thirunelveli district¹³. Tamil works of the Sangam age speak of the port of Korkai and its famous pearls¹⁴. Archaeological finds confirm the antiquity of the present Korkai village as referred to by Caldwell. Hence the identification of Korkai with Kilakkarai is fanciful and cannot be sustained. Nagapattanam, Tondi and Saliyur were other ports of lesser importance during ancient times. Archaeological finds at Arikkamedu near Pondicherry confirm the antiquity of the Pondicherry port¹⁵.

Under the Pallavas (575-900) Mamallapuram was a prosperous port which attracted foreign ships laden

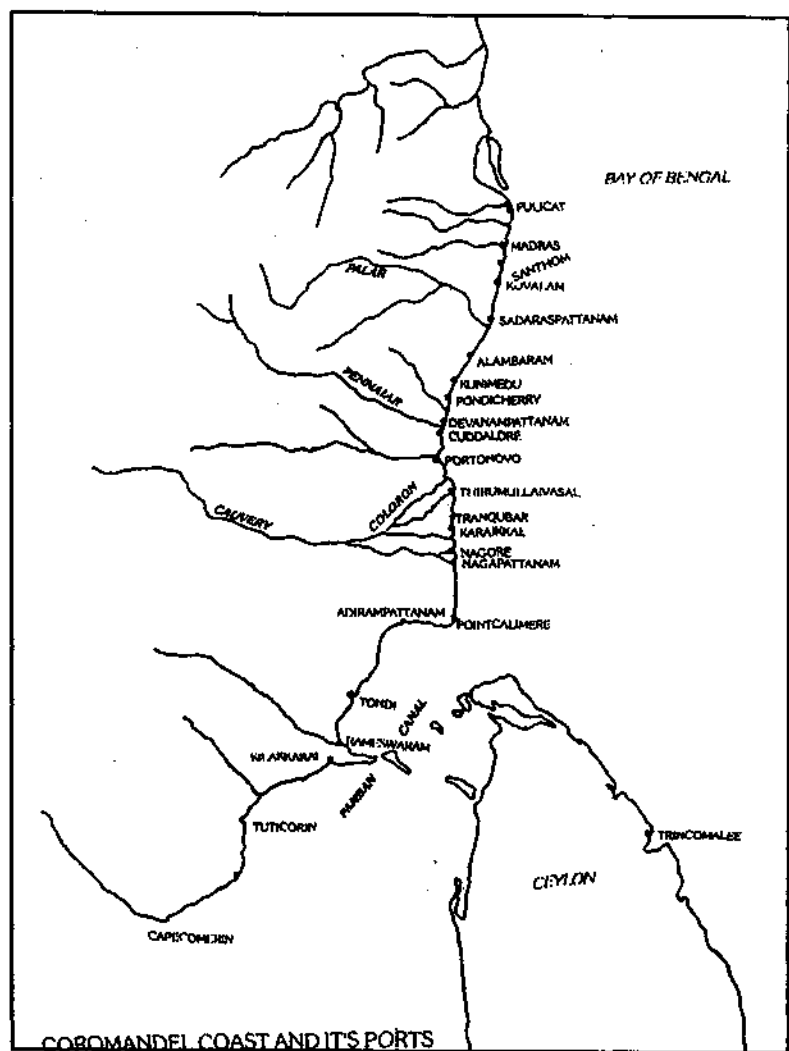
with gems, riches and elephants. Later it lost its importance¹⁶. Under Chola Raja Raja I, the status of Mamallapuram port was shifted to Nagapattanam¹⁷ which emerged as a vital port for the maritime trade of the various groups of merchants of South India. Epigraphs of the eleventh century amply testify to the trading activities in the port of Nagapattanam¹⁸. Mylapore (Santhome) was another port of considerable importance during this period¹⁹.

Kayal, a few miles south east of Korkai was an important port in the medieval period. Marcopolo, Wassaf, Rashiduddin, Abdul Razack, Nicolos Conti, Varthama and Barbosa refer to Kayal as a prosperous port²⁰. Kayal was said to be a great and noble city. All ships from the west touched this port. It was a meeting place of traders from Hormuz, Kis and Aden. Horses were brought from Arab countries to this port in large numbers for sale. Vasco da Gama has mentioned Kayal. Kayal is now called as Old Kayal. With the definite seizure of the Kayal area by the Portuguese in 1532, and the conversion of Paravas in large numbers, the status of Kayal rapidly changed. The local Muslim traders left Kayal and improved the port of Kayalpattanam, originally called Sonadukondan pattanam in an inscription of the fourteenth century found here and later corrupted into Sonagapattanam. According to Portuguese records by about 1540 Calepatao (Kayalpattanam) grew up as a rival port of Kayal. So it has to be noted that Kayal and Kayalpattanam are different places. It is safe to assume that Marcopolo's Kayal is not the present Kayalpattanam. St. Xavier records Kayalpattanam as the principality of the Moors (Muslims)²¹

There were also many minor ports on the Coromandel coast during the middle ages with lesser trading activities and assumed importance from the sixteenth century. Such insignificant ports shot into prominence for export and coastal trade. At the close of nineteenth century, there were about 65 ports in the Madras Presidency, among which 42 were in the coast of Tamil Nadu. They were : Madras, Marakkanam, Cuddalore, PortoNova, Kodiampalayam, Velanganni, Topputurai, Point Calimer, Adiramapattanam, Muthupet, Krishnajipattanam, Kattumavadi, Ammapattanam, Kottaipattanam, Gopalapattanam, Soundara pandiapattanam, Pasipattanam, Devendra pattanam, Tondi, Nambithalai, Mudiampattanam, Attangarai, Pillaiyarmadam, Emmandalamumkondan, Pamban, Rameswaram, Mandapam, Vedalai, Marakkayarpattanam, Valinokkam, Ervadi, Vaipar, Tutitcorin, Kulesekara pattanam, Kayalpattanam and Colochel²².

Among the above ports Madras, Nagapattanam and Tuticorin were ranked as major ports and the others as minor ports. Karaikkal, Pasipattanam, Nambithalai, Mudiampattanam, Attangarai, Pillaiyarmadam, Emmandalamumkodan, Rameswaram, Mandapam, Vedalai, Marakkayarpattanam, Ervadi, Valinokkam and Vaipar ports were reduced to lesser or insignificant trading activities at the close of nineteenth century²³.

The number of ports increased after the advent of the Europeans since the hinterland products had to be delivered at the coastal settlements and ports. The prosperity of a particular port depended on the availability of goods for export and coastal trade. When the export of the major commodity, the textiles, declined the majority of the minor ports lost their importance.



2. Coromandel Coast and its Ports (17th - 18th cent.)

Most of the Coromandel ports were located in the mouth of estuary of small rivers. Country vessels could sail into these rivers in favourable seasons to bring hinterland products for export. The ships were anchored far away at the firm ground in the sea and loading and unloading was done by numerous small boats. The ocean going vessels would stand out in the sea and the coastal boats could sail through the narrow channel into the river to load and unload on the river bank where warehouses and customs houses were located. A brief description of a few ports is given here for the better understanding of the trade, commodity composition of exports and imports, and the merchants and companies involved in the trade.

Madras (Chennapattanam) was a fishing settlement before the arrival of the English. It grew as an open roadstead and was primarily used for English shipping. The development of the Madras port during the eighteenth century was phenomenal due to political factors rather than commercial²⁴. Regular shipping was undertaken to Malabar, Bombay, Surat and the Persian Gulf ports and eastward to the Burmese ports, Ache, Bantam later to Manila and Canton. Urbanisation necessitated the development of coastal trade in rice, salt and other food articles. The port had good storage facilities and later was connected with railway link to various places in the Presidency. The principal exports were seeds, leather, raw and tanned skin, raw cotton, grains, pulses, coffee, tea, cotton manufactures and coir. The main items of import were cotton manufactures, metals and ores, yarn machinery, spices and sugar²⁵.

The port of Santhom (Mylapore) was of much significance in the trade to the Southeast Asian countries

under the Portuguese. The trade from this port dwindled in the nineteenth century. Kovalam (Shahid Bandar), Sadras Pattanam, Alambaram were ports for inland trade in the eighteenth century but they never developed in trading activities inspite of the efforts of the Nawabs of Arcot. Next port was Kunimedu. In all these ports the Dutch and the English were dealing with the merchants and shippers of this area but they degenerated in the nineteenth century. The Pondicherry port under the French was drawn into the Eastern trade network.

Cuddalore, called Islamabad²⁶ by the Muslims, had a continuity as an important port of this region. During nineteenth century, groundnut and its products (oil and kernel) were the staple commodity of export to the European countries and Ceylon. Coloured piece goods, palmyra jaggery, sugar, rice, pulses were all exported to various countries. The principal imports were coal, timber, spices, European stores and provisions. There was a brisk coastal trade in groundnut products, rice, paddy sugar and pulses²⁷.

PortoNovo was the smoothest and softest port on the Coromandel. It was known as Mohamed Bandar and the present Tamil name is Parangipettai. The anchorage in the approach to the port was firm and good. This port city had the character of an urban metropolis with ship building and repair yards. The Portuguese, the Dutch and the English had their factories here. This reveals its potentiality and importance in ocean trade. It was largely frequented by native vessels. Commodities of export were rice, paddy, groundnut oil, other oil seeds, textiles and indigo. The imports were European goods and fine grass mats from Ache²⁸.

The Thanjavur coast had a large number of ports the northern most being Kodiampalayam at the mouth of the Coloroon river. Next important port was Thirumullaivasal which has direct inland access through the Oppanar river. On both the banks of this river, there were many chowkies for the purpose of loading boats with grains to be carried down for export. Rice and paddy were exported in large quantities to Ceylon. From the next port, Topputhurai, live animals were exported. Tranquebar was the Danish port. Here the trade was not substantial. But coastal trade improved in this region due to the new settlements in the port town from the beginning of eighteenth century. In the later half of nineteenth century, trade decreased in this port because of the construction of Nagapattanam - Thanjavur railway line in 1861 and the rail connection to Tiruchirappalli in 1862. Native vessels frequented this port very often since the Danes encouraged such shipping activities. British Indian steamers called at this port to pick up passengers bound for Mauritius and other Eastern countries. Rice, paddy, coconut oil and coir products were exported and sugar, timber, sandalwood and French goods were imported²⁹. Karaikkal, the French port shipped large quantities of paddy and rice to Malabar and Ceylon. Textiles and dryfish were other articles of export. During favourable seasons, inland trade was undertaken by small vessels through the river Arasalar³⁰. At the close of nineteenth century, trading activities in this port fell to insignificance.

The Nagore port situated at the mouth of river Vettar, was the home of larger Indian merchant fleet ranging from one masted small vessels to ships of 300 tonnes³¹. The chief exports were rice, textiles, chank, and other sea products and imports were spices, metals,

areca, Pegu ponies and a variety of consumables. Small vessels sailed southwards to the coast of southern Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram, Thirunelveli and Malabar. It was an important port of South Indian trade to Ceylon. It served as an outlet for the produce of the districts of Mayavaram and Kumbakonam³². Nagore blue cloth found good market in Europe. Most of the merchants were Muslim Marakkayars to whom Nagore was holy place because of the presence of the dargah of Shahul Hammeed Aulia, popularly known as Nagore Andavar. Holiness and trading opportunity in this place attracted the Muslim trading communities and their settlements grew in the port area. The merchants here built their own vessels of considerable burthen. The Muslim traders of Nagore had depots at Ache, Sumatra, Pegu and Ceylon³³. At the close of the nineteenth century Nagore became a wharf of Nagapattanam.

Nagapattanam is about three miles south of Nagore. It was a prominent port of south India for centuries. After their occupation of this port, the Portuguese permitted native shipping uninterrupted through their cartaz system but their general hostility towards Muslims made the latter migrate to nearby Nagore. When Nagapattanam came under the Dutch, the remaining Marakkayar traders also began to operate from Nagore because of the hurdles created by the restrictive policies of the Dutch. The port was an open roadstead, offered good anchorage for larger ships and loading and unloading was done by small boats and lighters from 5 to 12 tonnes. The chief exports were groundnut, coloured piece goods, tobacco and other country products mainly to the Southeast Asian countries. Fresh vegetables, bullocks and sheep were shipped to Penang, Singapore and Ceylon and ghee, silk, skin and hides and provisions to Straits Settlements.

Cotton piece goods, twisted yarn, metals, timber and areca were the chief imports. White Manchester cloth was imported from the Straits and dyed and reexported from here. Rice was imported from Calcutta during scarcity seasons. This port was the chief centre for the transshipment of coolies to the tea and rubber estates in Ceylon and the Malay States. From the close of eighteenth century, larger vessels called to pick up passengers. Steps were taken by the English to attract European ships to this port. In 1861 Nagapattanam was made the terminus of the southern railway and trade increased. Since salt was the monopoly of the controlling power (English), the country crafts were pressed into service for the transport of salt to this port³⁴. In 1867, the ports of Nagapattanam and Nagore were merged³⁵.

South of Nagapattanam, the next port of significance was Adiramapattanam. Most of the sailings from here were to Ceylon, Malabar and Thirunelveli coasts. Rice and textiles were the chief exports and areca and timber were the imports. Fish, dry fish, salt, provisions and grains were the commodities in coastal trade³⁶. The other minor ports in the Thanjavur coast were used by the native traders for coastal trade and for trade with Ceylon.

Tondi in Ramanathapuram had been a port of importance even from ancient times. The ships sailing on the coast often took refuge in this port in the worst monsoon seasons for protection. In modern times it developed as a port of coastal trade within the shallow waters of Madura and Thirunelveli Bays and trade to Ceylon. Though the vessels in operation were small, the goods carried were substantial. Native Marakkayar

traders operated from this port using country crafts. The chief exports were textiles, rice, chank and imports were areca, pepper and timber.

The shipping between the east and west coast of India used the Pamban canal, between the island of Rameswaram and the mainland or the passage through the Adam's Bridge and the island of Manaar in Ceylon. Ships up to 800 tons could cross through Pamban. Pamban canal played a vital role in the Coromandel trade and was the bone of contention between European colonial powers and the native rulers.

Kilakkarai was a safe port with an anchorage in 2½ to 3 fathoms from the shore. It is said that Ibn Batuta³⁷ visited this port town. Foreign trade was conducted with Ceylon and internal trade with Malabar and Bengal. The chief exports were rice, paddy, cereals, silk, cotton products, jaggery, coconut, dry fish condiments and chank and imports were areca, pepper, spices, copper and zinc. This port was famous for the Arab horse trade from the thirteenth century. The Marakkayar traders of this town played an important role in the economic development of this region during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The celebrated Marakkayar business magnate Periathambi (Vallal Seethakathi) belonged to this town. The chief exports from here were Fullers earth, coral stones, rice, paddy etc., to Ceylon and palmyra fibres and chank to Bengal. During the nineteenth century chank export trade continued to be an important activity in this port.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the chief ports in Thirunelveli district were Tuticorin, Kayalpattinam Manapad, Alandalai, Veerampattanam, Pinnaikayal, Vaipar and Vembar. The trading activities

of these ports are amply recorded in the records of the European Companies. A study of these records provides a picture of the economic history of this region. Tuticorin became the most significant port after the advent of the Europeans. The Portuguese, the Dutch and the English concentrated on this port. The extension of cotton trade increased the importance of this port. Raw cotton from this region was exported to China in the nineteenth century. The port had safe roadstead with good anchorage in which vessels could ride in all seasons³⁸. Foreign trade was more than the coastal trade in 1880. Inland trade was conducted with the west coast. The chief exports were cotton, coffee, jaggery, chilly, sheep, horses, cows and poultry³⁹. Kulasekarapattanam port with a sandy coast and coconut thopes conducted trade with Ceylon. At the close of the nineteenth century it was a point of embarkation for passenger vessels⁴⁰. Kayalpattanam had constant trade with Ceylon.

The communities needed to run the business of the port such as boatmen, mariners, labourers, administrative personnel and merchants settled in all these port towns leading to their urbanisation. The sea faring communities acquired knowledge about the oceans and seas and astronomical data which were handed down verbally to their families. The Muslims of the Coromandel had expert knowledge of the Bay of Bengal. The English codified the favourable routes of trade in the Bay of Bengal. In the course of centuries many ports grew on the Coromandel and many fell due to some reason or the other. The hinterland of Coromandel supplied the goods required for export and inland trade and consumed the imported goods⁴¹.

The settlements in almost all the ports of the Coromandel coast were the stronghold of Muslims, particularly the Marakkayars and Labbais. Because of their settlement and trading activities many of the ports became urban metropolises. European records speak about the urban nature of ports like PortoNovo, Cuddalore, Tranquabar and Nagapattanam. These port towns contained palatial buildings of Muslim merchants apart from many other structural buildings. The process of urbanization on the Coromandel coast was mainly due to the concentration of the Muslim maritime community. Because of the concentration of Muslims in the Thanjavur coasts in places like Nagore, Nagapattanam, Adirampattanam, the eighteenth century English records call these ports "Moor Ports"⁴². Susan Bayly calls the Thirunelveli ports "Marakkayar Ports"⁴³. A large number of Marakkayars and Labbais were engaged in maritime trade till the second quarter of the nineteenth century. They were big merchants, ship owners, nagudhas, sailors, boatmen and ship employees of different descriptions, pearl and chank divers and fishermen. In the coastal towns such as Nagore, PortoNovo, Adirampattanam, Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam, the darghas of Muslim saints and mystics were considered holy by the Muslims and they settled there for their trade. During the nineteenth century many new settlements of Muslims sprang up in the coastal region, wherever the situation was favourable for their maritime activities. Thus many of the Coromandel port towns and settlements were the centres of maritime activities for the Muslims and they have contributed appropriately for the economic development and urbanization of the region.

Notes and References

1. Durate Barbosa, *The Book of Durate Barbosa : An Account of the countries Bordering on the Indian Ocean and their Inhabitants* (ed) M.L. Dames, (London Hakluyt Society 1980) II P. 124
2. Rober Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire (Vijayanagar) the Contribution to the Histroy of India* (1900 (Rpt) New Delhi, 1987) P - 239.
3. Barbosa, op. cit.,
4. Nachinarkiniyar, *Tholkappiyam*, (Urai) Poruladhikaram, Sutram - 113.
5. Sinnappa Arasaratnam, *Merchants Companies and Commerece on the Coromandel Coast. 1650 - 1740* (New Delhi 1986) P - 7 (Here after - company and Commerce)
6. N. Seeralan, *The survey of Ports and Harbours in Madras Presidency. 1858 - 1900*, unpublished M.Phil Thesis, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, 1987. P - 31.
7. Burten Stein, *All the King's Manas and Papers on Medieval South Indian History*. (Madras, 1984) P - 243.
8. Hobson and Jobson P - 526
9. S.M.H. Nainar (Tr) *Tuhfat - Ul - Mujahidin of Zainuddin*, University of Madras (Madras, 1942) P - 6 ; *Arab Geographers knowledge of South India*, University of Madras (Madras 1942) PP. 53 - 56.
10. *Silappadikaram*, V. 1- 10, *Silapadikaram*, V.R. Ramachandra Dikshidar (Tr) (Oxford University Press 1939), pp 92, 110 - 111, 115; Kennath Hall, *Trade and State Craft in the Age of Cholas* (New Delhi, 1980) P.165.
11. *Madurai Kanchi* II - 134, 144 ; *Silappadikaram* XXVII - 127; *The Periplus of Erithrean Sea and Voyages of Nearchus*, William Vincent (Tr) P. 105 ; V. Kanakasabai, *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago* (1904) PP. 22 - 23; V.R. Ramachandra Dikshidar op. cit P. 202

12. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, (London 1886) VIII P. 216 ; N.A. Ameer Ali, *Vallal Seethakkathiyin Vazvum Kalamum*, (Madras 1983) p.30-31, Ka. Mu. Sheriff, *Vallal Seethakkathi Varaltru* (Madras, 1986) pp. 60-62, M. Idris Marakkayar, *Nanilam Potrum Nannagar Keelakkarai* (Madras, 1990) pp - 2.6.,
13. Robert Caldwell, *A Political and General History of the District of Tinnelveli in the Presidency of Madras, from the earliest period to its cession to the English Government in AD 1801* (Rpt.) New Delhi, 1989 PP - 282 - 288.
14. *Madurai Kanchi* 133 - 138 ; *Sirupanarrupadai*, 56 - 58; *Muthollayiram* 30; *Silappadikaram* XXVII - 127; *Ahananuru* 3, 27, 120, 201, 280, 296, 350; *Kalithokai* 181.
15. R.E.M. Wheeler and A Ghosh, "Arikamedu an Indo Roman Trading Centre on the East Coast of India", *Ancient India*, No.2 (New Delhi, 1956) pp 17 - 124.
16. *Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India* No.26, "Pallava Statues at Mamallapuram" (Calcutta 1926) pp - 10 - 11.
17. Kenneth Hall, *op. cit.* p - 167.
18. A.R.E. 152 of 1956 - 57; 155 of 1956 - 1957; 162 of 1956 - 57 ; *South Indian Inscription*, 8 - 442.
19. A.R.E., 261 of 1910.
20. S. Arunachalam, *The History of Pearl Fishery of Tamil Coast* (Annamalai Nagar, 1952) p. 11.
21. Caldwell *op. cit.* p. 41 - 67 ; James Hornel, *The Sacred Chank of India*, (Madras, 1914) p. 4 Colonel yule, *Marcopolo*, II 305 - 307; A.R.E., 311 of 1964; *Francis Xavier, His Life, His Times* (Tr) M.Joseph Castelloe (Italy 1977) II p. 258.
22. *A Manual of Madras Presidency* (ed) C.D. Macleans, (Madras, 1885) II p. 423 (hereafter, Madras Manual)
23. *Ibid.*
24. S.Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, *op.cit.* p.22
25. C.W.E. Cotton, *Hand Book of Commercial information for India* (Trivandram, 1942) P. 67.

26. J.H. Garstin, *Manual of South Arcot District* (Madras, 1878) p. 408
27. *Administration Report of Madras Presidency* 1890 - 1 p. 64; *ibid* 1899 - 1900 p. 65; C.W.E. Cotton, *op. cit.* pp 65- 66.
28. J.H. Garstin, *op. cit.* p. 420.
29. *Madras Manual*, II p.278; N. Seeralan, *op.cit* p. 41.
30. C.W.E. Cotton, *op. cit* p - 65.
31. *Madras Manual*, *op.cit* II pp. 159 - 160.
32. Tamil Nadu Archives (TNA), Tanjore District Record Vol. 3240.
33. TNA / Tanjore District Record Vol. 3337, p. 45
34. Records of Fort St. George, (FSG) Commercial Department, Vol. II - S. No. 8633, p. 725; C.W.E. Cotton, *op. cit.* p. 65 ; TNA/Tanjore District Record Vol. 3325, p. 65 ; *ibid* Vol. 3174 p. 86; F.R. Hemingway . *Tanjore District Gazetteer* (1906) pp. 130 - 131.
35. *Madras Manual*, *op. cit.* II p. 159.
36. *Imperial Gazetteer of India* V, p. 24; *Madras Manual* *op. cit.* II p.159 ; N. Seeralan, *op. cit.* p. 52.
37. S.M.H. Nainar, *Arab Geographers Knowledge of South India*, *op. cit.* p. 36.
38. R.White, "An Account of Harbour in Tuticorin", *Madras Journal of Literature and Science* (Oct. 1836) PP. 305 - 309.
39. *Madras Manual*, *op. cit.* II p. 132.
40. Proceedings of the Government of Fort. St. George in the public department for the year 1857, Vol. II p. 448.
41. S. Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, *op. cit* pp. 26 - 28 and 32 - 37.
42. FSG, *Diary and Consultation Book*, 1753, p.154, 1734 p.3
43. Susan Bayly, *op. cit* p. 105.
44. TNA / Tanjore District Record, Vol. 3177 / 1800

Chapter - III

Political Background

The political development in the South in the seventeenth and subsequent centuries disturbed the peace and tranquility of the region. The political events of the period were closely linked with trade. The course of events from the conquest of the region by Kumarakampana, the commander of the Vijayanagar, in 1370, to the proclamation of the English East India Company as masters of the land in 1800 are sketched here briefly.

The decline of the Vijayanagar and Mughal empire morally and materially upset the Tamil country which without any paramount power to protect it fell an easy prey to the contending armies which were at large all over. The insidious rivalry among the native powers paved way for frequent invasions of the Muslims and the Marathas into the Tamil country.

The Pandian empire which was at its zenith in the fourteenth century plunged into disorder due to the civil wars and lost its imperial hold to the Muslim power of the north and Madurai was subjected to Muslim rule for over 55 years. Madurai was annexed

to the empire of Delhi during the reign of Sultan Ghiyasu-d-din Tughluq by about 1323 A.D.¹. One Jalalud-din-Ashan Sha was appointed as the Kotwal of Madurai. But he proclaimed his independence in 1333 A.D.². The whole of Coromandel region was under the sway of the Muslims. But the rule of the Sultans of Madurai was full of internal wars and confusion prevailed everywhere and the Vijayanagar kings lost no opportunity to attack the Sultanate. Kumarakamapana, the Vijayanagar commander conquered Madurai in 1370 A.D. and the Muslim rule was routed completely by 1378 A.D.³. With this, the Tamil country came under the Vijayanagar.

The Southern part of the Vijayanagar empire at the beginning of the sixteenth century was reorganised into separate provinces known as Nayakdoms with their headquarters at Madurai, Thanjavur and Ginjee. The administration of these provinces was entrusted to Viceroys known as Nayaks. The Nayakara System was a military feudalism with a quasi independent status⁴. When the Vijayanagar power was waning the Nayakdoms assumed autonomy. Further, the Nayakdoms had their own hierarchy of feudatories, the Polygars, (Palayakkarar) the local chieftains with traditional influence.

The break-up of the old Pandian rule, the Muslim onslaught and civil wars had devastated the country and chaos prevailed everywhere. The Nayaks with the help of the Polygars reorganised the administration and restored law and order. But the Nayaks were fighting themselves, inviting the Deccani Muslim powers, the Marathas and the Europeans into the politics of the Coromandel region. The Europeans, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French, the Danes and the English were

claiming supremacy over the Indian ocean and crossed swords in their attempt to get their claims established. In due course of time these European trading companies interfered in the internal affairs of the native territories and the native rulers fell prey to the foreign powers which ultimately resulted in their extinction.

The Nayakdom of Ginjee, the northern most part of the Coromandel region, asserted independence by 1614. The Nayaks of Madurai and Mysoreans encroached on its territories. The Sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda raided Ginjee alternately. Golkonda annexed its territories including the port of Pulicat and Madras. The Bijapureans took over the remaining parts including the port of Devanampattanam, PortoNovo and Pondicherry. The English established their factories in this territory with the consent of the Nayak and Muslim rulers. The Marathas captured Ginjee in 1678 and it fell to the Mughals in 1698 and later became a part of the Arcot subedari. At the dawn of the eighteenth century the crescent flag began to flutter from the portals of the Carnatic. The Nawabi of Carnatic was born with its headquarters at Arcot (Darun-nur-Mohamedpur) under the headship of Zulphikarkhan, the commander of Aurangazeb. At the disintegration of the Mughal empire after Aurangazeb, Arcot emerged as an independent power in the second quarter of eighteenth century. Anwaruddin became the chief of the Carnatic⁵.

The Nayakdom of Madurai was founded in 1529. It was divided into many *palayams* each under the charge of a *Polygar* (*Palayakkarar*). The Madurai Nayakdom included the present districts of Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Thirunelveli, Thiruchirappalli, Coimbatore, Salem and a portion of Travancore⁶. The

long coastline of the Madurai Nayakdom was the scene of intense trading activities by the European Companies. The Portuguese and the Dutch were expanding their trade in the coastal region. Gradually the control of the affairs of the coast slipped into the hands of these foreign powers and the Nayaks had no interest in overseas trade. But the export and import trade contributed much to the economic development of the region⁷. The invasions from Mysore and Bijapur were a challenge to Madurai. Madurai's interference in the politics of the Thanjavur Nayakdom invited a new powerful power, the Marathas into southern politics and later resulted in the establishment of Maratha rule in Thanjavur. The feudal poligars grew independent and the Nayak could not exercise authority over them. The disintegrating Madurai Nayakdom was taken over by Chanda Sahib in 1736 and thus almost eclipsed out from the political arena⁸.

The rule of the Sethupathis was inaugurated in Ramanathapuram in 1604 by the Madurai Nayak. The Sethupathis drifted from their allegiance to their sovereign and asserted independence in 1702. Ramanathapuram sprang up as an important state on the ruins of the Madurai Nayakdom. The English took over Ramanathapuram in 1795. A portion of Ramanathapuram territory was ceded to Sasivarna Thevar and the state of Sivaganga was born⁹. The Sethupathis laid emphasis on the maritime commerce in their territory. The Pamban canal was under their control. A good part of the pearl and chank fisheries were also on their coast. The Sethupathis encouraged the Dutch, the English, the French and the Danes to trade in their coast and thus they maintained an open market in their ports. The Sethupathis extended their patronage to the native Muslim traders also. The Muslims created

new settlements in their ports. Further the Sethupathis entered into joint venture with the local Muslim traders in trading activities to Ceylon, Malabar and Bengal¹⁰.

The Nayakdom of Thanjavur was formed in 1532 and became independent of the Vijayanagar empire by about 1650. Succession disputes among the Nayak families brought the Bijapur Sultan through their Maratha general Ekoji who esconced himself on the throne of Thanjavur and founded the Maratha rule in 1678 replacing the Nayak rule¹¹. Ekoji ruled Thanjavur till 1685. From 1685 to 1740 there were many civil wars among the members of Maratha royal family for the Thanjavur throne. The Sethupathis and the Thondaimans of near by Pudukkottai were also attacking Thanjavur. The tranquility of Thanjavur was disturbed many times. Finally Thanjavur was annexed by the English in 1798.

In 1736, the rulers of the Tamil country bowed to the Mughal imperialism. The Nayakdoms became their tributary states. The southern part of the Mughal territory known as the Carnatic was inaugurated with Arcot as its headquarters. The first Nawab Zulphikarkhan established his authority in the carnatic. But the Nawabs of Arcot due to political and other factors could not keep the country intact. After the decline of the Nayaks, the disheartened auxiliary powers became inimical to the Nawab of Arcot, who failed to make hay while the sun shined. The powerful local Poligars took the bull by the horns defied the authority of the Nawab and consequently the Carnatic region became a scene of incessant intrigues and conflicts. When Anwaruddhin was appointed as the chief of Arcot, civil war broke out between the Navayet and Wallajah families of Arcot. The Arcot episode

coincided with the succession dispute for the Nizamship in Hyderabad.

Thus there was total political disruption in the southern region paving the way for the Europeans to enter into our politics. The French and the English who had already succeeded in establishing their hold in some parts of the Coromandel started fishing in troubled waters supporting the rival groups in Arcot and Hyderabad to gain mastery over the situation. The Carnatic wars that ensued as a result of such discord and dissensions were favourable to the English. With the characteristic policy of divide and rule and naval supremacy, the English annihilated all their rivals one by one and emerged triumphant ultimately¹². Mohamed Ali who espoused the cause of the English was confirmed in the Nawabship in 1754.

Mohamed Ali (1754 - 96) is an interesting personality in the history of South India and was responsible for the firm footing the English gained in the peninsula. The English pretended to be the champions of the Nawab and their alliance yielded him some timely victories. The English slowly grabbed the political powers of the Nawab and became partners in administrations. By 1795 the English East India Company became the defacto rulers of the Carnatic and the Nawab was a shadow. The English with the characteristic statecraft outwitted the native powers taking the wind out of their sail. The Poligars who emerged on the ruins of the princely order, refused to comply with the demands of the Company. The Poligar rebellion of 1799 was suppressed ruthlessly, liquidating the influence of the local chieftains. The Nawab was made a pensioner by the treaty of 1801 and the British

paramountacy was firmly and permanently established in our land.

In this political background the Coromandel Tamil Muslims were in a peculiar situation. From the available sources right from the rise of Islam in the Coromandel, the Tamil Muslims were not participants in political activities. But they took a leading part in long distance trade, coastal trade and other maritime and economic activities without any ambition for political prominence. However they enjoyed the concessions and goodwill of the ruling houses in view of the profit the rulers derived from the trade contacts monitored by the Muslims. The Muslims had no direct access to political or military power in the kingdoms of the region. They were, it seems, passive spectators of all the political disturbances and whenever they were not able to bear the political onslaughts they simply migrated to territories favourable to their commercial activities.

The much - written Muslim influence in the Pandya court in the 13th and 14th Centuries was mostly on the commercial front and not political. Wassaf speaks about the prominence of one Takiuddin Abdul Rahman, the agent of Jamaluddin, the ruler of Kis (in Arabia). In the Pandya court, Takiyuddin is said to have been the Wazir (Minister) of Mabar, who was succeeded by Sirajuddin, his son and his grandson Nizammuddin in succession in the same position¹³. It must be remembered that these were Arabs by descent (not natives of the Coromandel). The position of wazir or minister ascribed to these Arabs is not confirmed by any Indian source though it is quite likely from the important positions they occupied that they exercised considerable influence in the Pandian court, of course,

because of their intimate connections with seaborne trade¹⁴.

The Sultans of Madurai who ruled the Coromandel region for about 55 years (1323 - 1378) A.D. were military chiefs from the courts of the Delhi Sultanate. Even the local commanders were of Delhi descent. The native Muslims might have been included in military service here and there. From the writings of Ibn Batuta we are able to understand that there were no native Muslims occupying higher political position. So it is inferred that the Muslims were among the citizens of the lot under the Madurai Sultanate¹⁵. Even during the occupation of the territories of the Coromandel by the Deccani Sultanates, the position of the native Muslims was the same as above. Further the Deccani sultans encouraged their own people of the Telugu country to settle in the hinterland of the Coromandel for helping their trading activities. During the period of our study the Nawabs of Arcot were actually the rulers of the Coromandel region but the native Muslims did not attain any special significant uplift under their protection. Further, the Nawabs or his nobles were not very keen about developing maritime trade in the coast and thereby help the traditional Tamil Muslims. Thus, inspite of many centuries of Islamic political domination, we do not find the name of a Muslim chieftain or a native commander in the status of a Palayakkar in the entire Coromandel region. The Hindus continued their supremacy in political and economic spheres due to their numerical strength and Islamic rule did not deter them from becoming opulent and influential¹⁶.

Arasaratnam rightly argues that the Coromandel (Tamil) Muslims largely stood outside the politics

unlike the Golkonda Muslims who combined commercial operations with political influence. This is mainly because the Coromandel Tamil Muslims had no ethnic or kinship connection with any of the ruling houses of the peninsular India. But they had developed some political connections away from the homeland in the terminal points of trade in countries like Kedah, Perak, Johore and Ache. In the homeland the only ruling house to which they were close was that of the Sethupathis of Ramanathapuram. It was only from here that they moved from commercial managers to the Sethupathis to holding administrative positions and rentiers in the kingdom. The only commercial magnet with political influence, in the Coromandel, in the history of the Muslims of the region, was Periathambi Marakkayar of Kilakkarai and we do not find any other Muslim of this status. It is significant that though the strongest ports of Muslim commerce were on the Thanjavur coast and just north of it they never grew to any political status in those territories¹⁷.

The colonial powers, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English who obtained political powers in our territory were unfriendly to the commercial activities of the natives particularly the Muslim community. The native rulers forgot to protect the rights of their own subjects who were in maritime trading activities, paving the way for European expansion. The Coromandel Muslim community adjusted themselves to the changed situations and reallocated their economic activities and were not very serious about acquiring any political importance. By accident or deliberate preference they chose to be isolated from other groups of the society with regard to political activities. Thus in the overall political background, the Tamil speaking Muslims were a neglected force politically in the Coromandel region.

Notes and References

1. S.A.Q. Husaini, *The History of the Pandya Country* (Karaikudi 1962) pp. 74 - 75.
2. *Fatuhu - Salatin* (Madras) p. 462 ; *Cambridge History of India*. Vol. III p. 488 ; H.M. Elliot and John Dowson, (ed) *The History of India As Told by Her own Historians*, (London, 1921) III p. 242 - 243; S.A.Q. Husaini, op. cit.
3. S.A.Q. Husaini op. cit. p. 108 - 109; N. Venkataramanayya, *The early Expansion in South India* (Madras, 1942) pp. 13 - 18.
4. R. Sathianatha Iyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madurai* (Oxford, 1924) P. 65.
5. C.S. Srinivasachari, *A History of Ginjee and its Rulers* (Annamalai Nagar, 1943) p. 65.
6. R. Sathianatha Iyer, op. cit pp. 52 - 59.
7. *ibid* p. 90
8. K. Rajayyan, *A History of Madurai (1736 - 1801)* (Madurai, 1974) pp.68 - 71 (Here after Rajayyan Madurai).
9. FSG Military consultations, Vol. 41 p. 108.
10. M.C.C. Vol. 44-A, (1792) p. 55; Revenue Consultations ; Vol. 62-A (1795) pp. 1796 - 97 and Vol. 105 (1800) pp. 2515-16 ; TNA Madurai District Records, Vol. 1178 pp. 470 - 472.
11. V. Vriddhagrisan, *The Nayaks of Thanjavur* (Annamalai Nagar, 1942) p. 31,
K.Rajayyan, Madurai, op. cit. p. 25.
K. Rajayyan, *A History of British Diplomacy in Thanjavur* pp. 61- 65 ; Thanjavur Saraswathi Mahal Modi Manuscripts (Tr) NO. 3 - 142, 6 - 193.

12. P. Subramaniyan, *Social History of the Tamils 1707 - 1947* (New Delhi, 1996) pp. 6 - 7.
13. Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.* III p. 32.
14. S.Krishnaswamy Iyengar, *South India and her Mohamadan Invaders*, (London, 1921) pp. 69 - 73.
15. S.A.Q. Husaini, *op. cit.* p. 3.
16. P. Subramaniyan, *op. cit.* p. 3
17. S. Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, *op. cit.* pp. 225 - 26.

Chapter IV

The Muslims of the Coromandel

Who were the Muslims of the Coromandel (Tamilnadu)? Islam took root in South India well before the waves of invasions from Central Asia which gave rise to the medieval Muslim Sultanates in North India. The early spread of Islam was associated with the expansion of South India's wide ranging maritime trade network. Arab Muslim traders and navigators settled along the east coast of the peninsula - Coromandel Coast - as early as the eighth century A.D. and their number increased as the region began to play a central role in the international trade which linked South India to the enterpots of West Asia and the international archipelago¹.

A chain of Muslim trading settlements grew up along the east coast from Pulicat to Colochel in Kanniyakumari. Many of their richest settlements were located in the coastal towns of Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli districts. They had links with the wider trading world of the Arabian peninsula and the Indian Ocean. The port towns of the Coromandel coast came to be identified as centres of formal Islam

in South India by the 12-13th centuries. The localities such as Pulicat, Nagapattanam, Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam contained significant number of Tamil speaking Muslims who could be classed as permanently professing Islam and were actually recognised as such within the wider society ².

The Arab Contact

The beginning of the Muslim contact with South India was not an accident but a continuation of the ancient commercial intercourse between the Arabs and the people of South India and the Arabs were the captains of Indian commerce. Much of the Indian trade was in their hands. Because of the proximity of Southern Arabia to the sea and its strategic location on the Indian route, rare and highly priced products of India, China, and Ethiopia found their way here in transit to the western marts. Spices and other aromata were produced here for seasoning food or for burning in the ceremonies of the courts and rituals, the foremost among them the incense, was the most precious commodity of ancient trade. Arab writer, Ibn Fadbullah-ul-Omari (circa 1348 A.D.) the author of *Masalik - kul - alzar*, while writing about India says that its seas are pearls, "its mountains are rubies and its trees are perfumes ³".

The Arabs, being great traffickers had access to both Indian and western ports. After the third century B.C. the bulk of the Indian commerce fell into the hands of the Arabs. It is also possible to assume that the South Indian Parava fishermen cum merchants took the South Indian articles in their vessels to the Persian gulf. The Arab took such goods to the coasts of Africa. From there they were taken via upper Nile to Egypt ⁴.

The flowing trade of the Arabs in Indian and Chinese articles enabled them to establish their colonies in Southeast Africa and South India and capture the monopoly of trade in the ports of these regions. It is generally believed that from very ancient times, the Greeks and Romans were trading in the Indian ocean ports. It may be noted that the Greek writers of the second and first century B.C. do not allude to Egyptian and Greek merchants sailing to and from India. While Pliny (79 A.D). and Periplus (88 A.D). have copious reference to Arab trade in the first century A.D., they have only casual references about the Roman ships moving across the Indian Ocean.

According to Pliny, the Romans used to purchase Indian articles from the Arabs by about 77 A.D. in Southeast Arabian marts⁵. Periplus mentions about Greek ships along with abundant Arab ships in the port of Muziris⁶. Even for such a traffic the Romans had to keep the Arabs in good humour and the Romans were able to send their cargos to India only with the help of such Arab mariners which can be seen from the fact that the Romans were sending presents very often to the rulers of Arabia⁷. The Greeks did not enjoy much favour from Indians⁸. Aden was occupied by a colony of Egyptians and Greeks and the monsoon was discovered for Romans by Hippalus an Egyptian pilot. Because of this a large number of ships left for the East from Aden⁹. Ptolemy who wrote his treatise on geography in the middle of the second century A.D. did not mention the Greek or the Romans as sailing to the South Indian ports though he gives a detailed account of the Tamil country. On the other hand he mentions Mokha (Mocha) in Southern Arabia as the great emporium of trade for South Indian luxuries¹⁰.

Thus the Arabs had commercial intercourse with South India from the remote antiquity till the birth of Islam, unhampered by any power though with varying degree of intensity. There was no scope for Greeks and Romans to develop their maritime trade in the Indian Ocean except for a brief span in the middle of the first century A.D. when the Romans took Egypt. Even that may not be called direct and they had to depend upon the Arab mariners for guidance in their voyages and they purchased most of the Indian goods from Arab traders. Geographically the Greeks had no direct and short sea route to India and they had to cross the Arab countries by land to reach India.

Yavanas

The Sangam literature of the ancient Tamil country which is assigned to the second century A.D. speaks about a class of people called 'Yavanas'. The Yavanas are mentioned as traders, soldiers and artisans, in literary works Ahananuru, Mullaippattu, Nedunalvadai, Perumpanarruppadai, Manimekalai, Maduraikanchi, Perungathai, Seevagasinthamani and Silappadhikaram¹¹.

Scholars usually interpret the word 'Yavanas' as Greeks and Romans. Some scholars extend its application to all those who came from the west whether as invaders or as traders. It is also said that the word Yavana originates from Ionian, the people of the Ionian seas meaning the Greeks¹². It seems to be a very hard derivation for the purpose of identifying the Yavanas with the Greeks. Shahibul Qamus the well known lexicographer of the Arabic language defines the word Yavan as a place name in Yemen in South Arabia. Yunan is a place near Ballaback in Syria. The word Yavan

which stood as a place name must have been the stronghold of Yavanas. A Muslim tribe in the south west province of China was known as Yunnan. Chinese writers called the Khalifa of Bagdad as the King of Yunnan¹³. According to Ceylonese tradition people who frequented the silk route before the Arabs were known as Yonas, a sibling of Semitic ethnicity¹⁴. In some old Tamil poems, Yavanam is said to be one of the fifty six countries around India and it denotes Arabia¹⁵. The well known medical system of Arabia is "Unani" and it is prevalent in the same name even to this day. The horse trade of the Arabs in the early centuries of the Christian era is well known¹⁶. No Greek writer has mentioned that the Greeks and Romans exported horses to South India. The list of Periplus on the goods exported from Egypt does not include horses. On the other hand, Arabs were pioneers in horse trade and the Arab breed of horses were rated the best. The principal imports from the Arabs were cloth, gold, emerald, coral, silk, furs, swords, rose water, date and horses. Exports were precious stones, pearls, crystals, odiferous wood, cotton, silk, elephants, pepper, lead, camphor, cardamum, clove, nutmeg, orange, lemon and betel leaf.

The Roman trade with South India is revealed by the unearthing of Roman coins in many parts of south India. These coins range from the time of Augustus to Antonius (27 B.C. to 161 A.D). But is it correct to suppose that these coins came to India only as a result of direct trade contact with the Romans? The only inference that we can draw from these finds is that the south Indian articles passed on to Roman occupied territories. We know that for centuries, the Arabs were the middlemen of south seas and they used foreign gold coins as medium of exchange. It is also

known that from Pliny and Periplus that the Romans even in the prime of their power were not able to exert their influence over Indian trade which remained mostly in the hands of the Arabs. Hence there is good ground to suppose that the Roman coins found in south India were brought by the Arabs who planted their colonies here as early as the second century B.C. and not exclusively by Romans as commonly held. Further it may be noted that the Himayarite Arabs were found to have minted coins on the Roman model and these coins were the imitation of the Roman coins found in south India. It is therefore possible to assume that most of the Roman coins that were found in south India were perhaps minted at by the so Arabs themselves¹⁷. Some Tamil terms of South Indian articles of trade such as Arisi (rice) Inchi (ginger) pipeli (pepper) etc., were freely borrowed by the Greeks. But it will be seen that these words have their origin in the Arabic language since they were passed on through this medium.

From the foregoing discussions we can draw an inference that the word Yavana may denote the Arabs. The "Yavanacheri" (Yavana colony) of Perumkathai, the Tamil classic, can be said to be Agartharsida's Arab colonies of south India ¹⁸. These colonies were situated in the port towns. The Arabic form of port town is Bandar. (Mohamed Bandar, Shahidu Bandar) we find this word in Sangam Tamil literature to describe the ports like Kodumanal, as it was named and called by the Arabs ¹⁹. Hence we are lead to a safe conclusion that the Yavanas mentioned in Sangam literature are the Arabs.

Spread of Islam

The Arabs came as traders and not as conquerers and they accommodated themselves readily to the

condition of the localities where profitable trade could be pursued. They settled under the protection of the authorities and thus acquired a privileged position. The Arabs were versatile in many skills and knowledgeable in many spheres of learning - as traders, manufacturers, navigators, warriors, geographers and scholars. The navigator Ibn Majid who conducted Vasco da Gama from the east coast of Africa to Calicut, was a mariner, a merchant and a geographer who had compiled his own star atlas ²⁰. The Arab settlements in south India after the birth of Islam, were conglomerate of Persians, Arabs, and Abyssinians, all Islamised, speaking the Arab tongue and have for the sake of convenience been designated as Arabs who dominated the Indian region silk route ²¹.

The Arab merchants who came to the coastal region of peninsular India for the purpose of trade either contracted marriages or settled in their places of adoption and married local women temporarily or permanently. The Arab mariners must have practised a sort of muta marriage (temporary marriage with a woman for a stipulated period) while they were in the ports of south India. They usually married the local women and stayed with them for a few weeks or months. The advantages were two fold; they secured not only a wife but also a place for board and lodge. The children born out of such marriages belonged to the mother's stock and remained with the mothers ²². Thus the Arab colonies grew in the coastal towns.

J.B.P. More in his recent work on Tamil Muslims, while describing the origin of the early Tamil Muslims, has argued that there is a strong possibility that mixed Arab Indian descents were born to the Arabs and devadasis (dancing girls) of the Kanyakumari area and the like. This conclusion seems to be based on mere

assumption and is totally misconcieved. It is wrong on his part to classify the entire early Muslims population as the offsprings of the devadasis and needs a revision. It is correct to assume that the early Arab Muslim traders and Arab Muslim settlers could have contracted a rightful marriage like muta (temporary) marriages according to the the prevailing social customs in the region. More also argues that the Arab travellers of the tenth century, like Abuzeyed, Almasudi, Sulaiman Al Islaki, and Ibn Haukal have not mentioned the presence of Tamil Muslims. The Arabic inscription of A.H. 116/134 A.D. at Tiruchirappalli and the inscriptions of the ninth century at Kayalpattanam about endowments given to the mosques by Pandya rulers are conclusive evidence about the presence of Muslims in Tamil Nadu right from 8th century ²²⁽¹⁾.

The Arab seafarers redoubled their efforts at oceanic commerce after the birth of Islam in the 7th century A.D. These Islamised traders continuing the contacts of the pre-Islamic days settled in many ports of the west and east coasts of India. Thus large Muslim communities came into existence through the marriage of local women to Arab Muslim sailors and merchants and grew further through local conversions due to the efforts of these merchant missionaries. The women they consorted with and the people whom they converted belonged to different cultures but as Muslims they developed into a distinct community.

Owing to the links of the Arab merchants with Arabia, India and Ceylon, from very early times "the Mohamedan influence in Southern India and Ceylon dates back almost to the very inception of Islam"²³. The

companions of Prophet Mohamed, Thamimul Ansari (Rali) and Mohamed Ukassa (Rali) are said to have migrated to the Indian coasts as zealous missionaries and settled in the east coast. Their tombs are at Kovalam and PortoNovo respectively. The tombs of the other early missionaries such as that of Kassim (Wali) A.H. 4/624 A.D., and Abdul Rahiman (Wali) A.H. 8/628 A.D. are found in Kanyakumari and Thirunelveli Districts respectively. Islam slowly penetrated into the hinterland also. At the Chola capital Uraiyur, (modern Tiruchirappalli) the earliest mosque in Tamil Nadu can be seen. It is near the Kottai Railway Station in Tiruchirappalli town in the form of a small mandapam and the Arabic inscription here informs us that it was built by one Abdulla Bin Mohamed Anwar in A.H. 116/734 A.D. So Islam had got a firm footing on the Coromandel coast and its hinterland even in the early years of the Hijira²⁴.

The native Hindu rulers of south India like Rashtrakutas, Kakathyas, Hoysalas, Pandyas and Zamorines encouraged the settlements of the Muslim traders in their dominions offering special concessions and inducements because of the profitable foreign trade. Further, the Arabs were favoured because they supplied horses to the south Indian states, cavalry and men for manning their ships. In return the rulers assured safety to their merchandise and person. The Zamorine even gave them freedom to convert his subjects to Islam. He issued an edict that in order to get sufficient number of Muslims to man his navy, one or more male members of the Hindu fishermen should be brought up as Muslim²⁵. The Governments in the eastern coast also pursued similar enlightened policies towards the Arabs, and the port towns became welcome places to them²⁶.

Because of the Arab Muslim intercourse, the ports of the Coromandel commanded an extensive coastal and seaborne trade²⁷.

As the Arab Muslim merchant settlements multiplied in the course of time, they became an integral part of the population. They added a new pattern of culture and a new channel for intellectual commerce. The Arab merchants enjoyed the liberty of preaching their faith to the natives. In this with a dual role in mind they moved close to the oppressed classes to whom Islam symbolised emancipation, equality and prosperity. To the efforts of these merchant missionaries are to be ascribed the formation of the earliest community of Indian Muslims²⁸. Thus these traders cum preachers did much for the spread of Islam. They also brought with them Sufis, mystics and other religious teachers and they also peacefully preached the Islamic faith.

These missionaries flourished on the evils of the Hindu society. The rigid caste system inflicted inequality, injustice and inequity on people of low castes. They were untouchables, never to rise in economic and social status and often harassed by the high caste people. With conversion, they entered the brotherhood of Islam, free from bondage and harassment with opportunity for upliftment. Hence the preachings of Islam drew flocks of native people to its fold and thus the Muslim colonies on the coasts of south India swelled both by increase in the number of Arab immigrants in pursuit of trade and by the inter related process of inter marriage and conversion. Ram Gopal has rightly pointed out "As a knife goes into a melon without much effort, so did Islam, penetrate into south Indian castes"²⁹. Thus the Arab

migrants of the early centuries of the Hijira stand as the progenitors of the early Islamic community in south India.

The Muslim population which integrated in the local society was influenced by Tamil culture. The early name "Yavana" disappeared from common usage and the Muslims of the east coast were known better as Sonakar, or Jonakar (at in the same name Malabar also), Thurukkar or Thulukkar (in Coromandel). Epigraphs and literary works of the period from the 8-9th centuries have innumerable references to the community.

Sonakar

The early name of the Tamil Muslims was Sonakar or Sonakan or Jonakan. Thivakaranigandu (treatise on synonyms and meaning of Tamil words) of the 8th century calls the Yavanas as Sonakar. Pingalanthai Nigandu of a little later period also confirms this³⁰. The commentator Nachinarkiniyar of Pathupattu, the Sangam work, uses the word Sonagan wherever the word Yavana occurs³¹.

In Sinhalese tradition, the Yavanas were called Yonakas based on Pali Yonna, meaning Arabs. Later the word Yonakar is said to have corrupted in to Sonakar and the Sonakars were recognised as the descendants of the Arabs. So Yonakar and Sonakar were used to denote the same people. In Ceylon, Sonakar street is also known as Yonakar street or Yon street even to this day. The official records of Ceylon call the Muslims population in Ceylon as Sonakar. The earliest settlers among the Muslims of Ceylon were called Ceylon Sonakar and the recent South Indian Muslim migrants were known as

Indian Sonakar³². In Malayalam tradition also Yonaka stands for Sonaka. Sonakam in Tamil stands for Arabia.

An inscription of Raja Raja I in the Thanjavur Big Temple mentions a Muslim merchant by name Sonakan Samur Paramchothi³³. Another inscription of the same temple gives the name of an ornament as "Sonakan Siddukku"³⁴. (head ornament) An inscription of Maravarman Sundara Pandia (1238 - 1257) mentions a mosque as Sonaka Palli (Palli - Mosque)³⁵. We find ample references about Sonakars in Tamil literature³⁶. Some folk dances of Tamil Nadu were called as Sonaka Manjari and Sonaka Koothu. The Arabs, later the early Muslims, were considered to be foreigners and a tax was collected from them known as "Sonaka Vari"³⁸. Many other inscriptions also mention about Sonakars³⁹.

Thus the Muslim population of the Coromandel came to be called as Sonakars from eighth century. It is also interesting to note that the Mapillas of Malabar were known as Sonaka Mapillas. Francis while writing about the Muslims of South Arcot district says that the term Sonagan applied (to both Labbais and Marakkayars) in the district⁴⁰. The Marakkayars of the Ramanathapuram coast were known by the name Sonakar even in the last quarter of the nineteenth century according to a family document of the year 1881. (document No. 535/1881 registered at the Ramanathapuram Registration office).

The prevalence of the word Sonakar can be seen even today in the Muslim society of the Coromandel. Muslims who are engaged in fishing activities go by the name Sonakan in many coastal villages and their habitation settlement is called Sonkavadi. They are

considered to be in the lower strata of the present day Muslim society⁴¹. There are place names such as Sonakan Vilai (Thirunelveli district) Sonakan Patti (Ramanathapuram District). Kayalpattanam was also called as Sonagapattanam. There are Sonakan streets in Cuddalore, Tuticorin, Kayalpattanam, PortoNovo, Thondi, Mandapam, Vedalai and Kilakkarai⁴². The long association of the Sonakars with seafaring activities is suggested by the name of the fish like Sonakan Thirukkai (String ray) Sonakan Valai (*Trichiurus muticus*) and Sonagan kezthuthi (*Macronus punctatus*)⁴³.

Thulukkar

The Muslims of the Coromandel coast were also called as Thulukkar, along with Sonakar. Thulukkar, meaning the native of Turkey. Though all the Muslims who frequented the Coromandel coast had not come from Turkey, this term is very extensively and popularly applied to all the Muslims by the fellow Hindus. While the word Sonagan is very sparsely used, Tulukkan is in popular use even to this day⁴⁴. The women folk of Muslims are called as "Tulukkachchi".

Adiyarkkunallar the commentator of Silappadhikaram translates the word "Yavana" as Yavanathurukkar. Several Tamil works of later period also refer to the Muslims as Thulukkar⁴⁵. According to some scholars the word Thurushka came into use right from the second century A.D. since emperor Kanishka was Thurushka by ethnicity as mentioned in Kalhana's Rajatharangini⁴⁶. Sanskrit and Telugu literary works give the term Thurushka for Thurukkar. The prasasthis of Vijayanagar kings include titles like Thulukka moham thavirthan, Thulukka thalavipadan etc., (i.e., those who defeated Muslims⁴⁷). The Sultanate of Madurai (in 14th

century) was called Thulukkaniam and Thulukka avanam⁴⁶. Thulukkar settlements were called Thulukkanam⁴⁹.

Thulukkar and Thulukkan are words very well rooted in the Tamil society to call the Muslims and this influence can be seen in all the spheres of life. Thulukkappoo (flower) Thulukkasamanthi (African Merigold) Thulukkamalligai, Thulukkappasali (Besella green) Thulukkappayaru (Kidney Bean) Thulukka Kathazhai are a few words to cite. There are place names like Thulukkanpatti (Virudunagar Taluk) Thulukkan-kulam (Aruppukkottai Taluk) Thulukkankurichi (Mudukulathur Taluk) Thulukka Muthu (Avinasi Taluk), Thulukkathandalam (Kanchipuram Taluk).

Anjuvannam

The early Muslims settled on the coastal towns functioned as a guild for themselves, like the merchant guilds of the Hindus, like Ainoorruvar, and Valanjar. The name Anjuvannam found in some copper plates and inscriptions of the 12-13th centuries A.D. along with the names of other merchant guilds, is considered to be the merchant guild of the Muslims. Anjuman is a Persian word meaning assembly or congregation. An old mosque in Thenkasi (Thirunelveli Dt.) is called "Anjuvannam Pallivasal" (mosque) even to this day. Scholars like Burnel believed it to be the guild of the Jews or Christians. But we find the name Anjuvannam in the earliest Islamic Tamil work Palsandamalai (15th century A.D.) which makes it clear that it denotes the Muslim merchant guild. Such merchant guilds functioned from Kottayam, Thirhandathanapuram and Nagapattanam. So the Muslim merchants of the early

settlements functioned as a guild for the promotion of their trading activities ⁵⁰.

The Social Segments of the Muslims of the Coromandel

The Muslims of the Coromandel coast were socially organised into segments or sub-divisions. They are Rawthar, Labbai, Marakkayar and Deccani. Mattison Mines includes Kayalar in this list ⁵¹. It is to be noted that the Marakkayars who migrated from Kayalpattanam area are called as Kayalar in other places for easy recognition. It is essentially a territorial identification. When compared with the meaning and titles of other sub divisions, the Kayalar sub-division seems to be superfluous. In the Census Report of 1891 of the Madras Presidency some more peculiar sub divisions among the Muslims are also given such as Puliankudiyar, Elayankudiyar, Musiriar, Vaigaikaraiyar, all denoting the place names from where they hail ⁵². These territorial identification cannot be construed as social segment since such territorial identification is very common even among the Hindu castes and tribes. Hence Mattison Mine's inclusion of the Kayalar as social segment of the Muslims of Tamil Nadu needs correction.

The social segments of the Muslims such as Rawthar, Labbai, Marakkayar and Deccani cannot be called as castes nor are they classes. (Caste is a disinctive feature of Hinduism and has no place in Islam). They are not hierarchically ranked like castes as all sub divisions are equal. But it is extremely difficult to distinguish one from another as they merge with each other. Despite distinctions of the sub divisions or segments the profession of Islam is a single distinctive religion to all of them. The names of these

sub divisions are rather occupational titles. It is behaviourally difficult to distinguish the sub divisions on the basis of occupational distinctions. The facts relating to their origin indicate their occupational factors⁵³. The above social segments have been in vogue for a very long time. These occupational titles are intermingled with one another. For example, the Labbai boatmen call themselves Marakkayars⁵⁴. Each segment or sub division has a very fascinating derivation about the origin of the name. An attempt is made here to trace the etymology and sequence of these occupational titles of the Coromandel Muslims.

Rawthar

A segment (sub division) of the Tamil speaking Muslim society is being called as Rawthar because of their association with horse trade, horse riding and training.

The flourishing horse trade between Arabia and the east coast is referred to in Sangam literature ⁵⁵. During the medieval ages, the ports at Kilakkarai, Devipattanam and Kayalpattanam were busy centres of trade in horses. Muslim traders brought the horses in their ships. A painting at Thirupudaimarudur temple, a sculpture at Thirukunrakudi (both in Thirunelveli district) depict ships ladden with horses with Muslim sailors. Marcopolo, Ibn Batuta, Wassaf and Rashiduddin give detailed accounts of the horse trade in the Coromandel ports. The traders on horse trade were called "Kudirai Chettis" in inscriptions⁵⁶, irrespective of their religion.

Rawthar is generally stood for horsemen ⁵⁷. Even Hindu rulers and soldiers were adorned with the title

Rawthar. The Sanskritised form of horseman is "Rahootha" as found in epigraphs⁵⁸. Some of the Telugu rulers bore the title Rahootha Rayan⁵⁹. One of the titles of Raja Raja was Rahoothamindan⁶⁰. In an inscription of 1510 the name of one of the rulers of the Kongu country is given as Paravatha Rawthar⁶¹. Some mirasdars in Thanjavur district in the 17-18th centuries had the title Rawthar and they are said to be expert horse riders⁶². Some of the Telugu speaking people in Tamil Nadu are called "Ravuth" which is considered to be a subcaste of the Baliya community. It is also the title of some Kannadigas⁶³. These people might be the descendants of the soldiers employed in the military of Vijayanagar as horsemen or associated with horse riding or trade. It is interesting to note that the women folk of the Ravuth families follow some customs similar to that of Rawthar (Muslim) women.

The well known legend of the Saivite Saint Manikkavasagar of the eighth century A.D. is connected with the purchase of horses for the Pandya king. In this legend Lord Siva appear in disguise as a horseman to protect Manikkavasagar is called Rawthar⁶⁴. Lord Muruga is praised as Rawthar by saint Arunagiri⁶⁵. Thus the term Rawthar was also being used as a title of respect and honour.

Anyhow, "Rabithu" in Arabic, "Ravuth" in Telugu, "Rawthar" in Tamil, "Rahootha" in Sanskrit - all terms are titles connected with horse traders, cavalry soliders, horse riding or horse training and this title was applied to all those who were connected with these activities; later it came to be retained by a section of Tamil speaking Muslims alone. Thurston says that it was the title of Jonaga Muslims. When the horse trade was brisk, some

of the Arabs and Persians might have been employed in the service of the local rulers to train the horses and for their upkeep. Those who stayed in the Coromandel coast and the hinterland courts of the rulers, chieftains and Zamindars for this purpose, might have contracted matrimonial alliances with native women and their descendants came to be called as Ravuthar or Rawthar. Mattison Mine's averment that "the Rawthar and Labbai do not claim any Arab ancestry", is not correct⁶⁶.

Though the present day Rawthar Muslims are without horses or activities connected with it, the title Rawthar stayed with them and was faithfully followed to this day. There are many place names like Rawtharnatham (Kallakurichi Taluk), Rawthanpatti (Kulithalai Taluk), Rawthan Vayal (Pudukkottai District), Rawthanpalayam (Thirunelveli Taluk). These places might have been their early settlements or their stronghold. The Rawthars remember their ancient trade and heroic valour in their marriage ceremonies and the bridegroom is conducted in procession on a horse. But this practice is fast disappearing.

At present there are many wealthy Rawthar Muslims engaged in different trades in the coastal towns and in the hinterland.

Labbai

Labbai is another general term used to denote the Tamil speaking Muslims. The Census Report of 1881, says that "the Labbais are known as Coromandel Moplas, with a slight admixture of Arab blood and native converts, they are thrifty, industrious and enterprising, plucky mariners and expert traders and they are distinct from Marakkayars"⁶⁷. They are also called merchant

Mohamedans. The census report of 1891 describes them as a mixed class of people consisting partly of compulsory converts to Islam made by the early Muslim invaders and Tippu Sultan⁶⁸. It is a fact that the vast majority of Indian Muslims were converts. It is said that force was used on several occasions but the existing historical evidences do not enable us to estimate either the scale or the effectiveness of such conversions⁶⁹. The myth that Islam was spread by force with sword in one hand and the Quran on the other has no substance with regard to Coromandel coast (Tamil Nadu). Here the propagation of Islam was the achievement of peaceful traders and pious sufi missionaries.

The word Labbai seems to be of recent origin, for, in the Tamil Lexicon this segment of the Muslims is denoted as Sonagan. The Labbais were textile and mat weavers in the inland, they were ship crew, and traders in marine products and expert divers of pearl and chank in the coastal belt. Even at present, both Labbai men and women in some areas earn their living by weaving korai mat. The Manual of Administration of the Madras Presidency points out "The Lubbys are exceedingly industrious and enterprising in their habits and pursuits there being no trade or calling in which they do not succeed. They are fishermen and boatmen. They are lapidaries, weavers, dyers, jewellers, bazaarmen, boatmakers, shop owners and merchants. Tamil is their mother tongue. In religion they are orthodox Muslims. Thurston says that their title is Rawthar and Marakkayar"⁷⁰. But the Marakkayars consider themselves better than Labbais.

Col. Wilks derives the word Labbai from Arabic "Labbaik" (here I am) in the sense of a servant or a slave⁷¹.

However, in the strict Islamic sense, the term denotes a religious teacher or a priest or khazi and it accords with the Hebrew word "Levai" meaning, a priest. The Labbai-priests, mullas and khazis are popularly known among the Muslims of Tamil Nadu as Levai. It is correct to infer the term in this sense. Labbai is a unique term in Tamil Nadu not met within any other part of India. The religious officiants at Comodia, Malaysia and Indonesian are also called as Labbai⁷². However, in due course of time, this term stayed as the title of a subdivision of Tamil speaking Muslims alone on the Coromandel region.

But the term Labbai is very liberally used by European writers to denote most of the Muslims engaged in maritime activities on the Coromandel coast. Prosperous traders and shipowners among the Marakkayars are also mentioned as Labbais in the European trading Company records, as will be described in detail in the subsequent chapters.

"Labbai" is considered to be a class name for the purpose of educational and job concessions in Tamil Nadu at present.

Marakkayar

The Marakkayars are the dominant segment of Muslims in the coastal towns of the Coromandel in numerical strength and wealth. Their settlements are essentially urban in character. Most of the Marakkayars were associated with seafaring and maritime activities. The European Company records contain a lot of information about them.

The origin and meaning of the term Marakkayar is obscure and confused because scholars associate it indiscriminately with other sub divisions of the Muslims. Thurston the authority on Castes and Tribes of Southern India has contradicted himself while giving definitions of various sub divisions of Muslims in Tamilnadu "Ravuthar or Rawthar" according to him "is a title used by Labbai and Marakkayars"⁷³. In the account on Labbai he says that "their titles are Marakkayar (Marakkalam) and Rawthar" (a horsemen)⁷⁴. The Gazetteer of Ramanathapuram points out that the Labbais are known as Marakkayars and Rawthars⁷⁵. The term has been written as Maraikkayar, Marikkayar, Mariccan, Marikkar, Marakkar etc.,

Different scholars derive the word Marakkayar from different languages and give various interpretations. Francis derives the word Marakkayar from Arabic "Markab". The story goes that when the first batch of Muslim migrants landed ashore they were naturally asked who they were and whence they came. In answer, they pointed their boat and pronounced the word "Markab" and they in consequence came to be known to the Hindus as Marakkayars or the people of Markab⁷⁶. We are not sure how the word Markab could corrupt as Marakkayar. The forefathers of other Muslim sub divisions also came in boats or Marakkalams or Markab. Quadir Hussain Khan says the word should be taken from the Arabic word Markab or Tamil word Marakkalam⁷⁷.

Thurston again says "there is some confusion concerning the exact application of the name Jonagan but I gather that it is applied to sea fishermen and

boatmen while prosperous traders are called Marakkayars⁷⁸. The Glossary of Madras the Presidency traces the word Marakkar, to the Malayalam word, Marakkalam, Mara=boat + Kar the plural termination showing possession⁷⁹. Some ingenious Marakkayars trace the term, to Egyptian Quohira or Cairo and the Tamil word "Marai" and attribute it to their knowledge of the Quran and Egyptian origin-Maraikkahiriyor. Plausible as both these derivations are, they indicate the desire of the Marakkayars to rise themselves in popular estimation. As their ancestors did not come from Cairo nor could their learning have been so well known among the Tamils as to win for them the name with such a religious significance⁸⁰.

Strange and funny derivations of the term from the shape of the cap of Muslims like Marakkal, a device to measure grain and from their assumption that they were so rich that they measured their wealth in marakkal, is also given⁸¹. To some, Marakkayars it is a corruption of Moroccar, or Moraccoyar, i.e., settlers from Morocco. To Logon, the term Marakkar is an abbreviation of Margakaran (follower of law) and it was applied as a title to persons of Christianity and Islam. Another common and popular derivation in Tamil is from **Marakkala Rayar** the leader or owner or chieftain of marakkalam or boat (Marakkala + Rayar = Marakkalarayar) like other Araiyaar chieftains like Vanatharaiyaar, Vallatharaiyaar, Kalingatharaiyaar⁸². Most of the writers follow this derivation and, say that the Marakkayars (Muslims) were the lords of **marakkalam**. Almost all the writers on Tamil Muslims have used this term and derivation.

Noboru Karashima while citing the word Marakkalanayan found in a Tamil inscription of the eleventh century in Sumatra (now in the Jakarta museum) argues that the word seems to relate to the term Marakkayar used to denote the seafaring Muslim merchants of the Tamil Nadu and Kerala coasts in later periods⁸³. Some other writers also have referred to this inscription and said that the term marakkalanayan is the old form of the term Marakkayar the ship owning Muslims⁸⁴. But the term nayan or nayakan will generally mean leader, captain or owner. So, marakkalanayan will denote a ship owner, ship captain or a ship commander. Kambaramayanam calls Guhan as the leader or owner of a thousand boats. Thirukkaranapuram, the Islamic Tamil literature of nineteenth century mentions the owner of a ship as Marakkalarayan. The word Marakkalanayan, Marakkalanayakan, Marakkalarayan etc., are general terms which may denote seafaring people including the Muslims as pointed out by the above scholar⁸⁵ but the proper etymology of the term Marakkayar has to be traced elsewhere.

The present day Marakkayars consider a copper plate believed to have been granted by Jayaveera Rajaguru Nayani, during the ninth century, A.D., as their birth certificate, since the word "Marakkalarayar" appears in that plate, as the title conferred upon Mohamed Khalji, the leader of the fugitives from Kaitrun (Cairo) who settled at Kaithrunpattanam or Kayalpattanam⁸⁶. On this basis, perhaps, the Marakkayars claim their descent from Egypt. The historicity and authenticity of this copper plate is doubtful⁸⁷.

Khan Sahib Mohideen Kadarsha Marakkayar of Tuticorin Marakkayar Mahal, had circulated a pamphlet on 7.1.1919, purportedly to be the true copy of the above copper plate. According to the copper plate, fearing the tyranny of the Arab rulers of Misru, some 228 members, men and women and slaves under the leadership of one Mohamed Khalji sailed in a ship and reached Sembinadu ruled by Abirama Adivera Raja Jayaveera Rajaguru Nayani. Khalji appealed to the ruler for a copper plate grant, which was issued. Since the settlers migrated from Kaitrun, the ruler named the place of their settlement as Kaitrunpattanam in the copper plate and the settlers were given the name Marakkalarayar, since they came in a Marakkalam. The date of the copper plate is given as Keelaga, 798. The new settlers were conferred liberal land grants, tax concessions and rights in the pearl fishery in the region.

According to the explanatory note for the copper plate as given in the pamphlet, the geneology of the families of the settlers is traced to those of Prophet Mohamed and the Khaliphs Abubakkar, Umar Farook and Uduman. Jayaveera Raja Guru is identified as the Chola who ruled from Madurai as the 74th Pandya king. The terms Marakkayar and Ravuthar are derived from Marakkalarayar and Ranuvayukthar respectively. Kaitrunpattanam is said to be the present Kayalpattanam. The date has been calculated as April 875 A.D. We have no information about the whereabouts of the original copper plate. The Marakkayars and Rawthars quote this copper plate in discussions about their origin and antiquity. (Text given in the annexure).

Even a superficial scrutiny of the text of the copper plate exposes several anachronisms, inaccuracies and palaeographical errors. In the entire genealogy of the Pandyas or Cholas there is no reference to any Chola or Pandya king by the name Jayaveera Raja Garu, which denotes a Telugu chieftain. The date 875 AD is untenable. There is no possibility of any part of Tamil Nadu being ruled by a Telugu chieftain more or less from Madurai in the ninth century A.D., The name of the ruler and the terms like Nayakkar and Thalavai, Urkkaval, Nattukkaval, Palayakkaval and Palayathar are palaeographic anachronisms and are inconsistent with the antiquity claimed for the copper plate. If at all this copper plate is a genuine one, it should be assigned to the period of Nayak rule and can not be dated before the sixteenth century ⁸⁸.

The Marakkayars quote this copper plate as their birth certificate and also for claiming the antiquity of their origin, titles and higher status among the fellow Muslims and also political validation for their claims and their rights in maritime activities in this soil. It is a fact that among the Muslims of Coromandel the population of Marakkayars was much higher. They were also economically strong. Socialologically, a segment or a subsegment of a particular group or community which was numerically and economically strong, will naturally project their status by associating some myths and eulogy to justify their status in the society and thereby establishing their rights in every field of human activity.

In a similar way this copper plate might have been invented by the Marakkayars in a period when their claims were in question. According to the copper plate, they claim a direct line of descent from the Prophet

Mohamed and the first four Khaliphas. No doubt this is to enhance their ethnological superiority over other segments in Islamic society. They have tried to quote the political recognition given to them by a ruler of the territory. They also trace the term Marakkayar from the ninth century. Above all the copper plate contemplates their professional right in pearl fishing, salt manufacture etc., as granted by the ruler of the territory from a very long time. Thus a critical analysis of this copper plate will go to show the intention of the Marakkayars to claim a higher status over the other segments, besides, establishing their professional rights in maritime activities which was under threat after the advent of the Europeans. Hence this copper plate can be said to be a sociological (folk) charter than a historical document and it is unhistorical to assign an early date as claimed.

The Sinhalese called the Arab traders as "Marakkala Mininsu" meaning a mariner or a boat man⁸⁹. Marakkala Mininsu is a corruption of Markar Mininsu. In the Ceylonese coast the prosperous Malabar (Sonagars) were called Marakkar. In the 15-16th centuries all the prosperous Sonaga Malabar were known under the title Markar. Markar came to be spelt as Marakar, Marikar and Maricar at later periods. In the old family documents of the Muslims of Ceylon, their ancestors are noted as only Marican (not Maracar). But this term is not in use in Ceylon at present⁹⁰. It is interesting to note that at present many of the Marakkayars of the Karaikkal region style themselves only as "Marikan".

We have seen that the Malabar were called in Ceylon as Marakars and it is commonly held to denote the people from Malabar, the Malayalam speaking region

or west coast of peninsular India. But linguistic studies reveal a very interesting information on this point that the Malabarīs are none else than the Tamil speaking Sonagars. Two books, *Thambiran Vanakkam* (1578) and *Adiyar Vanakkam* (1586) were printed and published in Kottayam. It was said to have been printed in Malabari language and the script was believed to be in Malayalam. But when the originals were made available recently, it was found to have been printed in the Tamil and that the script is mentioned in the book itself as Malabari. With this we come to know that Tamil language was also called Malabari and the Tamils as Malabarīs from the sixteenth century⁹¹. Ananda Rangapillai the famous Dubash of Duplex, at Pondicherry was called as, "les cheif des Malabarīs", (the chief of Tamils) by the French and the natives⁹². So the Malabarīs who bore the title Markar, later Marakar, are the Coromandel Muslims.

From the indigenous records available at our disposal at present, the authentic reference to the word Marakkayar is found only in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. The early reference to the name Marakkayar is found in the sixteenth century Islamic Tamil literary work, *Mihuraj Malai*⁹³. It is the Portuguese records of the sixteenth century which mention very often the title of some prominent Muslim shipowners and maritime traders as "Maracar". It is variously written in those records, as Marccar, Marcar, Mercar, Merquar, Marcoy, Markar and Marakar. The first reference to this term in the Portuguese record is found in the year 1504.

When the Portuguese arrived on the Malabar coast, they found here some people similar to their old enemies, the Muslim (Moor) conquerors of Spain.

The Portuguese called them Moors, as named by the Spanish chronicles which is synonymous with Arabs or Saracens⁹⁴. In general the Muslims were known only as Moors to the Portuguese⁹⁵. Their records also mention the Muslims only as "Moors". The other early European records too mention the Muslims of the east coast as Coromandel Moors⁹⁶. But the prosperous and influential shipowners and maritime traders were referred to with the title "Marcar" in the early Portuguese records, such as Ismale Merquar (1504)⁹⁷. Cherina Marcar (1512)⁹⁸ Mamale mercar (1512)⁹⁹. Pate Mercar (1557)¹⁰⁰. Mouro Mayane Mercar (1553)¹⁰¹ and Cunhale Mercare. These references lead us to a satisfactory clue about the etymology of the term Marakkayar.

The Muslims of the west coast who were engaged in the seafaring activities were generally called as "Marakan" in Malayalam, meaning a sailor, steerman, a commander, a rank among the fishermen and Mapillas and a title given to the Mapillas¹⁰². Dalgoda says that the Maracar and Marcar (similar to Ceylonese usage) originates from Marakan, meaning a ship commander and the title of the Muslims of Malabar¹⁰³. **The Tamil Lexicon traces the word Marakkayar from the root word "Marakan" in Malayalam**¹⁰⁴. The Palli fishermen of the Telugu country are called as Marakkalu which is equivalent to the term Marakan¹⁰⁵. It will be seen that the early Sonaga Muslims who were active in seafaring activities in the west coast were called as Marakan and the prosperous among them alone were called with respect as "Maracar" or Marakar (Maracan - singular, Maracar - honorific plural). The Portuguese used this plural honorific form to address the leading Muslim traders and ship owners, as recorded in their early

records. Since the Tamil Muslims - also known as the Malabaris - were having free trade contact with the west coast, the title Marakar would have been applied to them also. According to Mapilla tradition, the Marakkayars were originally the maritime merchants of Cochin. The Diaries of the Malabar Second Commission (1789) and the Matilakam records contain instances where the title Marakkar was conferred on distinguished Mapillas by the rulers as late as the 18th century¹⁰⁶. The boat owning Muslims of Cochin are still called as Marakar and their women as Marakkathi¹⁰⁷. Thus in the long course of time, only the term Marakan (from Malayalam) came to be spelt as Marakar, Maricar, Marican, Maraikkayar, Marakkalarayar and Marakkayar, which in our view, seems to be the correct etymological derivation.

It was the practice to call the most prosperous traders among the Jonagan or Sonagan sea fishermen and boatmen as Maracar. In fact those in the other segments who had touched great heights in wealth and status aspired for the badge of Maracar or Marakkayar and got admitted into the Marakkayar fold. Indeed the title was conferred on the chosen few and not on all and sundry. Hence the Marakkayars represented the cream, the elite of all the subdivisions or segments in the areas where they predominate. But in the course of time the term was more generously applied to all the coastal Muslims, irrespective of their social standing.

Among the Marakkayars of the Coromandel Coast, we find some more sub-groupings with titles like Thandaiyar, Nagudha, Malumi, Sukkani etc., They suffix these appellations also with their names (like Marakkayar). For example, Ismail Marakkayar,

Abdulkadar Nakhuda, Abubakar Malumi, Farook Thandaiyar or Thandel, Sulaiman Sukkani etc., All these titles are connected with seafaring and shipping occupation. Ain - i - Akbari of Abdul Fazal gives the following classes of personnel in the management of the ships. Nakhuda or Nakhoda: - the owner or captain of the ship who fixes the course of the ship. Maulim or Malumi: - the navigator, he must be acquainted with the depth or shallowness of the sea, know astronomy and guide the direction of the ship. Tundel (Thandal, Thandel, Thandayar): - the chief sailor or buffer, Shirang: - for superintending and landing the ship, the yardmaster, Bandari:- Accountant, Sukkanger or Sukkani: - helmsman who steers the ship according to the advice of the malumi; Panjari: - who looks out from the top of the mast, gives notice when sea, land ship or storm are sighted. Gumti, Toppaeles, Kharuva are other common sailors or Kalasis¹⁰⁸. Almost all these sub titles can be seen among the Muslims of the coastal towns who call themselves Marakkayars. There are Malumiar and Sherang streets in Nagore and other places.

A section of Muslim Marakkayars engaged in fishing activities are also known as Sammatis. The vessel used for fishing is called Samban and its captain Sambanoti, which had corrupted to Sammatti. The Marakkayar fisherman of Ramanathapuram coast are also called by the title Sammati. They are known as Sammankarar in Ceylon ¹⁰⁹.

There are also some other interesting occupational titles among the Muslims of the Coromandel. Kodikkalkaran (betal vein growers), Achukkatti (makers of weaving device), Panju Katti

(cotton labourers), Kuthiraikatti Rawthar (Horsemen), Yanaikatti Rawthar (Elephant mahout).

Thus the Muslims of the Coromandel coast (Tamil Nadu) are divisible into main sub division (social segments) like Marakkayars, Rawthar and Labbai and these subdivisions are not caste names but only titles, which are occupation oriented. There is no religious bar for intermarriage and interdining among these subdivisions and segments. The only difference is that Marakkayars are Shafis and Labbais and Rawthars are Hanafis of the Sunnite school of Islam sect.

The Muslims of the present generation do not affix their age old titles and appellations like Rawthar, Labbai and Marakkayar with their names, except for limited purposes like marriage and educational and job concessions. The majority of the Marakayar businessmen who are affluent in the society suffix "Sahib" with their names instead of Marakkayar. Following their ancient traditions, the Marakkayars of Kayalpattanam, Kilakkarai, Devipattanam, Nagapattanam, Adirampattanam and other coastal towns own business concerns in various countries.

Cholias

The Records of the Dutch, English and Danish trading companies refer to the Coromandel Muslims as Chulias, Cholias or Choolias in general. Almost all the travellers in medieval and modern India call the Muslims of the Coromandel as Chuliars or Chooliars ¹¹⁰. The term Cholia was originally a territorial name, meaning an inhabitant of Chola Country ¹¹¹. It applied to the people of all castes and religions. But in due course of

time, the Muslims alone were called by this term in Ceylon, Burma and the Southeast Asian countries, since mostly Muslims went to these countries for trade. There are Cholia streets in Singapore and Burma. There are Cholia Muslim Associations in Burma, Malaya and Singapore¹¹². There is Cholia mosque at Culcutta, which was constructed by the maritime muslim traders of Kilakkarai.

Deccanis

The Deccanis or Dakhnis or Pattanis are the Urudu speaking people in the hinterland of the Tamil country.

After the invasion of India by Mohamed Bin Kasim in 712 A.D., the families of Gazini, the Slaves, Khilji, Tuglaque and Mughal dynasties and the Deccani Sultans established their authority and ruled India from twelfth century A.D. Subsequent to the invasion of Malik Kafur in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, Muslim rule extended beyond the Vindhya and the soldiers of the Muslim army and administrators had to stay in the Carnatic region for political purposes. Their descendants came to be called as Dekkinis (Deccanis = From Deccan) and Pattani (from Pathan) by the fellow Muslims. Their mother tongue was Urudu. Urudu language is the combination of Arabic, Persian and Hindustani languages, which was in use among the soldiers of the Muslim army and later became an independent language. The Deccanis also learnt Tamil which they call "Arvi".

After the decay of the Sultanates of Deccan, there was a large scale migration of these people to the Arcot subedari. They got the patronage of the Nawabs. Their

descendants settled in North Arcot, South Arcot, Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai and Ramanathapuram districts. After the fall of the Nawabs of Arcot they resorted to various trades and professions such as tannery, cigar making, manufacture of decorative wares and ornamental cloth.

The major Muslim communities such as Marakkayar, Labbai and Rawthar are the descendants of the Arabs, where as the Deccanis are of Turkish or Mangoloid descent. All of them are orthodox Sunnites and profess Hanafi faith, and part of the present day minority Muslim community. They are also declared as educationally backward in Tamil Nadu ¹¹³.

Notes and References

1. Susan Bayly, *op.cit.* pp. 73-74.
2. *ibid.* pp.77-78; James Hornel, *Sacred Chank*, *op.cit.* pp.3-5
3. *Old Testament - Genesis - chap.37 - verse-25; Encyclopaedia Britanica* (eleventh Edn.) Vol II, p. 264; K.A., Nilakanta Sastri, *Foreign Notices of South India* (Madras 1939) p.20; Sulaiman Nadvi, "Commercial relation of India with Arabia", *Islamic culture*, April 1933.,p. 281-309; *Ibid.* vol. VIII 1934, p. 176;
4. P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar, *The History of Tamils*, p.12; George W. Spancer, *The Politics of Expansion, the Chola Conquest of Srilanka and Srivijaya* (Madras, 1983) p.76
5. Pliny, 12 - 34
6. Schoff, *Periplus of Erythrian Seas* (New York, 1912), p.44
7. Periplus, 80-82; K.A. Nilakanta Sastri *op.cit.* p.52
8. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri *op.cit.* p.128
9. *ibid.* pp. 6-7
10. P.K. Hitti, *The History of Arabs*, p. 58
11. *Ahananuru* 148; *Mullaipattu* 54-61; *Nedunalvadai* 101; *Perumpanarrupadai* 315-16; *Manimekalai* 19; 108; *Maduraikanchi* 321-323; *Perunkathai*: Yuki Potharavu 167-178, Magathakandam, Padumpathi. Potharavu 48, Magathakandam, Purathodukkiathu 3-8, 1:47; 175-177, 1:37;76 Vathavakandam Pichodanan 59-70, Vathavakandam, Mugavezhuthukadai 59-60; *Seevakasinthamani*; Gunamalaiyar Ilambakam 296:1147, Namagal Ilambakam 85:114, Gandarva thathaiyar Ilabakam 6:557; *Silappadhikaram* XIV 62-77, V, 7-63; Indiravizhakadhai, 8-10, Urkan Khadhai 66-67.
12. V.Kanakasabai Pillai, *Tamils 1800 years ago*, (1904) p. 12; M.M. Uwaise and P.M. Ajmalkhan, *Islamia, Thamizh Ilakkia Varalaru*, (Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai

- 1986) I pp. 10-12; M.Abdul Rahi, "Islam in Nagapattanam" and also in many other Tamil works.
13. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *op.cit.* p. 17
 14. *Mahavamsa*, W. Geiger, London, PTS 1950 Ch. X.V. 90
 15. M.R.M. Abdul Rahim, *Islamia Kalai Kalanchiyam*, (Madras) III pp. 788-89
 16. *Pattinappalai*, 185 - 186
 17. P.K. Hitti, pp. 56-58; E.J. Rapsan, *Indian coins* (1897) plate 6: JRAS, 1906, p. 610
 18. Elphinstone, *The History of India*, (London, 1857), I pp. 189-196.
 19. *Pathitruppathu* 55, 4, 51; 15-16, 67: 1-2; 74:5-6
 20. W.H. Moreland, *India at The Death of Akbar* (Delhi, 1989) pp.186-187; K.N. Bhill "Pilot Ibn Majid - who showed Vasco da Gama the Sea route to India in 1498", *History of Traditional Navigation* (ed) G.Victor Rajamanicam and Y.Subbarayalu, (Thanjavur, 1988), pp. 141-148
 21. A.M. Azeez, "Some Aspects of Muslim Society of Ceylon with Special Reference to Eighteen Eighty", Proceedings of the first international conference seminar of Tamil studies, Kulalampur, 1966, Vol. I.pp. 746-61.
 22. W. Robertson Smith, *Kinship and marriage in early Arabia* (1907) pp. 77-79
 - 22 (i) J.B.P. More, *Muslim identity print culture and Dravidian factor in Tamil nadu*, (orient and longman New Delhi 2004) pp.4 to 8
 23. Victor S.D. `Souza, "Status Group Among the Mapillas on the South Western Coast of India", *Caste and social stranification Among the Muslim of India* (ed) Imtiaz Ahamed, (New Delhi, 1978) p. 41

24. K.P.S. Hameed, Second Islamic Tamil literary, conference Souvenir, Tiruchy, 1973, pp. 51-56, S.M. Kamal, *Islamum Thamilagamum* (Madras, 1989) pp. 14-16; J.M. sali, *Thamilagathu Dargakkal* (Madras 1981) p.152, J. Rajamohamed "Islamic vestiges and culture in the history of Tiruchirappalli", paper presented in the Government Museum inauguration Seminar Tiruchirappalli - 1984; Susan Bayly p. 87, and 109; Tayka Shu Ayb Alim, *Arabic Arvi and Persian in Sarandib and Tamil Nadu*, (Madras, 1993) p. 14.
25. K.V. Krishna Iyer, *A short history of Kerala*, (Ernakulam, 1966) p.64; A. Sridhara Menon, *Kerala History and it's makers*, (Kottayam, 1987) W.H. Moreland, op.cit. pp.245-246, Appadurai, *Economic condition of Southern India*, II, p.564.
26. S. Krishnawamy Iyengar, op.cit. p.70
27. S. Maqbul Ahamed, *Indo Arab Relations* (New Delhi 1978) p. 80
28. A.B.M. Habibullah, *The Foundations of Muslim rule in India* (Allahabad, 1967) p.1
29. Ram Gopal, *A political History of Indian Muslims*, (New Delhi, 1988) p.2
30. *Thivakaranigandu*, p.31; *Pingalandai Nigandu*, p.131
31. *Pathupattu*, U.V. Swaminatha Iyer edition, p.337
32. M.M. Uwais and P.M. Ajmalkhan, pp.9-10; I.L.M. *Abdul Azeez, Ilankai Sonakar Ina Varalaru*, (Colombo, 1907) pp. 13-14
33. *South Indian Inscription*, Vol.II pp.460, 489, 495-96
34. *ibid* II to 93
35. *South Indian Inscription*, VIII p.402; A.R.E. 116 of 1903
36. *Kambaramayanam*, Sundarakandam 112.:207; Ottakkoothar's *Kulothunga Cholan Pillai Tamil*: 77;

- Thiruvilaiyadal Puranam*, (ed) U.V. Swaminatha Iyer, (1972) p.206; *Thirukkurala Kuravanchi*; *Thirumalai Raghunatha Sethupathi Vannam*
37. M.M. Uwaise and Ajmalkhan, op.cit. 51
 38. A.R.E., 172 of 1903
 39. ibid. 132; 149, 154, 156, of 1894
 40. W. Francis, op.cit. 56-58
 41. Particulars collected in field studies in Thanjavur and Ramanathapuram districts.
 42. *Tamilian Antiquary* I, p.86; W. Francis op. cit. p.299; M.M. Uwais and Ajamalkhan op.cit. 52; FSG Thirunelveli District Record Vol. 3570/1809, pp.5-6.
 43. *Tamil Lexicon*, (1932) p.3395; M.Abdul Rahim., *Islam in Nagapattanam*.
 44. *Yazhpana Marippayagarathi*, Chandrasekara Pulavar, American Mission press, (Jeffna 1842); *Koyilozhugu* p.21
 45. *Kambaramayanam* 14:13:902; *Kalingathuparani* - 333; *Kulothugacholan Pillai Tamil*: 52
 46. N. Akmal Ayyubi, *Some Aspects of Islamic Turkish Culture*, (Aligarh, 1985) pp. 103-104.
 47. *Inscriptions of Pudukkottai state*, No. 669, 670, 760, 763; *South Indian Inscriptions*, III pt. V.p.130: A.R.E. 642 of 1902; *South Indian Temple Inscriptions*, 309-D-249-1
 48. *Madurai Thalavaralaru*, (Madurai Tamil Sangam), p.2. A.R.E. 587 of 1902; *Koyilozhugu* p.138
 49. *Thirukkurala Kuravanchi*, 65:1
 50. *Travancore Archaeological series*, II pp. 67, 21-25, 34-35, 48-49; *Epigraphia Indica*, II p.68; A.R.E. 598 of 1926. S.Vaiyapuri Pillai, *Kalaviyar Karikai*; T.V. Sadasiva Pandarathar, *Kalvettal Ariyappadam Unmaigal*, p.23; M.M.

Uwais and Ajamalkhan, op.cit., pp.94 -96; A.R.E. 1926-27. pt.II

51. Mattison Mines, op.cit. p.161
52. Quadir Hussan Khan, *South Indian Mussalmans* (Madras 1910) p.60
53. Mattison mines, op.cit. pp-160-161
54. Edgar Thurston and K.Rangachari, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, (New Delhi (Rpt), 1975) IV p.495.
55. *Maduraikanchi*, 8-16:28; Pattinappalai
56. A.R.E. 556/1904; M.M. Uwise and Ajmalkhan, op.cit. I, p.51-52
57. *Indian Historical record commission*, Vol XV.1938, P.85; *Indian Antiquary*, III 1924 p.75; *Epigraphica Carnatica*, VII p.141; *Epigraphica India*, IV. p.66
58. *South Indian Inscription*, V p.428
59. A.R.E. 442/1906
60. ibid. 367 of 1912; 414 of 1913.
61. ibid. 169 of 1910
62. S.Raju, *Thanjai Marattia Mannar Seppedugal-50* (Tamil University, Thanjavur 1987) p.31
63. Thurston, op.cit., VI, p.247
64. *Thirupperundurair puranam, Thiruvilaiyadal puranam*
65. *Kandar Alangaram - Saint Arunagirinathar*
66. Mattison Mines, op.cit.
67. Madras Cencus Report 1881; Thurston op.cit. IV p.199; *A Gazetteer of Southern India with Tennasserim provinces and Singapore* (Madras, 1855) p.293
68. Madras Census Report, 1891
69. M. Mujib, *The Indian Muslims* (London, 1967) pp. 21-22

70. S.M. Kamal, *Islamum Thamilagamum*, op.cit. p.53; T.Rajaram, Rao, *Manual of Ramanathapuram Samasthanam* (1898) p.49; Thurston, op.cit. IV, p.200, 501. A.Manual of Madras, op.cit. I p.437
71. W. Francis, op.cit. p.86
72. *Tamil Lexicon*, VI, p.1941; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, IV p.55
73. Thurston, op.cit. VI p.247
74. Ibid IV p.193
75. *Gazetteer of Ramanathapuram District*, (1972) p.161
76. W. Francis op.cit. p.85
77. Quadir Hussain Khan, op.cit. p.23
78. Thurston, op.cit. V. p.4
79. C.D. Maclean, *Glossary of Madras Presidency*, (Madras)
80. Quadir Hussain Khan, op.cit. p.23
81. M.Abdul Rahim, *Islam in Nagapattanam*
82. Thurston, Vol. V.p. 1; N.Amir Ali, op.cit. p.49
83. Noboru Karashima, "Indian Commercial activities in Ancient Medieval Southeast Asia", paper presented in the Plenary Session of 8th World Tamil Conference Seminar, Thanjavur, 1995.
84. Ka. Tha. Thirunavukkarasu, *Thenkizhakku Asia Nadukalil Thamizh Panpadu*, (Madras, 1987) p. 326; Y. Subbarayalu, "Sumathravil Thamizh Kalvettukal", *Aavanam*, (Journal of Tamil Nadu Archieological Society, Thanjavur) No. IV, 1994. pp 116-123
85. *Tamil Lexicon* V. IV. pt. I. p.2222 (Nayan, Nayakan, leader, conductor); *Kambaramayanam* 2:7:3:3-4 (Aayiram ampikunayakan); *Thirukkarapuram*, (1814 AD) *Buddhukal Vasanthi padalam*:6

86. M.R.M. Abdul Rahim, *Islamiya Kalaikalanchiam*, III, p.40; Kayalpattanam selection grade TownPanchayat Centinary Souvenir, 1990 (ed) Kayal Mohaboob; Col wilks, *Historical Sketches of South India* (1810); S.M. Kamal, *Islamum Thamilagamum* op.cit.pp. 24-25; A.K. Rifayi, *Thamilakathil Islamiyar Varalaru*: (thenkasi 1988) pp.51-52.
87. T. Jayarajan, "Social and Economic customs and Practices of Marakkayars"
88. ibid. pp. 6-7
89. *Islamic Culture*, XIX - (1945) p.223 T.B.H. Abeya Singah, "Muslims in Srilanka in sixteenth seventeenth centuries;" *Muslims of Srilanka* (ed) M.M. Shukri 1986, p. 129-130.
90. I.L.M. Abdul Azeez, op.cit. p.18
91. A.M. Samy, *19th century Tamil Journals* (Madras, 1992) pp.14-16
92. A.R.P. Diary VI p. 381-84
93. *Mihuraj Maalai*, (1590 A.D). Stanza; 23; *Thirukkarana Puranam* (1814) *Buddhukkal Vasanitha Padalam* - 6.
94. *Blackis Modern Encyclopaedia*, VI. p.221
95. Hobson and Jobson p.581
96. S. Arasaratnam, *Companies and commerce*, op.cit., p.21
97. *Alvero Vaz in Cartaz de A.De. Albuquerque* III. p.263
98. *A De Albuquerque Cartaz* I. p.58
99. *Femo Pinto Peregnacao*, cap. 7.
100. *Joao de Burrows*, Dec. II, 11:7
101. *Pyrad de level Viagan*, I p.295.
102. English - Malayalam dictionary, Dr. Gundert

103. *Glossario Luso - Asiatica, Dalgoda*, II p.38; O.K. Nambiar, *The Kunjali Admirals of Calicut* (London, 1948) p.50.
104. *Tamil Lexicon*, V. p.3082
105. Thurston, IV, op.cit. p.501
106. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, *Studies in Medieval Kerala History*, (Kerala Historical Society), (Trivandrum 1975) P.59
107. Fifth international Islamic Tamil literary conference souvenir, Kilakkarai, 1990, p.176
108. *Ain - i - Akbari I*, pp.190-191; Rear Admiral K.Sridharan, *A maritime history of India* (Government of India, 1982) p.53
109. S.M. Kamal, *Islamum Thamizhagamum* op.cit. p.49; A.R.E. 392 of 1914; I.L.M. Azeez, op.cit. 41, and particulars collected in field studies.
110. Hobson and Jobson.p. 159; *FSG Diary and consultation Book*, 1734 p.3; S.Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, op.cit. 219
111. *Nannool*, Mayilainathar Urai, p.276
112. J.R. Vorhoevern, "Some notes on the Tamil community in Dutch Malacca, 1641-1855" proceedings of the first International Conference Seminar of Tamil studies, Vol. I, April 1968.
113. G.O. Ms.No.1298 (Public) 17-12-75 Government of Tamil Nadu.

Chapter - V

Europeans on the Coromandel and their impact on the Muslims

European maritime colonialism started in peninsular India from the beginning of sixteenth century. The Portuguese who arrived first incorporated themselves in to the systems in practice in the land. The Dutch, the French, the Danes and the English too followed the footsteps of the Portuguese. All these foreigners were accepted and assigned a place with all protection by the native ruling houses. The local rulers adopted the concept of free maritime trade zones. The colonial powers monopolised trade and shipping along the Coromandel region and it rudely disturbed the peace in the region. They also began to encroach on political authority.

The entire Coromandel region rapidly got transformed from a peaceful and free trade zone to zone of maritime discord based on denial of free trade and freedom of navigation. The rivalry was not only between the newcomers (Europeans) and the native powers but also among the Europeans themselves. The struggle continued till the nineteenth century when the English emerged as the dominant power and a new colonial rule was established that was based on maritime power and strength.

The big local power, the Vijayanagar empire, collapsed in the sixteenth century and the succeeding states like the Nayakdoms, the Deccani Sultanates and the like were fighting among themselves or confronting the Mughal empire and none of them could develop the capacity to challenge the European powers. Finally they succumbed to the naval superiority and financial backing of the English power. In the trade competitions and race for supremacy the traditional maritime people, the Muslims of the Coromandel suffered more than the traders of other communities and the economic blows proved fatal. A look on the trading activities of the Europeans on the Coromandel coast will amply testify the plight of the maritime Muslims of the coast. A broad survey of the condition of Muslims at the hands of the Europeans prior to the period of our study also becomes necessary for a better understanding of the subject. Hence a sketch on the activities of the colonial powers that stormed the silent waters of the Coromandel and the losses of the Muslims briefed here.

V-1- Portuguese

The anchorage of the galley of Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese adventurer at the port city of Calicut in 1498, marks the first European presence in the Indian sub continent. It led to the establishment of an overseas Portuguese empire in India. The Portuguese said that they came to India in search of Christians and spices. In the words of W.H. Moreland, "in the sixteenth century the Indian ocean was a Portuguese lake in which the absence of any serious opposition made it possible to control the seas"¹. The Portuguese became the masters and monopolists of spices trade in India. Indian rulers at that time did not enter into trade, so there was no

claim on the part of the rulers for monopoly over the trade in the Indian Ocean. Hence they extended all facilities to the Portuguese to attract them to their ports. The diversion of the maritime trade of India in to the hands of the Portuguese, destroyed the trade of the Arabs and the native Muslims and also delivered a mighty blow to Islam.

The maritime Muslim community of the western coast could not view the arrival of the Portuguese with sympathy. But against the strong opposition of the Arabs and the native Muslim traders, the Portuguese rapidly expanded their power and gained mastery over the trade in Malabar. They built the first fortified factory in 1503 at the mouth of the river Edappalli (Cochin). Thus the first European fortress on Indian soil came up as the harbinger of the future². The Portuguese pressurised the native rulers for commercial monopoly to the exclusion of everyone. Spices, gold and silver were declared as their monopoly³. They exploited the faith of the Christians for trade and persuaded them not to sell pepper to the Muslims⁴. Slowly the Portuguese went far and wide to conquer territories and establish fortresses to prevent the Arabs and Turks from trading with India⁵. Ceylon was made their tributary state in 1507. Goa was conquered in 1510. The control of Goa gave them a better point to prevent the Arab merchants entering the Malabar emporium. Control of Ormuz, the key to the east and the Persian gulf by 1515 stopped the flow of spices from the Malabar coast through the Persian gulf. Malacca was compelled to agree to a commercial treaty in 1511. The Portuguese establishments became Portuguese territories.

Cartaz system was enforced by the Portuguese for ships that operated in the Indian seas. Cartaz (from

Arabic, Certaz, meaning, a document) can be defined as a pass for navigation to the merchant ships so that they could navigate and enter the ports without any trouble. Ships without cartaz could be captured. This compelled the merchants and rulers to be friendly with the Portuguese. The Rulers of Malabar who supported the trading activities of the Portuguese also had to obtain Cartaz. Even the Mughal emperor Akbar obtained Cartaz for his ships to the Red Sea⁶.

Available evidences show that the Portuguese made their way to the Coromandel only after 1505. Lodovico de Varthama who visited Nagapattanam in 1505 mentions the presence of Christians but not the Portuguese⁷. As early in 1506, some of the Portuguese during their trip to investigate their prospects in Malacca, had landed purely by accident in the vicinity of Nagappattanam where they received a hostile reception from the Muslim traders⁸. Sewel points out that the governance of the seas east of Cape Comorin was also in the hands of the Portuguese by 1509⁹. The Portuguese made Pulicat an important trading centre since there was good scope for the collection of the textiles from the hinterland. These textiles were exported to Malacca.

According to the Portuguese chronicler Correia, one Manual de Frias was appointed as the first Portuguese captain of the Coromandel and Fishery Coast in 1521 with his headquarters at Pulicat¹⁰. Frias had authority to issue Cartaz. Cartazes were obtained by Muslims and other navigators and traders. The ships without Cartazes were captured. By 1539, the Portuguese had two important centres on the Coromandel, one was Pulicat with satellite San Thome

and the other was Nagapattanam. Nagapattanam was a busy coastal commercial centre in rice trade to Ceylon and other southern ports and Malabar, bringing back areca, timber, cinnamon and pepper. Pulicat was a textile centre. By about 1530, Nagapattanam became an important trading centre with the outside world. It is noteworthy that in essence, the Portuguese settlers operated side by side with the other principal groups in Nagapattanam, the Marakkayars, both typically functioning with small profit margins and small individual consignments in the trade ¹¹. Prior to the fall of Goa to the Portuguese, horse trade was in the hands of the Muslims. But by 1530 the Arabs and the native Muslim merchants were completely driven out from this market and the Portuguese enjoyed the monopoly in horse trade.

Though the Vijayanagar emperors were not against the monopolistic trading attitude of the Portuguese, the proselytizing of the natives by them called for drastic action. There were large scale conversions to Christianity in the coastal belt. The converts were regarded by the Portuguese as Portuguese subjects. The Paravas were effective tools in the hands of the Portuguese and it helped them to become the masters of the fishery coast wresting it from the Muslims. The Paravas had lived as fishers and pearl divers in the fishery coast from ancient times. By the 14th century A.D., the Muslims had established themselves firmly in the coast of Kayalpattanam and Kilakkarai, and gained control over the pearl fishery as lease holders¹². The control of the Pearl fishery by the Muslims reduced the Paravas to the status of daily labourers and slaves. They had to pay tribute to the

Muslim lease holders¹³. According to Francis Xavier, the Paravas were oppressed under the Moorish yoke. There were many quarrels between the Paravas and the Muslims resulting in loss of many lives on both sides¹⁴.

The Paravas approached the Portuguese Captain at Cochin. The Portuguese captain promised them help and protection if they got converted to Christianity, which was gladly accepted by the Paravas. Priests were sent from Cochin and many were baptised. Later during the visit of the Francis Xavier to the Coromandel coast there was mass baptism. Thereafter the Paravas were spoken of as the favourite children of the Portuguese and regarded as Portuguese subjects. The Muslims of Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam wanted to prevent the conversion obviously fearing that these conversion will hamper their activities in the fishery coast. They sent a delegation to Cochin with valuable presents to the Portuguese captain and approached their co-religionist, Cherina Marakkar, an influential ship owner and merchant of Cochin, to pressurise the Portuguese. But Cherina Marakkar could not help them. By 1537, the entire Parava population of the fishery coast was converted to Christianity¹⁵. The Paravas became competitors to the Muslims in the maritime activities with the blessings of the Portuguese.

The Portuguese had a fortified the fort at Nagapattanam and carried on brisk trade. The Nayaks of Thanjavur favoured the Portuguese and did not encourage the trade enterprises of the natives and so Nagapattanam became the centre of Portuguese missionary activities. Religion and commerce always combined in the expansion of the Portuguese empire. But their religious policy made them unpopular. The

Nayaks of Thanjavur were not in favour of the proselytizing activities of the Portuguese and were unhappy over their treatment of the natives¹⁶. There was brisk trade between Nagapattinam and Malabar. Spices and drugs were exported to Malacca and China. The Portuguese favoured the Chettiar merchants. There were many Muslim traders and shipowners trading along with the portuguese. Nagapattanam was captured by the Dutch in 1658.

The trade enterprises of the Portuguese assumed definite shape in the coast of Madurai by 1650. The Nayaks of Madurai did not encourage the native maritime traders including the Muslims and supported the Portuguese. The Portuguese helped Thirumalai Nayak in the succession disputes of the Marava kingdom. The Nayak extended many concessions to them. This encouraged the Portuguese to strengthen the proselytizing and trading activities which went against the interests of the Muslim traders of the region. Capitalising on the naval deficiency of the Nayaks, the Portuguese became the masters of the fishery coast. The Sethupathi of Ramanathapuram was hostile to the Portuguese. He favoured the Muslim traders in their coast against the Paravas of the Portuguese camp. In February 1655, Sethupathi Raghunatha Devan contracted a treaty with the Dutch declaring common enmity towards the Portuguese¹⁷. Hostility among the native rulers resulted in a political polarisation, centering round the European powers. Since the native rulers were unequal to the Portuguese in the sea, they necessarily had to take recourse to the other European powers. Thus we find that the Madurai Nayaks were in alliance with the

Portuguese and Thanjavur and Ramanathapuram were in alliance with the Dutch¹⁸.

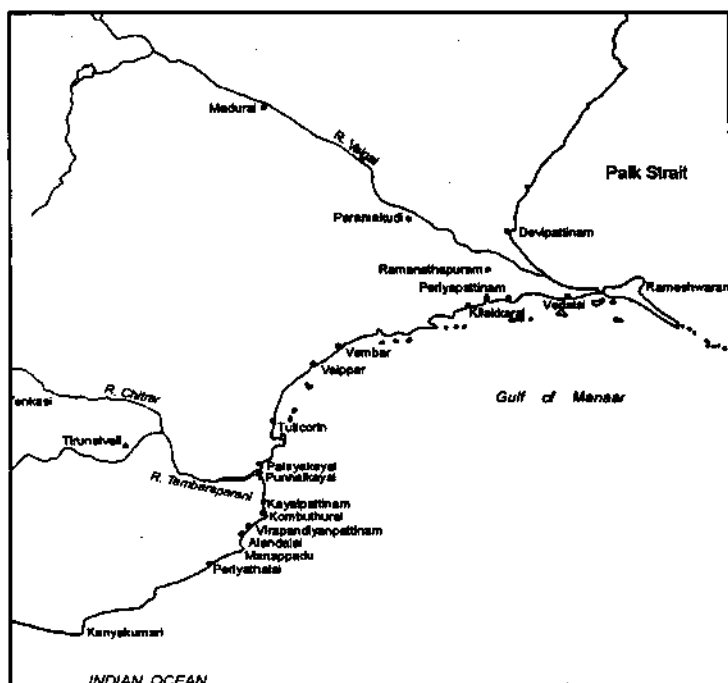
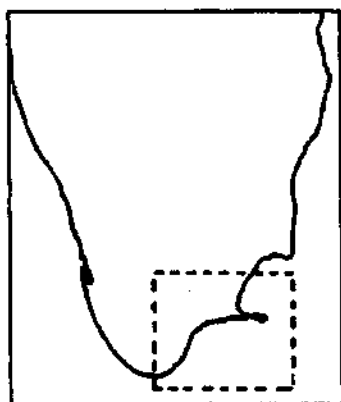
In the fierce contest for colonial rivalry between the Portuguese and the Dutch, the winds were in favour of the latter. The Dutch gained the blessings of most of the native rulers. Ultimately the Portuguese political hold began to weaken and their territories slipped one by one into the hands of the Dutch. After the loss of their territories by 1658, the Portuguese and their Mestico (children through Portuguese father and Indian mother) and Kestico (children through Portuguese mother and native father) offsprings relocated their activities in PortoNovo. From there, together with the local Muslim merchants, they developed an extensive network of mercantile contact with the ports of the Malay Peninsula, Malacca and Ache. Thus a limited trading activity continued even after the collapse of their political power. Forgetting their old rivalry the local Muslim population extended a helping hand to the Portuguese¹⁹.

The Muslims were considered as principal competitors by the Portuguese in India as elsewhere. But Vasco da Gama could not have reached India without the guidance of the Muslim navigator, Ibn Masjid, a native of Oman. He conducted Vasco da Gama from the east coast of Africa to Calicut. The Portuguese attitude towards the Muslims was one of inveterate hostility on account of economic and colonial motives. In the light of these realities it will be seen that the Portuguese animosity towards the Muslims was strong even after centuries of their conflict in Iberia and North Africa. The Muslim merchants were not permitted to trade in merchandise in which the Portuguese claimed monopoly. Hence the Muslims had to trade on the

commodities in which the Portuguese had little interest. Most of the Muslim traders became petty merchants dealing in arecanut, coconut, coarse cloth and such other things²⁰.

The Portuguese were also responsible for innumerable atrocities on Muslims on the sea. Panikkar while quoting a passage from Kerala Pazhama, says: "The Mohamaden ships were special objects of their fury. Even with cartazes their ships were not safe. The Portuguese sea-men demanded heavy bribes if it was not given the ships were confiscated"²¹. To quote an example a ship captured at the port of Kayalpattanam in 1526 by Manuel de Gama, the then captain of the Coromandel, was confiscated and the Muslim nagudha and his family were sold to slavery²². There were wanton destruction of Muslim vessels and ports. The Muslims carried on their trade in such an adverse environment at great risk to their lives and property.

Whenever possible the Portuguese allied themselves with the Hindu state of Vijayanagar against the Muslim principalities and adopted a different attitude towards the Hindu natives. The rate of levy on cartaz was higher on the Muslims than on the Hindu traders. They spared the Hindus while massacring Muslims as in the case of Albuquerque's capture of Goa in 1510, where the Hindus were spared and Muslims, men, women and children were burnt in batches inside the mosques²³. They did not hesitate to destroy mosques for the construction of churches. They prevented the Muslims from going on pilgrimage to Mecca²⁴.



3. The Fishery Coast

The Portuguese tried to eliminate the Muslims from the pearl fishery with the assistance of the Paravas. The Muslims clashed with Joao Froles, the captain of the pearl fishery coast in 1527. Affonso de Mello, the Portuguese captain avenged this in 1528 by burning down Kayal and Kilakkarai. The Muslims had to agree to pay an annual tribute to the Portuguese for pearl fishery, rights. The Muslim leader (Nainar) of Kilakkarai made an agreement with the Portuguese with regard to pearl fishery since the latter assumed themselves the masters of the pearl fishing along of the coast²⁵. The Muslims of Kayal left the place and developed the port of Kayalpattanam from about 1532²⁶. But the battle continued between the Portuguese and the Muslims on the sea between Pamban and Cape Comorin.

In 1537 the three captains of the Zamorin, Pate Marcar, Kunjali Marcar, and Ali Ibrahim came to the rescue of the Muslims of the Coromandel and sailed to the fishery coast with a strong force. They attacked the Parava villages and many were killed. Then they sailed to Vedalai and were waiting for a voyage to Ceylon. The Portuguese with a large contingent and with the help of the Paravas of the area attacked the Muslim camp. Many Muslims were slain. Vedalai and other nearby villages were burnt, their properties looted and boats were burnt. (We can see hundreds of epitaphs in Vedalai even to this day, which remember the martyrs in this battle, awaiting the attention of historians). Further the Paravas sailed to Kayalpattanam and burnt the entire village and the Muslims fled to nearby islands and Ceylon²⁷. The Portuguese and Paravas, emerged stronger and the Muslim trading power was broken. According to a letter of St.Xavier (dt. 28.10.1542) "after the victory

of Vedalai, no one now remembers Moors, none among them dares to arise his head"²⁸.

When the Portuguese established a fortified settlement in the port of Colombo in 1518, they became hostile to the Muslim settlers there. Some of the Muslims had blood relations on the Coromandel region some had dual domicile in South India and Ceylon. Regulations were passed restricting their migration and also the settlements of Muslims. Muslim merchants spread out to the smaller ports away from the Portuguese²⁹. So the migration of the Coromandel Muslims to Ceylon for trade and religious purposes was also seriously affected.

When Malacca was captured by the Portuguese in 1511 the Coromandel Muslim traders avoided Malacca and transferred their headquarters to Brunei on the southern coast of Borneo which became a new centre for the spread of Islam and they also concentrated in Johore. By 1535, the north coast of Java was Islamised. The rapid spread of Islam in Southeast Asian lands posed a serious threat to the plans of the Portuguese³⁰. Thus the conflicts between the Portuguese and the Muslims were centred both on ecclesiastical and economic rivalries.

When the Portuguese military and naval power were episodic in Bay of Bengal, the Muslim traders evaded the Portuguese instead of challenging them and they could carry on their trade³¹. It is also a fact that the Muslim traders in many places acquiesced to the Portuguese. M.N. Pearson reports that the Muslim merchants made no attempts to oppose the arbitrary extortive demands of the Portuguese. The merchants

rather accommodated quickly and indeed cooperated with the exploiters³². Muslim merchants of Cochin like Cherina Marcar, Mammalae Marcar supplied large quantities of pepper to the Portuguese. They obtained cartaze from the cochin factory to send their ship to Ormuz. These two merchants were very influential with the Portuguese. The Governor of India recommended to the Portugal crown in 1513 the grant some of special concessions to them. Nino Marcar another ship owner had sent his ships for the Portuguese to Malacca. The vessels of Chilay Mercar took elephants to Goa for the Portuguese³³. Nino Marcar and his brother had commercial establishments on the Coromandel coast and arranged for 1500 fighters to overpower the enemies of the Portuguese in the Coromandel region³⁴.

The Portuguese kings often instructed their officials in India to favour the Christian and Hindu merchants in contrast to the Muslims. This could not bear any point. The Hindu and Christian merchants had no such great capital as the Muslims. The local ship owners and sailors were only Muslims³⁵. In 1590, when the Portuguese crown ordered that the mosques in the Portuguese territories (except in Ormuz) be demolished, the Governor of India replied that the orders could not be put into effect since the Portuguese were trading in these territories with the Muslims also³⁶.

Because of economic compulsions and in the furtherance of their trading activities, the Portuguese had to throw their lot with the Muslims from the first quarter of the seventeenth century. They even married local Muslim women. As K.S. Mathew puts it very aptly "the Crusade joined hands with Jihad in the matter of trade. The Portuguese who reportedly crossed the ocean

to hunt out the Muslims had to depend on the intermediary and shipping expertise of the Muslims for their trade promotion³⁷.

It will be seen that in the later part of their stay in India, the animosity of the Portuguese towards the Muslims cooled down to a certain extent. But it was too late for the Muslims to recoup and readjust, since most of them were driven to despair and changed their occupational patterns. Trade of the Muslims declined not due to the lack of commercial expertise but because it was faced with the use of force based on superior technology and the lack of support from the local ruling powers. Thus the shattered trade of the Muslims became subservient. The Muslims could not match the Portuguese naval power. This key factor enabled the other European powers especially the Dutch and the English to encroach into further areas hitherto still left in the hands³⁸ of the Muslims.

The Portuguese oppression of the Coromandel Muslims is not the end of the story and it was continued by the Dutch.

V. // The Dutch

The Hollanders - the Dutch - came over to the Coromandel coast when the trade system was well established. They had to face a strong European rival, the Portuguese. The originator of Dutch commerce in India was Lins Cotton who visited Goa in 1583³⁹. "The Verenigde Oost Indische Compagnie"- (V.O.C) - The Dutch East India Company - sent two Dutch factors from Ache to Surat in 1605 to explore the commercial prospects⁴⁰. The Dutch vessels commenced trading in the Coromandel region the same year⁴¹. Masulipattanam and

Pulicat became the centre of their Coromandel enterprises⁴².

The political events in the Coromandel in the 17th to 19th centuries were intertwined with the commercial and colonial history. The Dutch appeared on the Coromandel when the native rulers were in search of a strong power to counter the Portuguese. They found it in the Dutch and invited them to their territories. A chronology of events relating to the relationship of the Dutch with the local powers, native traders, other European companies and its impact on the maritime trade of the region is briefly given below.

The central part of the Coromandel was ruled by the Nayaks of Ginjee (Senji) when the Dutch appeared there. Krishnappa Nayak of Ginjee, treated the Dutch with hospitality and allowed them to build a fort at Devanampattanam (Cuddalore). In 1617 Pulicat became the seat or Government of the Dutch under a Governor. They also built a fort there. The Dutch and the Portuguese interfered in the civil war of Ginjee in 1622. The Portuguese suffered a series of losses at the hands of the Dutch. Baticola in Ceylon fell to the Dutch in 1638, Goa in 1639 and Malacca in 1641. In 1658 the Dutch captain Joan Van der Lean captured the Portuguese settlement of Nagapattanam without a shot being fired. Jaffinapattanam also fell in the same year⁴³.

Vijayaraghava the Nayak of Thanjavur (1633-73) was initially not favourably disposed towards the Dutch and even did not recognise their hold on Nagapattanam. Subsequently he had to acquiesce in their possession. Vijayaraghava gave the Dutch a charter in 1658 offering valuable trade concessions. This deed permitted them

to hold the port of Nagapattanam, along with ten villages on an annual tribute. The same charter was renewed in 1662 by Vijayaraghava with additional privileges of setting up their own mint, the profit of which was to be shared between the VOC and the Nayak. About 1666 the Dutch got the ports of Thirumalairajanpattanam, Karaikkal and some other neighbouring places on lease. They also commenced factories at Thirumullaivasal and Adirampattanam⁴⁴.

An impressive fort was built at Nagapattanam and named as Narden. There is no trace of this fort at present. The only memory of the Dutch here is a street called Ollandar Saalai). Their indigo factory site of PortNovo is called Ollandhar Thottam (garden). In 1690 the seat of the Dutch Government in India was transferred from Pulicat to Nagapattanam and it was in their possession until the English siezed it in 1781.

When the major areas of the kingdom of Ginjee were taken over by the Sultan of Golkonda, was a cowle granted in 1647, favouring the Dutch⁴⁵. The Sultan of Bijapur who captured the other parts of Ginjee confirmed in 1654, the privileges that they were enjoying from the Nayaks of Ginjee. The liberal policies pursued by the Sultans of Bijapur and Golkonda to attract the Dutch to their territories helped the Dutch to expand their trade. When the Golkonda possession of the Coromandel fell into the hands of the Mughals, emperor Aurangazeb, in a farman in 1689, granted the Dutch all the earlier concessions⁴⁶.

The Dutch gained greater rights on the coast of Madura since they had inherited it by conquest from

the Portuguese by about 1650. They fortified the port of Tuticorin and had a number of Christianised settlements along the coast. By 1664, in all the seven ports of the Madura Kingdom (viz. Tuticorin, Manapad, Alandalai, Virampattanam, Pinnaikayal, Vaipar and Vembar) the Dutch flag was planted. These ports were secured by the Dutch in return for a loan given by the Dutch to the Nayaka of Madurai. The civil and criminal administration of these ports were taken over by the Dutch. The Marakkayar traders who had previously frequented these ports migrated to the Sethupathi's ports. The pearl and chank fisheries came under the monopolistic control of the Dutch⁴⁷. Again a treaty was contracted in 1669 granting many more trade concessions. Thus the Dutch enriched themselves in the coast of the Nayaks who had to remain silent spectators to their progress and sometimes even their misdeeds⁴⁸.

There was a good market for Madurai textiles (Cochai), rice and other food articles in Ceylon and areca in the Coromandel. Utilising the drought and famine conditions in the coastal belt during the third quarter of the seventeenth century, the Dutch engaged in large scale slave trade. They took full advantage of this to buy slaves for labour and settlement in the colonies of Ceylon, Batavia and South Africa. They purchased slaves in Tuticorin, Nagapattanam, PortoNovo, Devanampattanam and Pulicat⁴⁹.

Ekoji the Maratha general was installed in the Thanjavur kingdom in 1675. He withdrew the concessions given by Nayak Vijayaraghava to the Dutch. But the Dutch got them back by force. However Ekoji

granted a cove in 1676 restoring all the concessions given earlier by the Nayak and also ensured their possession of the ports of Thirumalairajanpattanam and Karaikkal⁵⁰. The Maratha kingdom grew weaker militarily and economically. They mortgaged large parts of coastal territories to the Dutch in 1757, By this time Dutch themselves became weak to take advantage of the opportunity for their expansion.

The Sethupathi of Ramanathapuram, the ruler of the pearl fishery coast, contracted a treaty in 1658 with the Dutch, declaring common enmity towards the Portuguese. Another treaty was signed in 1660. By this, free traffic was granted for each other's subjects through the straits of Rameswaram and Manaar controlled respectively by the Sethupathi and the Dutch. The Pamban Canal, in the Sethupathi's territory, was the most convenient waterway for ships with considerable burthen sailing between the east and the west. The Dutch trade in Sethupathi's territories increased. The rightful share of the Sethupathi in pearl fishery was also ensured. In the course of time the Dutch grew greedy and in 1670 declared monopoly on some essential articles of Indo - ceylon trade and imposed severe restrictions on the local traders. They wanted monopoly in the export of areca from Ceylon and to control its sale in the Coromandel coast. For this the Malabar areca was a hindrance. This was brought by the Coromandel Muslim boatmen and taken to all the ports through the Pamban canal. The Dutch wanted to prevent this by fair or foul means. Similarly the Dutch desired to forbid the pepper trade through the Pamban by private traders. All these ran counter to the interests of the Sethupathi and his subjects particularly the Muslim traders⁵¹. The Sethupathi conceded to yet another treaty in 1674 on

highly unfavourable terms. The treaty abridged the privileges of the Sethupathi in pearl fishery. Chank fishery became a Dutch monopoly, the Malabar areca was prevented from passing through the Pamban canal. The Dutch became masters in areca trade⁵². The implementation of the treaty adversely affected the trade prospects of the Muslims of the coast.

The Sethupathi began to follow a policy of flouting the provisions of the treaty of 1674. In this he had the active support of the Muslim traders of the coast. The influential Periathambi Marakkayar family of Kilakkarai that was prominent in the trade of the region now got close to the Sethupathi. They were appointed by him to high offices in the state. With their help the Ceylon ports were blockaded by the Sethupathi. The Sethupathi's boats and Marakkayar boats with countraband goods like cloth frequented the shallow bays of Ceylon and returned with areca. The officials of the Kandiyan kingdom also helped the Sethupathi and the Muslims. The Sethupathi also assisted the flow of Malabar areca and pepper through the Pamban and protected Muslim vessels from the Dutch cruisers. Chank was smuggled out to PortoNovo by Muslims to be sold to the English and the French⁵³.

In lieu of the loan given to the Sethupathi by the Dutch in 1674, he had to mortgage all the ports of his coast to the Dutch. The Sethupathi's trade was ruined. The vessels of the Sethupathi and the Muslims were confiscated in Ceylon. Dutch cruisers and soldiers by effective patrolling prevented the Muslims from bringing Malabar areca and pepper through the Pamban. The Dutch got this treaty revised, in 1684. It modified some objectionable clause of the 1674 treaty. The right

of the Sethupathi in chank fishery was partially restored. Thus the Dutch tried to pacify the Sethupathi. However conflicts broke once again between the Dutch and the Sethupathi. The Marava army with the help of the local Muslims began to attack the Paravas who were now with the Dutch. The Dutch attacked the Sethupathi in January 1685, by sea. His ports were blockaded and the vessels anchored there were confiscated. The Sethupathi sued for peace and a treaty was signed in March 1685. By this treaty the Sethupathi promised to remove from administrative positions Periathambi Marakkayar, and his relatives as well as other Muslims⁵⁴. This treaty was highly unfavourable to the interests of the Sethupathi and the Muslims of the coast. The treaty was flouted with the help of Periathambi Marakkayar. Hostilities broke out again in 1690 but the Sethupathi sued for peace and a fresh treaty was signed by which the Dutch took over the Pamban canal and other coastal areas. The Muslim traders of the coast did not take it kindly and connived with the Sethupathi's officials to flout them whenever possible⁵⁵.

The English were emerging stronger in the Carnatic from the second quarter of the eighteenth century at the cost of the Nawabs of Arcot. The growing power of the English threatened the commercial interest of the Dutch. The Dutch also decided to enter the political fray in the region. In 1758, Yusuf Khan the English commander of Madurai was in the process of suppressing the rebel polygars. The Dutch drove close to the polygars. They entered into coalition with eastern poligars of Thirunelveli. The Sethupathi allied with the English. The Dutch had to withdraw from the battle in 1761.⁵⁶ When the Nawab took over Ramanathapuram the Dutch had to adjust with the Nawab. Thanjavur

was annexed by the Nawab in 1771 and he wanted to acquire Nagore. The Dutch withdrew from Nagore⁵⁷. In consequence of the growing threat to their trading activities, the Dutch shifted their principal commercial centre from Nagapattanam to Colombo by 1792⁵⁸.

The developments in Europe affected the political scenario in the Carnatic. In June 1781, England declared war on Holland. The English utilised this occasion to wipe out the decaying Dutch power from the Coromandel. Had this not happened, the Dutch would have stayed in the Coromandel for a longer period like the French. Consequent on the outbreak of war between the Dutch and the English on the Coromandel, Nagapattanam surrendered to the English in 1781. Tuticorin also fell to the English in 1785⁵⁹. By 1783-84, V.O.C., was on the verge of bankruptcy. Finally in 1825, the British took over all the Dutch settlements in India.

Thus a brief account of events as discussed above from the entry to the exit of the Dutch in Coromandel will go to show that their commercial activities were closely linked to the political and economic life of the region. The Dutch enriched themselves with local political sanctions, at the cost of the traditional maritime community in which the Muslims were worst hit. The Dutch cherished a deep seated suspicion about the Muslims like the Portuguese. But their religious policy towards the Muslims was not as harsh as that of the Portuguese. However, the Dutch wanted to eliminate the Muslims who were not helpful for their commercial schemes. To overcome the competition of the Muslims in trade, they imposed many restrictions on them. The policy of the Dutch in Ceylon towards the Muslims also held good for the South Indian coasts particularly to

the Coromandel. The Batavia council had instructed the governor in Colombo to prohibit the rent and lease of land to Muslims and no government work could be entrusted to them. Further, no permission was to be granted to Muslim traffic by sea and those who migrated from other places were to be deported from Ceylon. This was intended to apply to those Muslims who were called Cholian (Tamil Muslims) but not to Bengali and Hindustani Muslims. Thus they singled out the Coromandel Tamil Muslims for harsh treatment.¹⁰³

The Coromandel Muslim traders had established commercial contacts in almost all the Southeast Asian countries for a very long time. The Dutch competed in all these markets with the Muslims and considered them as their trade rivals since the enterprises of the Dutch were guided much more by commercial spirit than religious aims. The Dutch used force against the Muslims in sea and land like the Portuguese and humbled them whenever possible since the Muslim merchants were not trained in such warfare nor their vessels were suitable for war. When the Dutch took over the management of the ports in Southeast Asian countries as well as in the Coromandel, they collected higher tariffs from the Muslims to keep them out⁶¹.

The Paravas received favourable treatment from the Dutch. But the Sethupathi patronised the Muslim traders of Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam. The Dutch as protectors of Paravas and controllers of the pearl fishery coast strove hard to limit the political and commercial influence of the Muslims and tried to crush it⁶².

In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the Muslims of the Coromandel under the leadership of Periathambi Marakkayar of Kilakkarai, with the patronage of the Sethupathis, were dominating the Indo-Ceylon, Malabar and interportal trades. But the treaties concluded between the various native powers and the Dutch were detrimental to the interest of the Muslims. The treaties with the Sethupathis dealt a severe blow to them. The restrictive and monopolistic policies of the Dutch in Indo-Ceylon trade affected the Muslim traders of the Coromandel who made a living by participating in the trade of the region. This naturally led the Muslims traders to smuggling and clandestine trade activities. The Muslim community is often found named as leading participants in smuggling activities in the 17th-18th centuries. Periathambi Marakkayar was the chief among them and he was the architect to foil the Dutch monopoly. The Dutch had termed Periathambi Marakkayar as the country captain and the evil genius behind the anti-Dutch policy of the Sethupathi⁶³. The animosity of the Dutch towards Periathambi Marakkayar and other Muslim traders is reflected well in the treaties of 1674 and 1685, which compelled the Sethupathi to remove Periathambi Marakkayar, his brothers, son as well as other Muslims from administrative positions along the coast from Point Calimer to Cape Comorin. This shows the intention of the Dutch to drive the Muslim traders the Coromandel away from trading activities.

The Dutch monopoly in pearl and chank fisheries was also against the trading and labour classes among the Muslims who were engaged in these activities. Paravas were preferred than the Muslim divers. The Muslim traders who were engaged in pearl trade had to be at the mercy of the Dutch. But the Muslims adjusted

themselves to the situation and tried to cooperate with the Dutch. They managed to continue their trade with passes issued by the Dutch. The Muslim traders helped the Marava forces an ally of the Dutch during the Dutch campaign against the Portuguese in 1657-58⁶⁴. During the Portuguese-Dutch war in 1652, a Muslim contingent from Thirunelveli helped the Dutch⁶⁵.

But the initial hostility of the Dutch on Islam and their economic rivalry with the Muslims was quite well worn out at the close of seventeenth century. In the pearl fishery, the Marakkayars of Kayalpattanam were allowed to have free boats. In the Tuticorin pearl fishery, free stones were allowed to the Muslim headman⁶⁶. The Dutch after realising the importance of Periathambi Marakkayar in the Coromandel coast, requested his assistance to run the Dutch trade in 1696. The Marakkayar permitted the Dutch to build a factory at Kilakkarai⁶⁷. Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam became the hub of the Dutch trading activity on the Coromandel coast. The Dutch permitted the free flow of Muslims between Ceylon and Coromandel. They also showed tolerance to the religious activities of the Muslims. The Portuguese never extended such concessions in religious matters. The Dutch attitude gradually became more tolerant towards Islam and less rigorous although the anti Islamic laws continued to remain on the Batavia Statute Book. Learned religious persons were allowed to migrate between Ceylon and the Coromandel. The Dutch even tried to formulate a code for Muslims. The Muslim traders were treated with consideration⁶⁸. Muslims were employed for shipping activities in Malabar⁶⁹. Owen Kail says many Tamilians were employed in the V.O.C. subordinate service at Pulicat and Nagapattanam as book keepers, writers and

craftsmen. Among them there might have been Muslims also in considerable numbers⁷⁰.

However trade rivalry and oppression outmatched the other considerations. The successive and gradual suppression of the Muslim maritime activities for centuries pushed them back economically. Traders with large capital and political influence alone could survive. Among others, some undertook interportal trade in the coast, some others went in pursuit of hinterland trade and many were reduced to petty traders. With the disappearance of the Dutch, the Muslims had to face the stronger European power, the English.

V-III- The French

The French were late comers into the trade of the Coromandel Coast in 1672. The Bijapur general Sher Khan Lodi granted the French a site for a settlement in Pondicherry⁷¹. In 1674, Francois Martin assumed charge of the affairs of the French in India. He established a good relationship with Maratha Shivaji who took over Ginjee from Bijapur. Shivaji issued a farman granting the port of Pondicherry to the French in 1693 with its administrative and judicial rights and customs concessions⁷². When Pondicherry passed on to the Mughals, Dawood Khan, the Mughal general added to the possession of the French some more villages near Pondicherry. In 1736, the Nawab of the Carnatic, Dost Ali gave the French the right for minting coins in Pondicherry⁷³. The Maratha ruler Shivaji of Thanjavur in 1739 gave a deed of cession of Karaikkal and Surrounding villages to the French.

The Maratha Rajas of Thanjavur were getting loans from the French and in lieu of it the French got

more villages near Karaikkal. By 1760, the French settlement of Karaikkal had 113 villages. Karaikkal served as the granary of Pondicherry. It was useful for provisioning Pondicherry and also for procuring cargo to its ships. The Carnatic wars, the famous struggle for supremacy between the French and the English broke out in 1749. The events of these wars are narrated elsewhere. The exit of Chanda Sahib and Muzafar Jang by 1752 was a serious set back to the French. The French were not fortunate on the Coromandel. By 1817 Pondicherry, Karaikkal and Yanam on the Coromandel, and Mahe in Malabar were the French territories⁷⁴.

The French invested in textiles in competition with the Dutch and the English. This created a marked impact on the Coromandel textile trade. A network of agencies were established to procure textiles. They gave advances to the weavers and offered a price higher than the other companies. This competition was advantageous to the native weavers and traders. The French company suffered from inadequate funds. They had to rely on local merchants and intermediaries. Its poor financial condition and its inability to monopolise the inter Asian trade must have prompted the French to resort to joint ventures with the Coromandel merchants⁷⁵.

The French emerged as the protectors of regional shipping, particularly at PortoNovo. They lent their colours and provided protection and navigational expertise to the native ship owners and this encouraged them to trade with Thailand, Tennaserim, Ujang Salang, Bantam, Ache and other Southeast Asian countries. Even the ship of the king of Ayuthya sailed to the Coromandel under French colour. When the merchants of PortoNovo were penalised by the Dutch or Danes for

not taking passes from them or refused passes due to enmity the French gave them protection under their flag and pressed into service French sailors and soldiers to protect their business ventures⁷⁶.

The French settlements were a heaven to the Muslim traders. Though much of the export trade was done by the European trading companies and merchants, the native Muslims were also encouraged by the French. They undertook joint ventures with the Muslims⁷⁷. During the time of wars and political confusion, the French came to the rescue of the Muslim traders by allowing them to trade under their colours. They also offered them technical expertise in navigation. The PortoNovo Marakkayars benefited much by French help. Thus the ship of a PortoNovo Marakkayar, Mohamed Sha was manned by a French captain during its voyage to Manila⁷⁸. Many ships of the Marakkayars engaged in coastal trade such as that of Mohamed Ali Baig, employed French captains in their ships⁷⁹. The French also employed Muslim navigators in their ships for voyages to Kedah, Tennaserim etc.⁸⁰. Since the customs duties were half of that of Madras, the Marakkayar ship owners and traders of PortoNovo, Nagore, Nagapattanam, and Tranquebar utilised the French ports for their trading activities. Thus the French settlements were favourable to the Muslim merchants and their trading activities.

V-IV-The Danes

The Danish settlement of Dansborg (Tranquebar) was founded on the Coromandel in 1620. Raghunatha Nayak of Thanjavur permitted the Danish Captain Ove Geede to build a fort at Tranquebar and trade freely with his subjects, and mint coins⁸¹. A fort was built in 1621.

The English factory records testify to the prosperity of Danish trade on the Coromandel during this decade⁸². At first the Danes traded with Ceylon. Their capital resources were very limited. They opened up trade between Coromandel and Tennaserim, thus directly coming into conflict with the Portuguese at Nagapattanam. They traded with Maccassar and imported cloves, much to the chagrin of the VOC. They also traded with Ache.

The Danes contracted local vessels to freight their goods to Bengal⁸³ and also borrowed ships from the natives for their freight to Maccassar, Ache and Bantam. But they lost a few such ships freighted in the course of their voyages, resulting in great loss to the Company. After some years, they concentrated on the enterpots of Indonesian ports and abandoned trade with unfavourable routes. Their debts increased day by day. Some Muslim merchants in Maccassar lent them money⁸⁴.

The Danish settlement at Tranquebar had no support from the home government. The arrival of Danish vessels to India was also limited. Their financial condition was close to bankruptcy. They had to sell a ship in their possession to the Sultan of Bantam for their urgent financial needs⁸⁵. Thus their trade was built on fragile foundation and was crumbling day by day and did not have a marked impact on Coromandel trade. Occasionally they interfered in the local politics also. They supplied gun powder to Yusuf Khan, the rentier of Madurai⁸⁵. Though the Danes were financially weak, they continued their trading activities with the help of the local traders. They lent their flags to the local merchants to trade with the ports of Ceylon, Ache,

Penang, Malacca, Malaya, Malabar, and Bengal during the time of political turmoils. The Danish Government was neutral in the war between the English and the French in the last decade of the eighteenth century. But when the Danes were found to be no longer neutral, the native ships with their flags were captured by French privateers⁸⁶.

The relationship of the Danes with the local traders, particularly the Muslims was cordial. They maintained a good rapport with the Muslims of the Coromandel and the Southeast Asian countries. The Danes helped the Marakkayar traders of Nagore, Karaikkal, Thirumalairajanpattanam and Tranquebar to continue their trade by giving their colours during periods of political unrest and wars. But for this, the sinking economy of the maritime Muslim people of the area would have come to a near collapse. Thus the Danes rendered timely help to the Coromandel Muslim maritime traders⁸⁷. The English purchased the Danish settlement of Tranquebar in 1845.

V.V. The English

The English East India company emerged from a humble beginning and rose to height of opulence and power in India. Throughout the period of our study the English East India Company and the British power continued and made their presence felt in the political and commercial history of the Coromandel region. The maritime activities of the Muslims met with many fluctuations and finally they were reduced to insignificance ⁸⁸.

The English entered in the Coromandel trade as early as 1614⁸⁹. They established a factory at Pulicat in

1619. The settlement of Madras (Fort St. George) was founded in 1640⁹⁰. When this part of the territory was overrun by Golkonda, the Sultan confirmed in 1672 an autonomous administration to the English in the Fort St George area. In 1689, the administration of Madras area passed on to the Mughals from Golkonda Sultans . The general of Carnatic, Zulphikarkhan confirmed all the earlier concessions to the English and permitted them to mint coins in the name of the emperor⁹¹. The Maratha subedar of PortoNovo issued a cowle to establish a settlement and carry on trade from the port⁹². After the death of Aurangazeb his successors also granted many concessions. These concessions and privileges made the British assertive and they utilised the confused political condition to establish their authority. At the beginning of the period of our study, the two major European powers the English and the French reacted to the political turmoil making use of the opportunities that came in their way and were ready to defend their trading rights. The native powers also responded opening the doors for the European ascendancy.

The year 1749 witnessed the outbreak of three wars of succession in the South all of which powerfully affected the course of Indian history. They were in Thanjavur, between Sayaji and Pratab Singh; in Carnatic (Arcot) between Wallaja Anwaruddin and Navayet Chanda Sahib; in Hydrabad, between Nazir Jung and Muzafar Jung. The French and the English interfered in these wars of succession and this brought them close to one power or the other. The English supported Sayaji in Thanjavur, Anwaruddin in Arcot and Muzafar Jung in Hydrabad. The French took the cause of the opposite camp⁹³. The forces of the confederates descended upon the territories of the Carnatic. After long battles, the

English force humbled the French-Navayet confederacy⁹⁴. Mohamed Ali Wallajah was made the undisputed master of the Carnatic. The immediate glory went to Wallajahs but in the ultimate victory devolved on the English. The English interest in Carnatic began with the establishment of Walajah rule in Arcot ⁹⁵. The strength and political authority of the other European powers were also on the wane and this was also favourable to the English.

The subsequent wars that arose between the Nawab and other local powers weakened the Nawab and made him more dependent on the English. The Nawab secured the assistance of the company for his defence, to consolidate his powers and to suppress the rebel polygars. This overburdened him with debts. The Nawab contracted loans from the Company to settle the dues for the military assistance given by the English and for the palace expenses. There was no scope for liquidating the debts ⁹⁶. To realise the debts the Madras Council forced the Nawab to sign various treaties in 1781, 1785, 1790 and 1792 which made the English partners in administration and custodians of certain territories. By these treaties they enjoyed unquestionable political and economic powers. Finally the treaty of 1801, the treaty of Carnatic, provided for the transfer of power and authority over the Carnatic to the English. This marked the beginning of the formal English rule in the Carnatic. The Nawab was made a pensioner. The administration was in the hands the English East India company till 1857 when the Indian territories came under the direct administrative control of the British Crown and India became politically and economically a vassal state of the British Empire ⁹⁷

Even by the second quarter of the seventeenth century, the English had established a well founded network of trading factories centred on Fort St. George. The city of Madras was the chief centre from which British rule expanded. It became the chief factory of the English on the Coromandel and the headquarters of the English East India Company. The English acquired a site from the Raja of Chandragiri in 1640 and it was developed as a fortified settlement. The town was called Chennapattanam⁹⁸. The trade of most of the Coromandel ports had to depend on Madras. A large part of the import and export trade was channelled through the Madras port⁹⁹.

The English had a permanent machinery at Cuddalore for entering into contract with the weavers and local traders for the supply of textiles. Porto Novo was also included in this network. The English tapped the markets to the west of Cuddalore as far as Salem. The company ships were carrying a good deal of freight. In 1684 the English company's export from the Coromandel was the highest in the history of textile exports from the Coromandel¹⁰⁰.

English ships plied in the popular routes of the Asian Coromandel trade. It sailed to Martaban, Pegu, Tennasserim, Arakan, Kedah, Perak, Johore and Ache, participating in the customary trade between these places and the Coromandel coast. Much of the trade from Madras was carried out by English private operators, company servants and free merchants. The traditional maritime merchants, the Muslims and Chettiers plied side by side with the English from the ports of Cuddalore, Porto Novo and Nagapattanam. The English traded directly with Manila in league with the

Portuguese, Armenians and Coromandel Muslims¹⁰¹. There was small boat traffic from Madras to Malabar, Ceylon and Maldives. Short distance inter portal traffic was also undertaken from Kovalam, Fort St. David, Porto Novo, Pondicherry, Tranquebar, Karaikkal, Nagore, Tondi, Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam in which the local Muslim traders participated.

The English company imported the English manufactures into Coromandel. They imported the West Asian goods, from Mocha and Bandar Abbas; from Burma and Thai ports tin, aromatics and a variety of goods; pepper, tin, aromatic wood and spices from Malaya and sumatran ports; copper and porcelain from china. The English private traders directly competed with the Coromandel native traders¹⁰². The English carried on a brisk trade in slaves. They regularly supplied slaves to the Southeast Asian markets of Ache, Arakan and Pegu. Slave trade was prohibited in Madras by 1687. But the trade went underground. Even during the nineteenth century children were kidnapped and transported overseas as slaves. A number of Muslim traders were involved in such cases at Nagapattanam, Nagore and Kayalpattanam¹⁰³.

Cotton piece goods were the staple commodity of export by the English as in that of the other European companies. In fact, the entire investment of the English was made only on piece goods. The East India Company started its investment on the weavers from the year 1793. The Company invested about 50 to 60 lakh rupees per annum. In addition to the export market, the entire internal demand was also met. The Coromandel weavers produced many varieties of piece goods for export. To mention a few, muslin, chintzes, palempore, longcloth,

calicos, allegaes, bettelles, collowaypoos, dispers, mooris, percolles, rumals, saucer guntees, sadaram - cheras, salampore, sail cloth etc. There were countless calico producing centres in Ramnad, Thirunelveli and Thanjavur. There were about 1023 looms and 4000 weavers in Nagore¹⁰⁴. There were about 980 looms in Ramanathapuram. The Company encouraged the local weaving sector upto the first quarter of nineteenth century. Huge advances were distributed to the weavers. Some special concessions were extended to the weavers who supplied textiles exclusively to the Company and they were designated as Company weavers. They were exempted from loom tax and their lands were moderately assessed. There were a large numbers of Muslim weavers in Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli districts¹⁰⁵.

The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed a remarkable change in the character of trade between India and England. Hence forward, India began to receive those very commodities as imports as hitherto shipped in her export trade, i.e., cotton manufactures and sugar. The Lancashire cotton industry was so developed and by the middle of the century the cotton piece goods from there started to invade the Indian market. It represented about the total import of foreign merchandise in India¹⁰⁶. Raw cotton was exported for use in the Lancashire textile industry and the finished products came to India¹⁰⁷. By 1823, except the Madras long cloth, all other piece goods lost market in England¹⁰⁸. Company's export trade in textiles was ruined. The weavers were thrown into misery and their industries nearly ruined. Among them there were many Muslim weavers and textile traders.

By the end of eighteenth century the English free merchants, the Nabobs, grew. The control of trade got transferred from covenanted servants to the free merchants. Trade firms took up the place of loosely associated individuals. This was a real challenge to the individual local traders both Muslims and Hindus¹⁰⁹. Joint stock companies were formed with influential and confident merchants as share holders and money was advanced to the producers of textiles through the contractors. There were money lenders to advance to the English for the duration of the voyage and the rate of interest was very high up to 30%. The English ships carried Coromandel piece goods and returned with silver that overflowed into Manila from Spanish America. The profit earned by them was very high¹¹⁰. When the East India Company lost its trade monopoly, private English merchants took up the place. They competed still vigorously with native merchants in all the traditional markets and commodities. The English administration showed racial discrimination against the native traders and favoured the English merchants.

The English tried to curb rival commercial competitions. To safeguard the English shipping interest an act was passed in 1814 restricting Indian shipping and ships employing Indian sailors. Indian built ships were prohibited in Indo British trade from 1814. The act stipulated that the ships entering English waters whose crew were not atleast 75% English, were liable to forfeiture, while the Captain in all these ships had to be White British. Local shipping was discouraged by discriminatory tariffs. In the Madras presidency, in 1872 the import duty on goods brought by the Indian ships was raised to 15% compared with 7 1/2% in the case of English ships. These measures dealt an effective

blow to native shipping and reduced it to insignificance in Indo-British trade by 1840¹¹¹. A corollary to these changes was the fact that the traditional Indian merchants, Hindus as well as Muslims ceased to play a major role in the external seaborne trade of India.

The English also monopolised certain commodities. Monopoly of the Indian products by the English meant that the Indian merchants were prohibited from buying commodities directly from the producers. The agents of the Company and Company servants forced such goods on the Indian merchants at a price higher than the prevailing ones.¹¹² The Indian merchants had to acquiesce..

The political, trade and other general policies of the English affected the maritime trade of the Muslims to a large extent. They were the most oppressed among the native traders under the English rule. Though the English supported the maritime trading activities of the Muslims in the early years of their ascendancy, their policy towards them changed in the later periods and thus the English had an ambivalent attitude towards the Muslims. Bearing all the difficulties, the Muslim vessels operated from PortoNovo, Cuddalore, and Nagapattanam to the ports of Burma, Ache and Malacca. From the Madura coast trade with Ceylon was brisk¹¹³. The Nawab of Arcot wanted to develop the ports at Kovalam, Santhome and Alambaram relying on the Muslim Shipping. But it was not attended to.

The English thought that influential Muslim merchants created problems for the Company's relationship with the Nawab. There were occasional disputes with the Muslims in the collection of customs.

The Muslim ship owners and traders moved to places favourable to them. The attempt of the English in the second half of the eighteenth century to attract Muslim traders to PortoNovo failed¹¹⁴. The growth of Pondicherry port under the French was an attraction to the Muslim traders of PortoNovo. The customs duty at Pondicherry was only half of that in Cuddalore. When the native traders represented for the reduction in the customs rate the Directors rejected it¹¹⁵. Rice and grain trade from the Coromandel to Ceylon continued to be an important activity of Coromandal Muslims. In the long run it was also affected by the hike in tariffs.

Further, the English were favourable to Hindu Chettiar merchants. They were nominated as their chief agents and principal traders at Madras. It is also a fact that Chettiar merchants were in a better financial position than the Muslim traders. The English felt that the Hindus were a docile group and very dependent on English power¹¹⁶. K.N.Choudury alleges that the English East India Company itself seldom made use of the Muslim merchants. At a point of time, the English considered the Muslim merchants as their enemies due to their common religion with the Mughal rulers¹¹⁷. Mujib opines that the British have been the cause of the economic ruins of the Indian Muslims and the British administration had taken fierce revenge on the Muslims for their participation in the upheaval of 1857-58¹¹⁸. The maritime trade of the Muslims of the Coromandel was viewed differently after the mutiny. Though the religious animosity of the English towards Muslims may not be comparable to that of the Portuguese or the Dutch yet the English discriminated

against them because of their political and economic compulsions.

The British administration was not very serious about the maritime activities of the natives. The Muslims had to share the fate along with other native traders. Only few Marakkayar maritime traders and ship owners survived the economic storm. There were few wealthy Marakkayar traders engaged in trade with Ceylon and in coastal trade in the scattered pockets of Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli. The trading activities of many of the families dominating the Coromandel coast was engulfed by the British economic power and supreme shipping technology and by 1900 the glorious history of the Coromandel Muslims' maritime activities faded away in to silence.

Thus the occupation of the Coromandel region by various European colonial powers and their commercial and political activities, right from the sixteenth century to the dawn of the twentieth, has played a major role in the maritime activities of the region and one of the results was the ultimate economic downfall of the maritime Muslims.

Note and References

1. W.H.Moreland, *Akbar to Aurangzeb - A study in Indian Economic History* (London, 1923) pp. 6- 8\
2. K.S.Mathew, *Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth Century*, (New Delhi, 1983) p. 50.
3. C.R.Boxer, *The Portuguese Sea Borne Empire 1415 -1825* (London, 1969) p.98; K.S.Mathew, op.cit. p. 55
4. K.S. Mathew, op.cit. p.55
5. Ibid pp. 60 - 62
6. W.H.Moreland, op.cit.p.9
7. *The Itinerary of Lodovico de Varthma of Bologna from 1502 - 1508* (London, 1928) (ed.) J.W.Jones p.72
8. Sanjay Subramaniam op.cit p.98
9. Robert Sewell, *A forgotten Empire (Rpt)* New Delhi, 1987) p.119.
10. Sanjay Subramaniam, op.cit. p. 103.
11. Ibid.p.105
12. Barbosa, op.cit II pp 74 - 78 , 120 - 124
13. For Paravas, see S.C.Chitty "Remarks on origin and history of the Paravas "JRAS. 1837, pp 130 - 134; Ramnad District Manual, (Madras, 1889) pp. 39-40; Thurston VI pp. 140 - 155; James Hornel, "The Chank shell in Ancient Indian Life and religion, QJMS (Bangalore 1913); *The sacred Chank of India* (Madras 1914) *The Chank shell cult in India* (Bombay, 1942); Pate, *Tinneveli Gazetteer*, p. 230 K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *Pandya Kingdom* (London, 1928) pp. 52-53.
14. M.Joseph - Costelloe, (Tr), *Francis Xavier his Life and Times* (Rome, Italy, 1977) II. P. 259-60

15. Ibid. pp. 264-65
16. Castets, "How Nagapattanam in 1642 became the first Portuguese possession in the Coromandel," *Journal of Bombay Historical Society*, V. 1939, p. 139; C.Sivarathnam, *Tamils in Ceylon*, (Jasffna, 1959) p.147
17. R.Sathianatha Iyer, op.cit. pp. 123 - 124.
18. S.Arasaratnam, "Commercial policies of Sethupathis of Ramanathapuram 1660 - 1690, " Proceedings of the Second International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, 1967 vol.. II, pp. 251-260.
19. Sanjay Subramaniyan, "Stay on the Portuguese of Southern Coromandel in the late Seventeenth Century", *Indian Economic and social History Review*, 1985, pp. 22.4
20. Sheik Zainudeen's, *Tuhfat-al-Majahidin*, p.81; Comdr., K.N.Bhil, " Pilot Ibn Majid op.cit.
21. K.M.Panikkar, op.cit., p.94
22. Sanjay subramaniyan, *Political Economy*, op.cit. pp. 103-104.
23. Stephen F.Dale, *Islam and social conflict, - The Mapillas of Malabar 1498 - 1922* (Oxford, 1980) p. 36; R.S. White way, *The Rise of Portuguese power in India* (London, 1839) p. 139
24. *Tuhfat - al-Mujahidin*, op.cit p. 60
25. St.Xavier, op.cit p. 259
26. James Hornel, *The sacred chank*, op.cit. p.4
27. St.Xavier, op.cit p. 259
28. ibid
29. S.Arasaratnam, "*Ceylon in Indian Ocean trade 1500 - 1800*, "*India and Indian ocean 1500 - 1800* (ed) Ashindas Gupta and M.N.Pearson, (Calcutta, 1987) pp. 224 - 238

30. D.G.E. Hall, *A History of South East Asia* (London, 1985) pp. 201 – 206
31. C.R.De silva, "Muslim traders in Indian Ocean in the Sixteenth Century and the Portuguese impact, *Avenues to Antiquary, Muslims in Srilanka* (ed) MM.Shukri (Srilanka, 1986) pp. 147-165
32. M.N.Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarath, The Response to the Portuguese in 16th Century* (Berkely 1976) p.4.
33. K.S.Mathew, op.cit p. 103
34. K.S.Mathew, "Trade in Indian Ocean during the 16th century and the Portuguese" paper presented in the International Symposium on Maritime History, Pondicherry University, 1989
35. *ibid.*
36. *Documenta Indica*, (ed) Jose Wicks Rome, (Institute of Historicum Societatis Lesu 1948 – 79). II p. 130
37. K.S.Mathew, *Portuguese in Malabar*, op.cit. p. 106
38. C.R.De.Silva, op.cit.
39. T.I.Poonen, *The Dutch Beginning in India proper* (1930)
40. Sanjay Subramaniyan, *Political Economy*, op.cit p. 168.
41. Tapan Roy Choudry, *Jan Company in Coromandel 1605 – 1690, A study in Inter Relations of European Commerce and Traditional Economics* (The Hague, 1963) pp. 15 – 16
42. Sanjay Subramanian *Political Economy*, op.cit p. 168
43. C.S.Srinivasachari, op.cit pp.110 – 111, 117, 147
44. V.Viriddhagirisani, op.cit p. 101; *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V.p. 127

45. S.Arasaratnam, *Copanies and Commerce*, op cit. p.66
46. *ibid.*, 73-76
47. R.Sathianatha Iyer, op.cit pp. 242 - 244, A Arasaratnam, Madura kingdom, op.cit; Arasaratnam, *companies and commerce*, op.cit. p. 80.
48. S.Arasaratnam, Madura Kingdom. Op.cit. R.Sathianatha Iyer, op.cit p. 260.
49. S.Arasaratnam Dutch East India Company and kingdom of Madura 1650 - 1700, *Tamil Culture* Vol X 1963 pp 48-63., R.Sathianatha Iyer, op.cit; S.Arasaratnam, "politics and society in Tamil Nadu 1600 - 1800 A view in Historical perspective", Proceedings of the Third International Conference seminar of Tamil studies Souvenir, Paris 1970; S.Arasaratnam, "Slave Trade in the 17th Century", paper presented in the Second International Symposium, on Maritime studies, Pondicherry University, Dec. 1991; S.Arasaratnam, *Copanies and Commerce*, op. cit. p. 72
50. S. Raju, *Thanjai Maratia Mannar Seppeddugal* -50, op. cit, p, 1-6; Bumal, *Elements of South Indian Palaeography* (1878) p .93 Sewell, The antiquarian Remain in the presidency of Madras, p , 281;
51. S Arasaratnam "Commerical policies." op.cit
52. *Corpus Diplomaticum Neirlande indicum., Vol II* (ed) J.E. Heers . (The Hague, 1934) pp.532-36, as quoted by Arasaratanam, in , Commercial Policy.
53. Governor and council of Ceylon to the Governor General and Council, 17th Oct. 1678, Koloniale Archief 1222 and 51 ,and 18th June 1680 ,1224 -32 as quoted by S.Arasaratnam , in Commercial Policy; S. Arasaratnam, "A Note on Periathambi Marakkayar, a 17th Century commercial magnat," *Tamil Culture* Vol. X.I 1964 pp. 1-7

54. *Corpus Diplomaticum Neirlande indicum*, III pp. 370-71, 378-80 as quoted by S.Arasaratnam, in Commercial policy.
55. S.Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, op.cit. p. 82.
56. Yusuf khan's letter to Madras council received on 15th June 1760, *M.C.C.*Vol.8, pp. 194 - 95 and 205. p. 218, 5th July 1760
57. Mohamed Ali's letter to Madras Council 25th Feb. 1776, *M.C.C.* Vol.25 p. 12.
58. Alexander Wynch and Council, 4th July 1775, letter to court of Directors - Military Despatches to England, Vol. 10 pp.85 - 86
59. H.R.Pate, *Tinneiveli Gazetteer*, I. p.77
60. D.A.Kotalawale, "Muslims under Dutch rule in Srilanka 1638 - 1769", in, *Muslims of Srilanka* (ed) M.M.Shukri, pp 167 -185.
61. S.Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, op,cit. p. 70:71; G.V.Scammel, "The pattern of Erupoean Trade in Indian Ocean, C. 1500 - 1700," paper presented in the First International Symposium of Maritime History pondicherry University, Feb 1989
62. S.Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, op.cit p. 43
63. Sanjay Subramanian and David Shalman, " Prince of poets and ports Chithakkathi the Marakkayar of Ramnad."
64. S.Arasaratnam, A note on Periathambi Marakkayar, op.cit.
65. Vijaya Ramasamy, *Textiles and weavers in Medieval South India*. (New Delhi, SI985) p. 145
66. S.Arunachalam, *History of Pearl Fishery of Tamil Coast*, pp. 123 - 128; James Hornel "Indian Pearl fishery in the Gulf of Manaar and Palk Bay," *Madras Fisheries Bulletin* No. XVI 1922. p. 29.

67. V.O.C.Record, 1615 II 653 V (TNA)
68. D.A.Kotalawale, Muslims under Dutch rule in Srilanka op.cit.
69. *Dutch in Malabar – Selections from the Records of the Madras Government.* Dutch record No. 13 (1911) – pp 85; C.R.Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415 – 1825* (London, 1969) pp. 142 – 143.
70. Owen C.Kail, *The Dutch in India*, (New Delhi. 1981) p. 107
71. S.P.Sen, *French in India, The First establishment and Struggle* (Calcutta, 1947) pp 321 – 41.
72. S.Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, op.cit p. 92.
73. G.B.Mellesan op.cit p. 74 – 78 *Gazetteer of Union Territory of Pondicherry* (1989) I p. 169; A.R.P. Diary 1 pp 49, 50 – 53. Saroja Sundarajan, *Glimpses of Karaikkal* (Madras, 1985) p. 18 ; B.S.Baliga, *Thanjavur District Gazetteer Hand Book* 1957) p. 348. Robert Orms, *History of Military Transactions of the British Nations in Indostan* I p. 623.
74. *Pondicherry Gazetteer*, p. 225.
75. S.Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, op.cit 157; Chief of Cuddalore to the president and Council; 13 March 1687 – 8 Public Dept. Sundries III; B.Krishnamoorthy, “The French East India company and the Indegenous Merchant Community in the Coramandel during Seventeenth Eighteenth Centuries”, paper presented in the second international symposium on Maritime Studies, Pondicherry University, Dec. 1991; A.R.P. Diary II, p. 165.
76. B.Krishnamoorthy op.cit; Chief of Cuddalore to President and Council 12 March 1678, Commander Rochester to President and Council, 15 march 1678; Public Sundries, III; A.R.P. Diary I p. 216, IV p. 214.
77. A.R.P. Diary I, II p. 165

78. *ibid* I p. 216
79. *ibid* II p. 143
80. *ibid* I p. 200
81. V.Vriddhagirisan *op.cit*, p. 94; S.Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, *op.cit* p. 298; Donald Fergusson, "The Danes at Tranquebar and Sherampore *JRAS* 1898 p. 625; T.Venkatasamy Rao, *Manual of District of Tanjore* (1883) p. 754; Hunter, *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XIII, p. 183.
82. William Forster, *English Factories*, Vol. I.p.266.
83. Tapan Ray Choudry, *Jan Company in Coromandel* *op.cit*. pp. 113- 114.
84. *ibid*. 186.
85. K.Rajayyan, Madurai, *Op.cit*. p.218
86. FSG, *Public Consultation* Vol 339, 17th Feb. 1808 pp. 1314 - 1315; Vol., 340, 15 March 1808 pp. 2127 - 30.
87. *ibid*
88. S.Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, *op.cit* p. 92.
89. Sanjay Subramanayan, *Political Economy*, *op.cit* p. 174.
90. E.R.James, *Official Hand Book of Madras* (1935) pp. 33-34. H.D.Love *Vestiges of Old Madras* - pt. I pp 344 - 45
91. Farman of Nawab Zulfikarkhan to Elihu Yale 16th December 1690, Fort St.George Consultation Book, 1691; H.D.Love, *op.cit*.pp. 463, 512 - 18
92. W.Francis, *op.cit*. p. 40
93. Charles Floyer in Council 22 May 1749 Fort st. David, Consultation, Vol. 17 p. 143; K.R.Subramanayan, *The Maratha Raja's of Thanjavur* (1928) *op.cit* p. 51 Thanjavur Saraswathi Mahal Modi Script (Trans) 9 - 4
94. H.D.Love, *op.cit* II p. 431 - 432. A.R.P.Diary, Vol VIII pp. 157 - 158.

95. A Collection of Treaties, vol V.p.180 - 181; K.Rajayyan, Madurai op.cit p. 163.
96. Charles Smith in Council, 15 May 1781, *M.C.C.* Vol. p. 1187; A collection Military dispatches to England Vol 18. p.341.
97. A collection of treaties, vol V No. XI William Medows in Council, 7 Aug and 24 Sept 1790, *M.C.C.* Vol.139. p. 3607, 3346. A collection of Treaties vol. V - The Carnatic Treaty 1792. Edward Lord Clive in Council I I Oct. 1798, *M.C.C.* Vol. 88, pp. 3179 - 3181; Edward Lord Clive in Council, 6 May 1800, *M.C.C.* Vol 268 pp. 2681 - 2691; Sir Charles Okelay in Council 21 Aug. 1792, *M.C.C.* vol 160, p. 3825. Lord Clive in Council 31st Oct. 1800; Secret Consultations Vol.II, pp. 756 - 758 Lord Clive in Council, 15th Oct. 1798, Commercial dispatches to England, vol.6 pp. 300 - 324. The Treaty of Carnatic, 31st July 1801, in Secret Consultation vol. I pp. 786 - 801
98. *Seethakkathi Nondi Natakam*, Stanza 158; *FSG Diary and Consultation Book*, 1690, p. 7; Madras Tercentenary volume 1939, pp. 65 - 66.
99. S.Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, op.cit p. 212
100. *ibid* p. 153.
101. *ibid*
102. *ibid* p. 192
103. S.Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, op.cit p. 203; *Judicial consultations* Vol 185 A/28 June 1825 p. 1417 - 19; Thirunelveli District Record Vol. 1014 - 17 March 1825 p. 2482.
104. Holden Furber, *Jane Company at work, A study of European Expansion in India in the late Eighteenth century* (Oxford 1951) p. 17 C.H.Philip, *The East India Company*

- 1784 - 1834 (Oxford, 1961) p. 23; J.W.Kaye *Administration of the East India Company 1773 - 1834* (Oxford, 1951) p. 31. C.Ramachandran, *East India Company and South Indian Economy* (Madras, 1980) pp. 1- 2; Commercial Despatches to England, 9th Aug. 1799. K.N.Choudri, *The Trading world of Asia and the English East India Company 1660 - 1760* (Cambridge, 1978) p. 476; TNA Thanjavur District Records, Vol 3349/1779 pp. 4 - 12; *Public Consultations* vol 184 A 12-2 - 1793 pp 262/65.
105. *FSG Public Consultations*, 23, October 1812; TNA Thirunelveli District Record, Vol 3587/1811, pp 428 - 38, vol 3594/1817, p. 2415; TNA Tanjore District Record Vol 3327/1803 pp. 13-19; vol 3349/1779
106. C.W.C.Cotton *op.cit.*p.63
107. C.Ramachandran, *op.cit* p. 63
108. Commercial Despatches from England, 26th May 1823; Amallesh Thiriripathi, *Trade and Finance in Bengal presidency* (New Delhi 1956) p. 227
109. Hendry Dodwell, *The Nobobs of Madras* (Rpt.New Delhi, 1986) p. 12.
110. *ibid.*, p. 129
111. Kernial Sing Sandhur, *Indians in Malaya, Migration and Settlements 1786 - 1957*, (Cambridge 1969) pp. 32 - 33; Sarada Raju, *Economic Condition of Madras Presidency 1800 - 1850*, (Madras University) p. 222; *Supplement to the IV the Report of the East India Company* app. 47; pp. 23 - 24.
112. Ramakrishna Mukharji, *The Rise and Fall of East India Company*, (Bombay 1973) pp. 304 - 305.
113. S.Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, *op.cit.* p. 199.
114. Despatches to England, 17 Aug, 1717 p. 117; Despatches

- from England, 8 Jan 1717 - 18 p. 112. Despatches to England, 17 Aug. 1717, p. 117; Despatches from England, 8 Jan 1717-18, p. 112;
115. Despatches from England 17 Oct. 1718 p. 13.
116. S.Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, op.cit 209
117. K.N.Chouduri op.cit pp. 149 - 150
118. M.Mujib, op.cit p. 525.

Chapter VI

Maritime Activities of the Coromandel Muslims

Part I

The land division of the coastal region according to Tamil tradition is called, Neithal. Naturally people living in Neithal land had to depend on the sea and its products for their livelihood. Their occupations were centered around the sea. An old Tamil poem describes the occupation and activities of the people of Neithal as follows: boating, chank and pearl fishing, swimming, searching for marine products, fishing, guiding about the rocks under the sea and the sea currents, selling fish, manufacture of salt, predicting astronomical data and forecasting weather conditions, to sail in ships and undertaking voyages to other countries for trade¹. From very ancient times all these maritime occupations were undertaken by low castes among the native Hindus who were called Parathavars (later known as Paravas). For, the upper Hindu castes, i.e. dwija or twice born castes, crossing the sea was prohibited by custom. Therefore generally the upper caste Hindus did not take up maritime activities involving seafaring. During the middle ages a sizable population of the coastal region was Islamised and they engaged in all of these maritime activities particularly the Marakkayars and Labbais. For

the voyages on the sea and across the seas the people of the Neithal used various kinds of vessels. The names of such vessels used by the ancient Tamils are found in the Tamil literary works right through the Sangam Age. A few of them are Vangam², Umpi³, Nawai⁴, Dhoney⁵, Kalam⁶, Madhalai⁷, Pathai, Punai, Thonnai, Paru, Podam, Panri, Thimil, Pattihai, Paduvai, Midavai and Odam⁸. The parts of these vessels are also described in detail in these literature⁹. The word Kappal seems to be a very late origin, by about 16th century.

The maritime activities of the early Muslim traders of the Coromandel Coast were closely linked with the spread of Islam and Muslim settlements. There were powerful incentives for the Muslims to pursue commercial activities. Prophet Mohamed himself was a trader and what was done by him was a sunnat (tradition) for the Muslims. Further the Quran declares that Allah has allowed trading. (Quran:2:275). At the time of the rise of Islam in the seventh century A.D. the Persians and the Arabs from West Asia and the Malays from Southeast Asia shared the trade of the Indian ocean via the Coromandel ports to the great centres of Malacca, Ceylon and Cambay. As summed up by Toussaint "with the advent of Islam in the seventh century A.D., the Arabs conquered Persia, controlled the Persian Gulf. Under the Abbasid Caliphs Islamic sea power was at its height. With the decline of the Abbasids in the tenth century A.D. and the rise of the Fatimides in Egypt, the centre of Islamic sea power shifted from the Persian Gulf to Red Sea, while Muslim colonies developed in east Africa and peninsular India"¹⁰.

The spread of Islam paved way for the emergence of powerful Muslim trading communities in peninsular

India. Peninsular India occupies a central position in this region and its vital role in trade is undeniable. With the rise of the Islamic power in West Asia, the Muslims lost no time in spreading their influence in the ports of peninsular India among the Hindu communities along the coast with whom they had already established friendly and close trade relations. They also tried to spread their new faith, the Islam. In the course of time, Arab settlements grew into powerful native Muslim trade settlements.

Malabar was a vital link in Muslim trade in the Indian ocean. The Chola sea power was a serious obstruction in the eleventh century to the growth of Muslim influence. One of the first important measures taken by Chola Raja Raja I towards the end of the tenth century A.D., was to secure the Malabar coast in an engagement at Kandalurchalai and to conquer the Laccadives and Maldives islands. This was intended to curb the Arab influence in Indian ocean trade. After the decline of the Chola power in the twelfth century the Muslim influence increased and they enjoyed a major role in the sea-borne trade of the region¹¹.

The Coromandel ports became the favoured settlements of the Muslim traders. Kayal was the principal port in the thirteenth century where Muslims were the principal traders. It was also the chief port for trade with Ceylon, Malacca and the Persian gulf. Kilakkarai, Devipattanam, Tondi and Nagapattanam also became busy ports and important Muslim centres of trade. These maritime towns played a crucial economic role in the pre-colonial Coromandel coast. The import of horses was one of the earliest specialities. By the early fourteenth century, the armies of the Pandya rulers

were supplied with west Asian horses, shipped in by the Muslim traders to Kayal, Periapattanam and Kilakkarai from the great international enterpots of the Persian gulf.

In this, an important agency had been established here by an Arab chief who is described by Muslim historians as Malikkul Islam Jamaludin the ruler of Kis. He was very influential in the Pandyan Kingdom. The establishment of this agency was necessiated by the growth of horse trade. According to the account of Wassaf, as many as 10,000 horses were imported into the Coromandel ports of which Jamaludin's share was considerable. The most important item of trade from the Arabian ports was indeed horses. Marcopolo who visited Kayal at the end of thirteenth century has left detailed record about the horse trade at Kayal. Kayal was also an important link in horse trade to Ceylon¹².

The diverse Muslim communities of peninsular India had a significant role to play in the Indian ocean trade in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries until they were ousted by the European powers. By the end of twelfth century, the naval power of the Cholas and the Sylendras completely declined and many mercantile communities of peninsular India began to claim a major role in Indo-Ceylon trade and in trans oceanic trade. Soon they were able to secure a dominant role in the maritime trade of India and an enviable share of the seaborne trade in Malacca, the Indonasian islands, Java, Aden and Maldives. The Muslims controlled much of the region's trade in gem stones and pearls. Many Muslim port centres also served as outlets for the international trade in cotton piece goods. After the destruction of Bagdad in the middle of the thirteenth

century by the Mangols, the Arab activities in the East became restricted. In fact at the end of fifteenth century the Arabs had lost their supreme position in the sea borne trade¹³. The Gujarathi Muslims and Tamil Muslims took the Indian ocean trade from the Arabs.

The fifteenth century Chinese sea farers comment on the commercial links of Nagapattanam with Sumatra, Java and the Burmese ports. In the sixteenth century Adirampattanam, Kilakkarai, Nagapattanam, PortoNovo and Pulicat were among the region's most active textile export centres. Muslim sea going men from Pulicat and Nagapattanam carried Coromandel piece goods to Mocha, Malacca and Burma. Even in the late nineteenth century, these Muslim ports still had links with the great international exchange centres of the Indonesian archipelago and the Malay Peninsula¹⁴.

The Gujarathi Muslims handled much of the trade to Aden, Malacca, Sumatra and ports in the Bay of Bengal. Around the same time, Tamil Muslim traders played an influential role in the Southeast Asian trade though not perhaps to the same extent as the Gujarathis. Pearson says that details are unfortunately not available but the dominance of Tamil Muslims is clear from the evidence we have in the Malay annals regarding the affluence and political influence enjoyed by the Tamil Muslims in the Kingdoms of Malacca, Java, in the fifteenth century and the significant role they played in the trade of the Malay world¹⁵. The Gujarathi Muslim ships might have freighted for the Coromandel Muslims, when they touched the coast.

The religious ties and association of the converts with the Muslims of other nations opened new fields

of service to them in the mercantile towns. The increase in the number of ships in trading activities necessiated more personnel to man them. The Tamil Muslim took up such jobs in the ships and were ready to travel for long distances. They also entered into trade in a variety of subsidiary roles such as brokers, jobbers and retailers. The poorest among them became porters and packers. The native Muslims were the channel through which foreign goods were distributed either on barter or for money among the people¹⁶. There were many others who were in the upper strata of the society and they enjoyed a better position. It is possible that such people were mainly the traditional trading communities who were converts to Islam and the growing influence of Islam facilitated their uplift. Along with the Muslims, the Chettiars were profitably engaged in oceanic trade. Their economic power was bigger and not comparable with that of the Muslims.

The men who took Islam across the Bay of Bengal were the members of mercantile communities. Tamil Muslim merchants did a lot in this direction. The Gujarathi Muslims also had served this cause but the Tamil influence was deep rooted. It was principally the efforts of these small groups of scribes, mystics, missionaries to a lesser degree their mercantile patrons coupled with the political and economic ambitions of the local rulers that set Islam on the march across the Malay world¹⁷. Marcopolo who visited Sumatra in 1292 mentions about the Muslim traders who influenced the natives of the place to embrace Islam¹⁸. Most of these merchants may have been from the Coromandel since the Muslims of many islands of the Southeast Asian region had adopted as their own the prefixes such as Labbai.

The influence of Tamil Muslims was so great that it had an impact on the political fortunes of Malacca from the fifteenth century. They played a significant role in the political life of these countries. Through diplomatic ties, marriage, presents and general goodwill, these Muslims became great favourites with the kings and obtained many concessions. They became not only prominent in the commerce of the ports but gradually became powerful force in the royal court intrigues of Malacca and were in a position to make kings and ministers¹⁹.

The third ruler of Malacca, Raja Ibrahim was dethroned and murdered in a coup by a Tamil Muslim, led by the elder brother Raja Kasim, in the year 1446. Raja Kasim's mother was the daughter of a rich Tamil merchant from Pase. The Tamil uncle Tun Perak was instrumental in placing Raja Kasim on the throne. After this, Malacca became a Muslim political power of the first rank. Tun Perak was also responsible for the territorial expansion of Malacca and for the defeat of the Siamese. Thus he extended his influence over the commercial and foreign policies of Malacca. Tun Perak and his successors were very powerful and were the real rulers; the rulers on the throne were only figure heads. Tamil Tun Ali was one of the Sahubandar. (chief merchant) Malacca was the most important commercial centre in Southeast Asia during this period. It was also main diffusion centre for Islam²⁰. Malacca propagated Islam and converted the island of Java.

It was at this stage that the position of Muslims was seriously affected by the intrusion of the Portuguese in Indian waters. The Muslims were subordinated and ruthlessly attacked. Eventually Muslim trade began to

decline. The effects of the Portuguese presence were deeper along the Malabar coast than in the Coromandel. Hence Muslims of the Coromandel were able to continue their trade ventures with the Southeast Asian countries. The Portuguese appeared in Malacca waters as early in 1510 as the rivals of the Tamil Muslims in trade and politics. The Portuguese were hostile to the Muslims where ever they found them, in their homeland as well as in the far off lands where they traded. The Tamil Muslims persuaded the Sultan of Malacca to take stringent action against the Portuguese. However Malacca was captured by the Portuguese in 1511 and the Sultan escaped to the island of Bentang in the straits of Singapore. Thereafter the Tamil Muslim traders avoided Malacca and transferred their trade interest to Brunei, Johore, Perak, Ache and other trade emporias in Southeast Asia, which became new centres of Islam and they became the allies of the rulers of the respective countries²¹. It can be said here that the Coromandel trade and Islamisation went hand in hand in the region. In this we find a striking similarity with the activities of the Portuguese though the methods were different.

However the failure of the Sultan to thwart the Portuguese at Malacca appears to have given added stimulus to the spread of Islam over much of the Malay world. In this the Tamil Muslim merchants enjoyed greater advantages in the Malaccan Muslim ports, than the Hindus. In due course of time, they emerged as the sole shippers in Malacca²². Thus the Muslim merchants kept their trade alive because of the active support from the royal courts in Southeast Asia.

The Portuguese favoured the Chettiar merchants to keep the Malacca trade going on. But the Hindu mer

chants found it extremely difficult to compete with their Muslim colleagues and were compelled to sell or rent their remaining shipping and arranged port to port conveyance of goods in Muslim vessels and confined themselves to transactions like money lending and brokerage. The same sort of changeover took place among the Tamil Hindu merchants of the Coromandel coast also²³.

Textiles constituted the major portion of exports from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Cotton piece goods with gold thread were exported from Pulicat, Mylapore, PortoNovo, Nagapattanam and Nagore, to Malacca, Sumatra, Borneo, Siam, Tennaserim, Pegu, Persia, South Arabia and other Red Sea ports. Animal skins were sent to Batavia for being sent to Japan. Indigo was exported from PortoNovo. Slaves were exported to Ceylon and other Eastern countries from Pulicat, PortoNovo, Nagapattanam and Tuticorin. The Muslim traders vigorously took part in these trading activities.

The major category of import was pepper and spices. They were imported into the Coromandel from Malabar both by land and sea, and also from the Southeast Asian Ports, particularly Ache. This shows pepper was cheap in Sumatra and transport cost was not very high. Nutmeg, cloves and cardamom came from Southeast Asian ports and cinnamon from Ceylon. Elephants, horses, tin, copper and dyes were other items of import. Tin, a commodity of demand in the Coromandel was imported from Ache, Malacca, Perak, Kedah, Ayuthya, Tennaserim and Ujang-Salang, Copper came from Ayuthaya and Tennaserim and lead from Burma. Camphor and incense, the major items in South Indian rituals came from Japan and Southeast Asia.

The neighbouring island of Ceylon supplied a variety of goods like pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, palmyrah, coconut, coir products and areca to the Coromandel. An important item of import was the elephants, the speciality of the merchants of Coromandel coast. Elephants came from Ache, Kedah, Perak, Tenneserim, Pegu, Thailand and Ceylon to the ports of PortoNovo and Nagapattanam. Muslim rulers and Nayaks purchased them for their army. Palayakkars and chieftains of the region purchased them to keep up their dignity and prestige. Horse trade was not so attractive in the Coromandel from the seventeenth century. A few imports only were reported from Persia and later from Ache. The merchants brought silver and precious stones from various centres to the Coromandel in return for their goods. The Coromandel Muslims utilised the patronage of the Sultans of the Southeast Asian countries and also worked together with the traders of those countries and carried on a flourishing trade²⁴.

In Malacca, the Tamil Muslims were active businessmen and the Coromandel goods were sold at a profit of 50 to 100% after deducting 18% freight charges and other duties. The role played by these *klings*, as they were called, was very important. But they were generally known as Cholias in many towns of Malacca. The habitation of these Muslims was called Cholia street. Tamil was prevalent and it was the language for trade in Malacca. Well todo families in Malacca made their children learn Tamil²⁵.

The Cholia Muslims enjoyed a dominant status in Ayuthya and Pegu. They held high offices in the Island of Ujang Salang and in the neighbouring Bengari when one of the Cholia Muslims was its governor

during the last quarter of the seventeenth century. The Coromandel Muslims were so rich that they purchased ships built in Kedah and Johore and one such trader is identified as a Marakkayar from PortoNovo²⁷. The rulers of Kedah and Johore sent their ships to the Coromandel ports where the Cholia merchants negotiated goods for them. Thus the Coromandel trade was initiated both ways. A Coromandel Labbai was a prominent ally of the Sultan of Jahore and he was the economic advisor of the region²⁸.

However, the establishment of the trading companies by the Dutch, the English, the Danes and the French and the residual trade of the Portuguese were a stiff competition to the Tamil Muslim merchants in the Southeast Asian ports. When the Dutch took over Malacca in 1641, the Coromandel Muslims traded with the passes issued by the Dutch. The Dutch had no violent religious feud with the Muslims but considered them as their main trade rivals.

From the third quarter of seventeenth century, the Cholia Muslims of PortoNovo, Devanampattanam, Nagore, Nagapattanam and Tranquebar undertook bulk trade with Bantam. In this they utilised the help of the Danes in Tranquebar. The Danes had six large ships which were set apart solely for freight to Bantam. The Coromandel Muslims fully utilised this freight service. About 150 merchants could sail in a ship with their merchandise. The main commodity of export was textiles and the merchants returned with a variety of goods but mainly with gold and silver. The Coromandel Muslim traders entered into partnership with the merchants of Java, Malaya and Borneo who were trading in the Bantam ports. The Sultan of Bantam himself was a trader prince and he

was the chief trader in his ports. His ships sailed to Pulicat, PortoNovo and Nagapattanam. The Coromandel Muslims acted as his agents in these ports. The Sultan of Bantam bought vessels from the Coromandel, probably from Muslim ship builders of Nagapattanam and PortoNovo²⁹.

The Coromandel Muslims undertook southward trade to Ceylon, Malabar and the Maldives. The volume of trade in this direction was great. About 250 vessels plied between Jaffna and the Coromandel ports, most of them belonged to the Coromandel Muslims. The Muslims of PortoNovo, Nagore, Nagapattanam, Adirampattanam, Muthupettai, Tondi, Kilakkarai, Kulasekarapattanam, Kayalpattanam and other minor ports were in trade with Ceylon. Many of the Tamil Muslims in the coastal towns of Ceylon had their original home in their homeland. Thus they had a dual domicile. Apart from this, Tamil maritime Muslim merchants particularly Marakkayars and Labbais, who had lesser capital or smaller dhoneyes were engaged in areca trade with Ceylon and sold them in the nearest Coromandel ports³⁰. The English freighted their ships from the Coromandel eastward to Syriam, Mergui, Kedha, Ache, Macassar and Bantam, mostly from Madras. These ships touched PortoNovo to pickup more goods. The Muslim traders of PortoNovo freighted their goods in such vessels of the English³¹.

In the homeland, the Coromandel Muslims had the support of some native rulers. The Sethupathis of Ramanathapuram extended their support to the Muslim traders. The Muslim traders, Marakkayars and Labbais also preferred to settle in the Sethupathi's ports because

of the overwhelming Parava influence in the Madura ports. Many small Muslim merchants plied their vessels from the Sethupathi's ports to Ceylon, Malabar and in interportal trade. The Dutch were favouring the Paravas against the Muslims whom the Sethupathi supported. When the Dutch secured the Madura ports from the Madurai Nayaks, Muslim traders migrated in large numbers to the Sethupathi's ports. The restrictive policy of the Dutch adversely affected the Coromandel Muslim traders. The restriction on the transport of merchandise through the Pamban canal and the monopoly in chank dealt a severe blow to their trade. The power of the Sethupathi was also at stake. The influential Periathambi Marakkayar family that was prominent in the trade of the area got close to the Sethupathi and had great influence in his policies. The family played multiple roles as merchants, brokers, revenue farmers and intermediaries to the Sethupathi.

Periathambi is a title of the family of Sheik Abdul Quadir Marakkayar of Kilakkarai. Between 1682-1715, we find in the Dutch records atleast three Periathambis. The first reference to the old Periathambi occurs in 1682 in Dutch and English records and he is mentioned as "Pedda Thambe Marcar". When Kilavan Sethupathi had pushed down the Madurai Nayaks from the fishery coasts, he appointed this Periathambi Marakkayar to collect taxes from the coastal communities. This Periathambi, Syed Abdul Quadir Marakkayar, is identified as the father of the celebrated, Seethakkathi alias Syed Abdul Quadir, the patron of poets and a literary figure and philanthropist in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. So, Seethakkathi is to be identified as the second Periathambi of the Dutch records. Arasaratnam calls him the commercial magnate

of seventeenth century. Sanjay Subramaniam calls him as the "Prince of Ports". This Periathambi also enjoyed the confidence of the Sethupathi and he was appointed to high offices in the State. He was the chief strategist in wrecking the Dutch monopoly in the Coromandel coast. The Dutch termed him the evil genius behind the anti Dutch policy of the Sethupathi. The Dutch dreaded him and compelled the Sethupathi to remove him, his son, his brothers and his relatives from all state positions.

The Sethupathi incorporated this Muslim community leader, Periathambi - Seethakkathi, in the state policies and designated him "Vijaya Raghunatha Periathambi", Vijaya Raghunatha, being the name of Sethupathi. According to Dutch records, he is said to have controlled everything in Kilakkarai region and was the second most powerful man in the Ramnad State after the Sethupathi. Thomas Van Rhees, Governor of Ceylon (1692-7) points out in his memoir that the market price of textiles was raised or lowered according to the pleasure of Periathambi who had the entire management of the business in the Coromandel as well as Ceylonese coasts. The Sethupathi in collaboration with Periathambi sent his ships to the Persian gulf and Bengal. The trade of Seethakkathi is extolled by poets in Islamic Tamil works. He is called "Vallal" (great philanthropist) in these literary works. He is said to be the founder builder of the great Jumma Masjid at Kilakkarai, one of the marvels of Dravidian architecture. By 1698 the Dutch realised that they could not carry on their trade without the help of Periathambi Marakkayar and concluded a friendship treaty with him. Then the Marakkayar became the intermediary to the Dutch. He also permitted the Dutch to build a factory at Kilakkarai.

The English records from 1686 mention Periathambi Marakkayar. He was owning a ship building yard and repaired the ships of the East India Company which traded in the region. He supplied rice and pepper to the English. The English had requested the Marakkayar's help to trade in this region, most probably via the Pamban Canal. Since the Dutch records of 1709, mention one young Periathambi, we have to conclude that (Seethakkathi) Periathambi might have died by this time or relieved himself from active trade. After the year 1715, the name of the family of Syed Abdul Quadir does not find prominent place in Dutch records. But the successors of his family continued to play a dominant role in the maritime trade of this region and had big factories, at Kilakkarai and Bengal. They were proud of the Royal patronage enjoyed by their forefathers. In 1862 one of the descendants of Seethakkathi styled himself as Syed Mohamad, S/o. Melapandagasalai Maha Shri Shri Ravikula Muthu Vijaya Raghunatha Sultan Abdul Kadir Marakkayar of Kilakkarai³².

Adam Labbai, Naina Labbai are some other powerful maritime traders of Kilakkarai who were having trade contacts with the Dutch. Another contemporary of Vallal Seethakkathi was Abdul Kasim Marakkayar, a trader of repute. He was the patron of poet Umaru the author of Seerapuranam, the celebrated history of Prophet Mohamed. It is generally believed that Seethakkathi-Periathambi Marakkayar was a patron of poet Umaru and was instrumental in writting of the Seerapuranam. But his name did not find place in the text of Seerapuranam. Since poet Umaru was a contemporary of Seethakkathi, who was also patronised by him like many other poets, it is probable that Abdul Kasim Marakkayar might have continued the work

initiated by Seethakkathi, since Kasim's name is mentioned in twentytwo stanzas in Seerapuram³³.

The vessels of the Muslim merchants of the region were in a brisk trade from Madras ports, at the end of the seventeenth century. We find many Muslim names of ships and their captains in the list of vessels that plied to and from Pegu, Ache, Kedah, Malacca and in coastal trade. Elephant trade from Kedah was significant. Many names of the Coromandel Muslim traders, particularly from PortoNovo and Nagapattanam find place in this list³⁴. It is evident that by the close of the seventeenth century, the Coromandel Muslims had their settlements in Perak, Pegu, Malacca, Kedah, Ache and Ceylon.

The Tamil Muslims penetrated in large numbers into Kedah from Nagapattanam and PortoNovo. In Perak, one Siddhi Labbai was a popular royal merchant (Soudagar Raja). He was a Tamil Muslim and the entire trade of Perak was in his hands³⁵. He had factories at Perak. Siddhi Labbai had contacts with the powerful Labbai and Marakkayar maritime traders in Nagapattanam, Cuddalore and PortoNovo. Large quantities of tin from Perak found its way into these ports in the vessels of Tamil Muslims or was freighted in English vessels for the Tamil Muslims³⁶.

The Tamil Muslims settled in Johore were trading in tin. They stocked large quantities of tin in their factories for shipment. The Danish, from Tranquebar freighted their vessels to Johore for the Cholia Muslims. There was considerable English private trade in Johore. Some of the English private merchants had partnership with Cholia Muslim shippers. The Dutch issued passes to Cholia Muslims to trade in the ports of this country³⁷.

Ache had a strong life line in Coromandel trade. There was regular traffic from PortoNovo and Nagapattanam to Ache. The English freighted in their ships the goods of Tamil Muslims, from PortoNovo and Cuddalore to Ache³⁸. Thus PortoNovo withstood all the European competition and successfully conducted the Asian trade.

The Muslims of the Madura and Ramnad coasts continued their trade with Ceylon inspite of the hostilities by the Dutch. At times they had to resort to clandestine methods and smuggling. In this they had the blessings of the Kandyan king and the Sethupathi. As already seen Periathambi Marakkayar family was the prime activist in this regard. The Dutch were unable to control such activities of the Marakkayars. When the Dutch vigorously tried to eliminate the Coromandel Muslims from the trading activities in the Ceylonese coast, the trade balance of the Dutch was affected. There was shortage of food and cloth in Ceylon. The poor peasant could neither purchase food or cloth at cheaper rates nor sell his agricultural products at higher prices since both ends were encroached by the Dutch monopolistic policy. Thus the commercial economy of Ceylon was closely tied up with that of the Coromandel in which the Muslims played a vital role³⁹. At the close of the seventeenth century, the Dutch adamantly reduced the passes to the Marakkayars of Nagapattanam to Malacca, Maccassar, Bantam, Johore and Ache ports. Permission was denied to trade with Ceylon. Trade to these ports was the main stream of overseas trade. The Muslims utilised the goodwill of the Danes in Tranquebar to continue their trade to the above ports. Thus from the close of the seventeenth century the maritime trade of the Coromandel Muslims met with serious setbacks and their economic condition began to crumble.

PART II**Maritime Trade**

At the beginning of the period of our study - from 1750 - the political uncertainties in the Coromandel hinterland coupled with trade rivalry brought down the quantum of native maritime trade. The conflicts between the ruling powers large and small or major and minor eroded the economy of the region. The English were gaining upper hand against their European rivals. The Dutch power was waning. The production of textiles, the staple commodity of export, was affected in the weaving centres. The maritime traders could not procure goods for the Southeast Asian markets. Consequently exports from the ports got reduced. Native people connected with maritime activities were naturally affected. Many of the ports decayed. Moreover the rise of European companies in Asian trade was another serious challenge in which the traditional markets were shut down to the Coromandel merchants in general and Muslims in particular.

In these adverse conditions the shipping owned by the Muslims began to decline in number. The trading activities were very limited to the ports of Ache, Johore, Perak, Pegu, Arakan, Malay Peninsula and Ceylon. PortoNovo, Nagapattanam, Nagore, Karaikkal, Adirampattanam, Tondi, Kilakkarai, Kayalpattanam and Kulasekarapattanam were busy ports.

The records of Coromandel shipping for the early eighteenth century are not consistent with the shipping that entered and left from the ports. The ships that

entered and left from Madras port are randomly listed in the consultations of the Fort St. George council. Information on some ship owners and records of their voyages, appear in the litigations that came before the Mayor's court. The evidence thus is by no means exhaustive and extensive but there is enough to provide a picture of the ownership and the routes popularly sailed by the native traders⁴⁰. In the eighteenth century Madras emerged as the seat of Coromandel trade. From Madras, there was regular trade to Ceylon, Maldives and Malabar. There was short distance traffic between the ports of Madras, Kovalam, Fort. St. David, Cuddalore, Tranquebar, Pondicherry, PortoNovo, Karaikkal, Nagore and Nagapattanam in which the Tamil Muslims participated. During the period the Hindu merchants were very powerful. They had the favour of the English settlers in Madras. The Komatti, Beri and Baliya Telugu Chettians were influential traders and shipowners⁴¹. The vast resources with them brought them close in to the emerging English power.

But the shipping south of Cuddalore was in the hands of the Muslims. To help the Muslim shipping, the Nawab of Arcot wanted to develop some of the ports like Kovalam, Alabaram and Santhom in their dominion. But it did not yield the desired result. The Cholia Muslims picked up the guantlets and operated their vessels with available resources and merchandise from PortoNovo, Cuddalore, Adirampattinam, Nagore, Nagapattanam, Kulasekarapattanam to Ceylon Malabar and Lacadives. There was regular traffic to Bengal from Coromandel for the import of edible oil and food grains. Rice and textiles were exported to Ceylon in return elephants, areca, pepper, spices, coconut, coir products, pulmyrah timber were imported into the Coromandel.

There was a greater concentration of Cholia Muslims in Kedah, in the eighteenth century. They were in the forefront of maritime commerce in Kedah ports. When the English were trying to establish a factory at Kedah in 1772, the Coromandel Muslims were well knitted in trade of the coast and also in politics. The English representative of Kedah, Monkton writing to the Fort St. George on the 22nd April 1772 has stated that the Cholia Muslims were dominant merchants in the coast and influential in the court. The king Sultan Mohamed was relectant to enter into contract with the English to the detriment of the Cholia Muslims, since he was getting good income from the trade contacts of the Cholias. Elephant trade was very attractive and the Cholia Muslims were engaged in this. Since the Muslim ships had their own security measures the English representative had requested strong guns in the vessels of the English as a protection to the ships⁴². A report of 1789 says that the Cholia Muslims were well settled in the capital of Kedah and along the stretches of the coast. The Cholias had risen to positions of influence and power in the state. They were the harbour masters and Soudagar Rajas (Royal merchants). In 1770, one Cholia Muslim called Jamal had risen to become the most influential minister in the state and was conferred with the title Datu Seri Raja. In this capacity he handled the king's negotiations with Francis Light over British settlement in the state of Kadah⁴³. The Nagore and Nagapattanam Cholia families continued their connection with Kedah which expanded later in the 19th century.

Similarly the Cholia Muslims were well settled in the coast of Ache and influential with the rulers. In the effort to promote their own trade, the English were trying to establish a factory at Ache. The English

resident at Ache, Charles Desvoeux writing to Fort St. George in 1772 says that the Cholia Muslims were very influential with the King of Ache. Among them one Cholia Muslim Mohamed Kasim probably a native of Nagapattanam was the prime merchant. The English representative could meet the Sultan only with the help of Mohamed Kasim. The English had to negotiate with Mohamed Kasim to get trade concessions from the Sultan of Ache. The Cholia Muslims stiffly opposed the entry of the English but later they compromised with them and the English were permitted to trade in the ports of Ache⁴⁴.

When English the settlement was founded in Penang in 1789, the Cholia Muslims were the first traders to arrive there. Early trade statistics show a large scale trade between PortoNovo, Nagore, Nagapattanam and Penang. The early censuses of population shows that the Cholias were the third largest community. Among the first inhabitants were family clans of the Labbais and Marakkayars. Some of whom were known as people of affluence living in some of the best dwellings in the urban settlement. But there were many Cholias of lower social order engaged in a variety of occupations, shopkeeping, peddling, poultry rearing, coolie labour on the water front and active as crew in ships. It was noted that the vessels from the Coromandel would bring annually about 2000 men who would stay for short periods, earn some money and return with their savings. Penang had captured the imagination of the Cholia Muslims as a place with a future. The English encouraged this perception⁴⁵. When Stamford Raffles founded Singapore in 1824, the Cholia Muslim inhabitants were there in large numbers⁴⁶. The Cholia Muslims were mobile. Some members of the

merchant families lived semipermanently in the main land of the Southeast Asian ports to conduct their business.

The Tamil Muslim merchants from Nagore and PortoNovo in the eighteenth century carried paddy and ready money to the Jaffna Peninsula. Their agents made advances to the local tobacco cultivators and shipped the cargos from Ceylon directly to the Malabar coast and Panang. Native vessels from the Coromandel, the majority of them belonging to Muslims plied to Malabar in the eighteenth century from Manapad, Tuticorin, Kilakkarai, Kayalpattanam, Tengapattanam, Nagapattanam and Colochal. They carried cotton piece goods such as spreads, chintzes, frocks, stockings, cambaya (a cheap cloth) kerchief, calljas (Manapad white cloth) tupatti, roomals, tobacco, salt, onion, writing olas and Karupatti (the native palmyrah sugar). In return they took areca, coir, timber, copra, coconut, sandal wood, pulinjica (scap berry), dry ginger, turmeric, wild jack tree and commodities brought by Mascat Bambaras (one masted ship from Arabia) such as dates, incense, asafotida, kismis, almonds, pista, rose water, glass beads, Perisian carpets Ormuz salt (Rock salt) medicinal tubers, gum resin, zinc oxide, pearls, Turkey red cloth, blue stone, gum Arabica, Pepper, wollen cloth, Persian silk cloth, wheat, coffee and sea products from Arabian countries. The trade was mostly on the barter system⁴⁷.

The regions cotton textiles were woven in the specialised weaving centres in the coastal villages of Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli and transported to the nearest ports for export. Large quantities of textiles were exported from Nagore and

Karaikkal ports to Sumatra and the Malay countries. Some of these consignments were shipped through the ports of Bengal where Marakkayars had chavadis. Mauritius too was a port of call of the Tamil Muslim textile traders⁴⁸. Thirunelveli Muslim artisans were specialised in carpet weaving and the products had good market in export trade. Most of them were Tamil Labbais. The commercial life of these Muslim weavers was controlled by big Muslim traders. In the villages of Ramanathapuram also there were a large number of Tamil Muslim weavers who produced materials for export. Ramanathapuram, Kilakkarai, Panaikulam, Kamudhi, Abiramam, Mudukulathur and Paramakkudi were the settlements of Muslim weavers and dye makers. Statistics relating to the close of eighteenth century reveal that there were about 980 looms in the Ramanathapuram villages alone owned by Muslim weavers⁴⁹. The multifarious activities of the Tamil Muslims show the part played by them in the economic development of the region.

The Diary and Consultation books of the Madras Council contain records relating to the arrivals and departures of vessels from Madras port and also from other Coromandel ports via Madras enroute to Bengal and Southeast Asian countries. These records give the name of captains (Nagudha) of the respective ships, types of ships etc. Mohamed Bux, Alle Bux, Rahiman Bux, Cadar Bux were a few names of Muslim ships as found in these records (bux = ship) and invariably the Nagudhas were Muslims. Even the ships owned by the Hindu merchants were manned by Muslim crew members. The East India Company employed a large number of Muslims in their factories. They appointed only Muslim crew in their ships in the early years.

There was regular Muslim shipping from PortoNovo to Malacca⁵¹. Santhom was an important port of export and a considerable number of Muslim traders were settled in that port town⁵².

Some of the Muslim traders were so rich that they lent money to the East India Company. Mohamed Ali Baig a merchant and ship owner in Cuddalore was a financier to the Company. The Company was not financially sound to repay the debt to him and discharged the loan in instalments⁵³. Tamil Muslim merchants settled in the Ceylon coasts regularly visited Madras port for trade⁵⁴. The trade in metal was an important item from the Southeast Asian countries. Mohamed Sahib, a Coromandel Muslim, was virtually a monopolist in metal trade and he lifted large quantities of lead and tin⁵⁵. The merchants of PortoNovo like Shaik Marakkayar and Shaik Ismail Marakkayar plied their ships in interportal trade to Pulicat and Kovalam and they had considerable trade with Tennaserim⁵⁶. Peer Marakkayar of PortoNovo was a trader of considerable repute. He had business connections in Pondicherry. He acted as an agent of Ananda Ranga Pillai, the merchant and Dubash of Duplex⁵⁷. Mohamed Meera Labbe was a shipowner and prominent merchant in Cuddalore having good relationship with the East India Company⁵⁸.

After the year 1753, we find only a few reference to the arrivals and departures of vessels from Madras port in the Madras Council Consultations. Even in these few references we find only the names of the ships of the Company, Company merchants, Chettiar merchants and English private traders and very rarely Muslim ship names. The ship crew of the Company vessels were all English. By this time, we understand that the Chettiar

merchants had come closer to the East India Company. One Nalla Chetty made huge investments for the Company in Cuddalore⁵⁹. Lingi Chetty, Pigu Nalla Chetty, Perumal Chetty were other important merchants and intermediates to the Company⁶⁰. The Chettiar merchants bought the commodities from the company and afforded space for the storage of the Company goods and the goods of English private traders. Thus by the third quarter of eighteenth century the Muslim merchants had lost ground and voice in the Company trade in Madras. With the investments of the Chettiar merchants, the Company merchants plied their ships to England, Batavia, Surat, Calcutta and St. David (Cuddalore). The Tamil Muslim merchants sent their merchandise in such ships of the Company merchants⁶¹.

Some of the native rulers were themselves engaged in overseas trade, inspite of the political troubles. Muthuramalinga Sethupathi of Ramanatha puram (1772-1795) was a trader prince and he had trade contact with Bengal and Malabar. He had also commercial relations with various European Companies such as those of the Dutch, the French and the English. He entered into joint ventures with some Marakkayars in overseas trade. Sekuna Labbai of Kayalpattanam and Sheik Abdul Kadar of Kilakkarai were his allies in maritime trade. The Sethupathi granted many concessions to Marakkayar traders and encouraged them in their enterprises. The Marathas of Thanjavur also encouraged the native traders to some extent. Sarabendrarakpattanam (Saluvanayakkanpattanam) was an important port in the Thanjavur coast during the nineteenth century. The Marathas had their own trade ships. In 1838, the ship Brihadisvara belonging to the Maratha king was utilised by the English private traders.

Ships were built in Sarabendrarajapattanam. Fresh water was supplied from this port to the passing vessels. There was a growing trade from this port to Ceylon. The Modi records of the Marathas give the names of some Marakkayar maritime traders in the Thanjavur coast along with others. The ships of Sheik Mian Kadar exported pearls to Malacca from Nagore in 1806. Naina Rawthar was a shipowner in this port. But the concessions and encouragement afforded by the native rulers were not substantial enough. The traders could not withstand the competitions from the European Companies and European private merchants⁶².

The pleadings in the Mayor's Court reveal some interesting features about the Muslim ship owners of the Coromandel. Details of financing, rates of interest, litigation settlement procedures and trade practices can be gleaned from these records. Ismail Labbai a merchant from Madras was having trade connections at Pegu. He was a ship owner and a financier. He advanced a loan at the rate of 9% interest for the joint owners of a ship *Fatheraheem* which was trading in the Southeast Asian ports. When they were unable to repay the loan, they sold their ship to settle the account of Ismail Labbe. Adam Labbe and Syed marakkayar were financiers in the Madras port town and they advanced money to the ship owners and traders in overseas trade with an agreement for the repayment of the loan amount along with a percentage in the net profit⁶³.

All the Muslim maritime merchants did not sail in the ships that were on trade to the ports of other countries. They just loaded their cargos in the ship of a particular Marakkayar. They paid the freight

charges to the owner of the ship and a commission on the value of the merchandise to the nagudha of the ship for selling and bringing the money due to them. The cargos on the ships were insured known as *respndentia* and loans were obtained on this from money lenders. During the second quarter of eighteenth century the insurance premium for the cargos was 16%, the freight charge was 14% and the commission of the nagudha was 7½% of the total value of the cargos. When the nagudha fails to settle the amount due to the merchants they approached the court for redressal. Chettiar merchants also sent their cargos in Muslim ships⁶⁴. Many of the insurance companies were run by Chettiars⁶⁵.

The Hindu ship owners appointed Muslim nagudhas and the ship was given in his charge to freight the cargos of the Muslim merchants in interportal trade and also for trade with other countries. The nagudha took loans on his own accord for his trade prospects during this business voyage. The ship *Mundala Veeraragava* belonged to a Chettiar merchant. He appointed Meera Mohamed Labbe as nagudha of the ship who was an independent timber merchant and a shipowner. Meera Mohamed Labbe took loan for his business voyage to the Southeast Asian countries from John Straton an English private merchant. The English private merchants also utilised such ships for transporting their own cargos⁶⁶.

The Cholia Muslims were able to survive in the highly competitive environment because of their cost-effective modes of operation. There was no sharp distinction between the exporters and importers of commodities and ship owners and navigators. Owners of

ships and many of the crew members had an interest in the cargo carried. The entire operation of equipping a ship, launching it, sailing it to its destination and back was a community operation with most persons involved belonging to a clan network. Most of those who sailed in a ship would be linked in this way, others in any case were members of the broader Coromandel Muslim community. The crew and laskars employed on the ship were paid less in wages and permitted to engage in small ventures of their own. When a vessel was at anchor in a port these people were engaged as labourers and they also worked as carpenters, caulkers, riggers and so on. In this way the outfitting of a ship was considerably less expensive to owner or to the nagudha who contracted it. Consequently the Cholias were known for their ability to operate with small profit margins. But they could not compete with the growing European capitalism in this way of operation during the later half of nineteenth century^{66(a)}.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, Madras, Pondicherry and Tuticorin were the important major ports. PortoNovo, Nagapattanam, Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam were also in the main stream of oceanic trade, but not to the same extent as in previous centuries. Further, many new minor ports sprang up for coastal trade. The Muslim merchants of Nagore, Nagapattanam and PortoNovo continued their trade with Pegu, Ache, Penang, Malacca, Malay, Ceylon, Malabar Coast and Bengal. The trading activity from Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam was mostly confined to Ceylon, Malabar, Bengal and other Coromandel ports. Due to the wars in Europe among the nation who had interest in Indian Ocean trade there was unrest in the Indian Ocean region. The native merchants were afraid of

sending their ships on voyage because they were captured by the enemy nations. The French privateers mercilessly captured such ships of the enemy's territories - with their flags and colours - in large numbers and confiscated the ships and cargos. This resulted in the loss of ships and cargos to the native traders.

In such troubled circumstance during the last decade of the eighteenth century and in the first decade of the nineteenth century, the Danes helped the Muslim merchants of Nagore, Nagapattanam, Karaikkal, and Tranquebar. We find information about such shipping activities, in the archival records where the names of ships, their owners and the cargos freighted are recorded.

The merchants in Nagore used to despatch their ships to the ports of Colombo, Ache, Penang, Malacca, Malay, Bengal and Malabar with Danish flag to escape the depredation of the French privateers since the Danes were neutral in the war. During the course of the war in the first quarter of the nineteenth century when the Danes were no longer neutral, the vessels of native merchant sent with Danish colours were in danger. The merchants who had despatched their ships in such circumstances requested the East India Company to give protection to their ships by using the British fleet. Thus the native merchants and ship owners had to depend on one or the other of the European powers to continue their trade and the colonial rivalry was an additional challenge to native shipping activities.

The names of the ship owners as found in the records, reveal that the Muslim merchants of Nagore

were very brisk in the Coromandel coast. In one instance, out of seventeen signatories in a memorial to the English authorities in 1808, requesting their protection for their ships, only four were Chettair merchants and the rest were Muslims. The names of these ship owners (signatories in the memorial) were, Mohamed Marakkayar, Mohamed Syed Marakkayar, Ali Sahib Nagudha, Habib Mohamed Malumi, Peer Sahib Syed Ismail Labbai, Mohamed Rafeek Marakkayar, Mohideen Sahib Nagudha, Syed Mohideen Nagudha, Sulaiman Malumi, Fakir Mohamed Nagudha, Siddhi Mohamed and Ibrahim Nagudha⁶⁷. The Nagore Marakkayar merchants had stated in the memorial that they were happy since they constantly had the protection of the English authorities in all their mercantile transactions. Whenever they experienced hurdles in their trading activities they approached the Commercial Resident at Nagore for redressal⁶⁸.

Many of the ships of the Marakkayars found with the Danish colours and even with the colours of other nations were caught by the English fleet and the French privateers. The vessel of Mohamed Ackel of Nagapattanam which sailed under Achenese colours was captured by the French privateers. The vessels of Leve Vappa Malumi and Mydeen Kundoo Maricar, the merchants of Nagore, while returning from Malacca and Penang were caught by the English fleet in Tranquebar waters. According to the accounts maintained by the nagudha of the above ships, the merchandise in the ships belonged to Mohamed Ali Marakkayar, Mohamed Syed Marakkayar, Ali Sahib Nagudha, Habeeb Mohamed Malumi, Peer sahib Naguda, Muthumeeran Sahib, Syed Ismail Labbai, Mohamed Rafeek Marakkayar, Madan Sahib Nagudha, Syed Mohamed Nagudha, Sulaiman

Malim, Fakir Mohamed Nagudha and Siddhi Mohamed, Ibrahim Nagudha of Nagore; Mohamed Sahib Marakkayar, Habib Mohamed, Abdul Gani and Syed Ahamed Marakkayar of Nagapattanam, Mohamed Ali Marakkayar, Shaik Mohamed Nagudha and Vappa Chinna Vava Marakkayar of Thirumalairajanpattanam; Mohideen Kundoo and Mohamed Thambi Marakkayar of Karaikkal. All the above merchants requested the company authorities to release their merchandise and the ships which were sent to Penang and Malacca⁶⁹. The company authorities conceded their demands⁷⁰. From this we understand the trade practices in the Nagapattanam belt. There were only a few ship owners and a large number of maritime traders. All of them did not travel in the ships. They entrusted their cargos to the nagudha of the respective ships for being sold and the nagudha maintained proper accounts and the nagudha of the ship was given a proportionate percentage in the profit.

A list of new vessels registered by the Muslims in the year 1808 in Nagore and Nagapattanam shows that there were only seven in number. All of them were engaged in overseas trade. This register contains the names of the ships (Kadar Bux, Mohideen Bux, Mohamed Bux, etc.) type of the vessel and tonnage, the names of the owners, commodities freighted name of Nagudha, country to which the vessels plied and the licence and pass particulars. Most of the vessels were two masted. The owner of the ship and the licences for taking out voyages differed in most of the vessels. For example the two masted vessel, Kadar Bux, was owned by Peersa Magdoom Marakkayar but the ship had a Danish pass in the name of Abusali Marican, who is the nagudha of the ship. Another two masted vessel, Mohideen Bux, was owned by Kadar Mohideen Kappalar,

the pass was in the name of Saidoo Pillai Marican, the nagudha. Since the pass for the voyage was in the name of the nagudhas, the owner may or may not sail in the ship. We are able to note only rare instances of joint ownership of vessels among the Muslim traders in the Coromandel⁷¹.

The Muslim merchants of Cuddalore and PortoNovo traded with Penang, Kedah and Ache. When their vessels on voyage were in trouble, they used to approach the East India Company authorities for protection. In a memorandum to the company authorities the merchants of Cuddalore namely Kadar Mohamed Ali, Hussain Marakkayar, Adam Sahib, Kadir Mohideen Malumi, Esa Levai, John Sahib, Sevatha Marakkayar and Madaka Sahib, the merchants of PortoNovo such as Mian Mohamed, Bade Mian, Vavoo Mariccar, Meera Mariccar, Umar Naina Aulia Labbai, Mahaboob Sahib, Magudum Sha, and Kabeer Sahib, have saluted the English administration as benevolent and equitable and requested the continuance of the partonage and protection in Indian waters. Thus the Muslim merchants of the Coromandel coast were at the protection of the East India Company authorities during this period⁷².

The Marakkayar traders of Nagapattanam region continued their trade with the eastern countries even in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Some of the merchants acquired new ships and passes were issued to such vessels by the English. But the number of vessels in use were lesser than those in the previous quarter. Further the vessels were smaller and the tonnage capacity was also less. A reference to the records of registry of ships in Nagapattanam region show only a few names of Muslim vessels such as Barakath⁷³.

Mohideen Bux⁷⁴, Meera Mydeen, Meera Madar⁷⁵, Mohideen bux⁷⁶, Hydroos⁷⁷, Sydoo Hydroos⁷⁸, Kadar Bux⁷⁹, Mohamed Ali⁸⁰. Thus the Marakkayar merchants cum shipowners were declining in the region, and their economic condition shows a downward trend from this period onwards. The conquest of India and Malay by the English robbed the Coromandel Muslim maritime enterprise of any significance in the eastern seas. As a result, the influence of the Coromandel Muslim traders declined in Malay. Except for a few South Indians, who continued to feature in the Malay States the export and import trade fell into the hands of the English traders.

The absence of opportunities in shipping along the coast of the Coromandel forced the maritime people, the Marakkayars to shift their activities to inland trade. Many migrated to the Southeast Asian countries in search of better jobs and business. Large scale migration from the Coromandel began with the foundation of Penang in 1786. The early immigrants became prominent traders and financiers and got firm footing there. Later immigrations were by arranged movement induced by governmental action and the persuasion of prospective employers and their agents. This was because of the political and economic changes in the homeland and abroad. Immigration became easier because by the middle of the nineteenth century India and most of the Southeast Asian countries became the vassel State of Britain politically and economically.

Right from 1790 the ships from the Coromandel took annually about 2000 men to Penang. Many of them went as shop keepers and coolies. When they returned home they were succeeded by others⁸¹. English acquisition of Malacca in 1824, and the foundation of

Singapore in 1819 demanded more labourers. There was a constant copious flow of labour from South India. The ship fare from Nagapattanam to Malaya was reduced from Rupees 15 to 8 in 1887. The South Indian Muslim immigrants were treated well. Malaya withdrew all restrictions in 1897 and the free flow immigration was allowed⁸². All the main ports of the Coromandel had facilities for handling passenger traffic to the Straits. Vessels from Cuddalore, PortoNovo, Nagore, Pondicherry, Nagapattanam, Madras, Karaikkal, Kayalpattanam, Kulasekarapattanam, Kilakkarai and Tuticorin took migrants in great numbers. Many of these people were previously engaged in maritime enterprises. vast majority of the commercial immigrants, the Cholia Marakkayars, became salesmen, peddlers, petty entrepreneurs, shop keepers, street side vendors, medicinemen, stall holders, merchants, financiers and contractors of substantial means⁸³.

The Muslim shipowners of the Coromandel utilised the opportunity in the immigration process then in practice. They undertook more trips to the Southeast Asian countries. Virtually many of the cargo ships became passenger ships and the merchandise became secondary. At times the ships were found overloaded and engaged in passenger service without a proper pass or licence. Such ships were taken to task by the English authorities in India. When Brig. Mohideen Bux was found with overload of passengers and also without a valid pass on its way to Tennaserim, she was subjected to legal action. Alison another vessel with captain Abdul Kadar Malumi from Nagapattanam to the Malay coast which had capacity for only 35 passengers was found with 351 passengers and also merchandise of different descriptions, was penalised. Brig Shree

Jaganath Rasathi, commanded by Chinnathambi Marakkayar was on regular passenger service to Malaya from Nagapattanam. Brig. Mohamed Bux of Nagore took passengers from Nagore and Karaikkal to Southeast Asian countries. There was a large scale migration to Burma also during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. About twelve ships owned by the Marakkayars manned by Muslim nagudhas were on this activity from the Coromandel. The passengers mostly Muslims were taken from the ports of the Thanjavur coast and PortoNovo. Muslim women also emigrated along with their men⁸⁴.

There was a large scale emigration to Penang and Malaya also and the ships owned by the Marakkayar traders of Karaikkal, Nagore and Nagapattanam were on this route. In 1848 alone about 23 ships freighted passengers from Nagapattanam, Nagore, Karaikkal, and PortoNovo. Many of the migrants from Karaikkal went to France. But the ships on these voyages could not fulfill the norms prescribed by the English authorities and they were penalised on many occasions⁸⁵. Most of the migrants to Ceylon were from Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli coasts. Along with the regular trade passenger service was also encouraged to Ceylon⁸⁶. The migrant coolies returning from Ceylon were given concessions to bring certain goods without duties which fetched them good profits on the Coromandel coast⁸⁷.

The emigrants to Ceylon were from the ports of Tuticorin, Kayalpattanam, Kulasekarapattanam, Vaipur, Kilakkarai and Pamban. The majority of them were Muslim Marakkayar and Labbai traders. When compared

with other northern ports of the coast the shipping activities in the above ports were lesser. We find only a few names of vessels in passenger traffic to Ceylon from these ports such as Mohideen Bux, Rahmaniya, Allasamy Hameed, Hameed Latchumi, Abusali Hameed etc., The ships which carried passengers were always overcrowded and the authorities in both the coasts were worried about taking suitable action on the erring vessels⁸⁸. But apart from the licensed ships, many small dhoneys are said to have engaged in taking passengers clandestinely to Ceylon through the shallow waters.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, also there was large scale migration of Muslims to Burma, Strait settlements, Ceylon, France and Ache, from Nagapattanam, Karaikkal, Pamban, Kilakkarai and Kulasekarapattanam. There was constant and regular passenger traffic as regulated under Act XXV of 1859 from the ports of Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram, Thirunelveli to Ceylon, from Pamban to Bengal and Strait, from Nagapattanam to Rangoon, Strait and Bengal⁸⁹.

At the close of the nineteenth century the maritime trading activities of the Muslims were not appreciable. Materials and evidences at our disposal for the study of their activities are also very meagre. We hear only a few names of shipowners and traders engaged in overseas and coastal trade at Nagapattanam, PortoNovo, Kilakkarai, Kayalpattanam and Kulasekarapattanam. The traders with lesser capital shifted to other occupations and migrated inland. Many emigrated to other countries in search of favourable positions.

In the Ramanathapuram coast, Kasim Mohamed Marakkayar of Mandapam was a wealthy maritime trader and shipowner during this period. For many generations his family was engaged in commercial enterprises of many kinds. He was the owner of seven villages around Mandapam. The Raja of Ramanathapuram had given him the Hare Island in the Gulf of Manaar. The British Indian Steam Navigation Company was represented by his family at the Pamban port. The loading and unloading of cargos at Mandapam and Pamban ports was under his control. A fleet of thirty boats of his own were engaged in this service and about 1000 persons were employed by him in the maritime activities, throughout the year. He helped the English in all their enterprises and chank and pearl fishery. He was later honoured with title "Khan Bahadur" and was also extended other honours and concessions by the British government. He had vast trade connections in Ceylon. He was a philanthropist and was respected by people of all sections and affectionately called as "Mandapam Marakkayar". He contributed the entire amount for laying a road of 8 miles for the benefit of of the pilgrims from Ramanathapuram to Devipattanam temple⁹⁰. The Hare Island which was in the possession of the descendants of Mohamed Kasim Marakkayar was acquired by the Government of Tamil Nadu recently for the creation of the Marine National Park⁹¹.

Kilakkarai had a concentration of a considerable number of maritime traders and ship owners. The descendants of Periathambi Marakkayar (Seethakkathi) continued the traditional sea faring activities. One such descendant of Periathambi Marakkayar was Habib Marakkayar who lived in the first quarter of nineteenth century and popularly known as Habib Arasar (Arasar-

king). He was also known as merchant prince. He was a trader in gemstones and owner of many ships and had trade contacts in Ceylon and Bengal. For many years he was the rentor of pearl fishery in the Gulf of Manaar. He was in the good books of the British. In 1809 he was permitted by the English authorities in Ceylon to pass through the main gates of the fort in a palanquin. His son Sheik Sadakkathulla Marakkayar was permitted to use the same honours and separate insignias by the Ceylon Government in 1823. Habib Marakkayar's brother, Abdul kadar Sahib Marakkayar was a trader of repute and was well respected by the Ceylon Government. In 1821 when he went on a pilgrimage to Mecca all the allies of the English were asked to extend their help to him since he had fair and honest transactions in Ceylon. Habib Marakkayar built the Cholia mosque in Culcutta (which is known by the same name even to day) and his descendants built the Odakkarai Mosque at Kilakkarai. He built chavadis for the convenience of gem traders at Culcutta and Rameswaram. He was a great philanthropist and patronised many Muslim Tamil poets and was instrumental in publishing many Islamic Tamil literary works. A survey report of the English says that. "Kilakkarai was the residence of Cubby Mohamed Marakkayar, (Habibmohamed) a wealthy merchant and the chief of the town". "Ahamed Jalaludeen Marakkayar owned seven mercantile ships and he had extensive trade connections with other Coromandel ports and Ceylon⁹². Sultan Abdul Kadar Marakkayar was another shipowner in Kilakkarai. Rajanayagam, one of the Islamic Tamil epics of 1807, extols his trading activities and philanthropy⁹³. Mapillai Labbai Alim (1816-1896) was a prominent gemstone trader, philanthropist, poet and mystic of Kadiria tharikka. He was so influential and powerful

in the Coromandel coast and the Ceylon, that he could collect one rupee on every boat in Ceylonese coast for his Aroosia Thaikka (Arabic learning centre) at Kilakkarai. He had rendered significant religious service in Ceylon. His son Syed Abdul Kadir Marakkayar (1846-1912) was a maritime trader and mystic of Kadiria tharikka⁹⁴.

Vappu Naina Pillai Marakkayar was a ship owner and trader in Kilakkarai. His sons Syed Kasim Marakkayar, Muthu Ibrahim Marakkayar, Kirudu Naina Marakkayar, Mohideen Abdul Kadar Marakkayar and Syed Mohamed Marakkayar were also prominent maritime traders. They were trading with Ceylon, Malabar and Bengal ports. This family had two ships. They had big godowns in the seashore at Kilakkarai which stand even to this day. This family is also said to be the descendants of Periathambi Marakkayar. We come to understand from the documents maintained by the members of this family that the value of a two masted ship in their possession was about Rs. 4000/- in 1881⁹⁵.

The Pamban canal itself was a private property for some time which was granted by the ruler of Ramanathapuram to a Marakkayar family at Pamban. Neither people nor vessels could cross the Pamban canal. The family of Aboobakar Marakkayar was given the right of taking the people across the bar of the Pamban on payment of a fee. Later the members of the family became pilots and they collected fees from all the vessels for piloting them across the canal and shared the income among themselves. When difference of opinion arose among the descendants of the family in sharing the fees collected, Abul Naina Ambalam, Peer

Tamby Marakkayar, Muthu Ahamed and Chinna Meera levey Marakkayar represented the matter to the Collector of Ramanathapuram. The Collector ordered the retention of their hereditary rights over the Pamban canal but fixed a salary to those who actually piloted the vessels across the Pamban canal⁹⁶. The descendants of the family of Aboobakkar Marakkayar were appointed as pilots at the Pamban port for piloting vessels across the Pamban.

The trading activities in the ports of the Thanjavur coast were in the hands of the Marakkayars of this region. Realising the importance of the Nagapattanam port and the other minor feeder ports in the coast, the English company proposed to improve them for the development of trade. The statistics of the company shows that there were about seventy maritime traders at Nagore and Nagapattanam alone in the beginning of the nineteenth century and they had a total capital resources of two lakhs pagodas. They entered into the nineteenth century with the support of the English East India Company and were honoured well. The East India Company engaged the Cholia vessels for their coastal trade in the Coromandel ports. The Resident at Nagore wrote to the Board of Trade in "1812 that the trade with the east was conducted chiefly by the Cholia merchants residing at Nagore and Nagapattanam ports and they used vessels built there itself the burthen of which ranged from one hundred to four hundred tonnes". The list furnished by the British Resident about the ships and their owners exporting salt to Bengal contained only Muslim names. Mohamed Kasim Marakkayar was the principal merchant of Nagore who got his ships made at Pegu⁹⁷. It is said that he lived in a palatial house. Merchants like Kadar

Mohideen Sahib of Nagapattanam owned a fleet of ships providing employment to a large number of coolies both Muslims and non Muslims⁹⁸.

An influential shipowner and maritime trader at Nagapattanam during the last quarter of the nineteenth century was Ahamed Thambi Marakkayar. Later he became a member of the Madras Legislative Council and was honoured with the title Khan Bahadur. He had trade contacts in the Straits, Burma and Ceylon. He had a fleet of ships and also a large number of small boats for loading and unloading cargoes at the Nagapattanam port. He was the agent of the British India Steam Navigation Company at Nagapattanam. Mohamed Gouse Marakkayar and Gulam Mohideen Marakkayar were other shipowning merchants at Nagapattanam during this period⁹⁹. The shipowners and traders with lesser capital could not carry their activities against the growing economic competitions. Asan Kuthoos Sahib Marakkayar, a ship owner of Nagore obtained a sum of Rs. 10,000/- in 1890 to repair his ship from one Ramanathan Chettiar and the ship was hypothecated to the Chettiar. The Marakkayar could not repay the loan and authorised the Chettiar to utilise the ship to undertake voyages and return the ship after the credit amount was realised. This shows that the financial resources of Marakkayars were dwindling ¹⁰⁰.

In Adirampattanam there were many Marakkayar shipowners and maritime traders. Elavapillai Marakkayar was the owner of many dhoneyes. His vessels regularly plied to Masulipattanam and Nagore¹⁰¹. Mohamed Thambi Marakkayar was a ship owner and maritime trader popularly known as Kappalkarar (owner

of ships) of the town. He owned two ships by name Mohideen Samdani and Sultan Hydroos which plied to Ceylon and Kakinada. He was a close associate of Mandapam Marakkayar referred to above. Thangavappa Marakkayar, Mohamed Mohideen Marakkayar, Sheik Thambi Marakkayar and Hussain Marakkayar were other important ship owners and maritime traders in Adirampattanam¹⁰². Sultan Marakkayar of Thirumullaivasal a ship owner was engaged grain trade with ceylon¹⁰³.

Though Karaikkal was a centre of Marakkayars, there were only a few shipowners and maritime traders at the close of nineteenth century. Since the adjoining Nagore and Nagapattanam ports were advantageous the Marakkayars of Karaikkal based their shipping activities in these ports. Export of grain continued from Karaikkal to other ports of the Coromandel and Ceylon. Many of the prosperous maritime traders from here emigrated to Singapore, Penang, and France and Indonesia. The houses of the descendants of the shipowning families at Karaikkal are called "Kappal Kara Vedu" (house of ship owners) even to day. Kadar Sultan Marakkayar was prominent maritime trader and shipowner. He had business connections in Singapore. Mammana Pillai Marakkayar was the owner of many ships. He had factories at Kakinada and Karaikkal. His ships plied to Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Ceylon. This Marakkayar had a sound knowledge of astronomy and could predict monsoons and cyclonic effects which won the appreciation of the English.

There were also many small traders engaged in coastal trade and in the transport of salt, timber, grain and fish from one minor port to another in the Thanjavur

coast. Many of the Marakkayars were engaged in various other maritime activities like fishing, chank diving and trade in dryfish¹⁰⁴. There were a number of Marakkayar trade in with small capital operating their dhoneyes and boats between the minor ports in the coast of the district such as Topputhurai, Point Calimere, Muthupet, Krishnajipattanam, Kattumavadi, Ammapattanam, Kottaipattanam, Pasipattanam, Gopalapattanam and Soundarapandianpattanam and they supplied the commodities to the big traders.

Islamic Tamil literary works are one of the prime source for the study of the prosperous merchants of Kayalpattanam¹⁰⁵. Most of them were dealing in precious stones. They had business connection in various overseas countries. They also imported uncut new precious stones into the Coromandel¹⁰⁶.

A reference to the available records on shipping in Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli districts in the third and last quarter of nineteenth century give occasional reference about the trading activities of Muslims of the region. Tuticorin was the major port. Kayalpattanam, Kulasekarapattanam, Vaipar and Kilakkarai were the minor ports of importance. Many of the ships from these ports during this period bear Muslim names such as Mohideen Hydroos Bux, Mohideen Baghyalakshmi Bux, Mohideen Bux, Mohamed Sulaiman Bux, Kadar Bux etc., The captains (nagudha) of these vessels were also Muslims. Ships from these ports carried on interportal trade and foreign trade with Ceylon. No bigger vessels plied from these ports. All the vessels that operated from these ports were schooners, brigantines, boats, vallam and dhoneyes and were lesser than 90 tons burthen.

Kayalpattanam and Kulasekarapattanam were very busy ports. A large number of vessels operated from these ports during this period. Along with the cargos, passengers were also taken to Ceylon and Cochin from Kilakkarai, Kayalpattanam and Kulasekarapattanam¹⁰⁷. While three-fourth of the crafts which plied from these ports belonged to the Muslim maritime traders of this region, one fourth belonged to the Parava Christians. Vaipar was the Parava port which was a Christian centre. The Paravas were also traders competing with the Muslims of the region and they had the support of the Company and their vessels plied to other ports in Coromandel and Malabar. From the ports of Kilakkarai, Kayalpattanam and Vaipar merchandise were sent to other ports like Nagapattanam, Adirampattanam, Muthupet, Madras, Cuddalore, and Pondicherry¹⁰⁸. We get a complete list of commodities of export and import from these ports. Their costs also find place in the records.

At the fag end of nineteenth century the sea traffic from Kayalpattanam was minimum but Kulasekarapattanam continued to be a busy port. The commodities of export from these ports were mats, oilcake, chille, dryfish, yarn, tobacco, condiments, ghee, animals, teakwood, porcelain, medicinal herbs, cotton, sandalwood, palmsugar, textiles, etc. Areca, coconut, Jute, wheat, blackgram, metals, coconut oil, plam and coconut trunks, bullions, spices, yarn and cane were imports from Ceylon into these ports. Food grains, areca, coconut, dryfish, timber, palm sugar, animals, spices, tobacco, cotton and chank were the commodities in interportal trade¹⁰⁹.

There were only a few prosperous maritime trading families at the close of the nineteenth century

in the Kayalpattanam area. The families of Ahamed Hussain Marakkayar and Mohideen Meera Marakkayar were the leading maritime traders at Kayalpattanam during this period. They had extensive business connections in Ceylon and were running a cargo company at Colombo by name "Colombo Cargo Boat Company". They were having more than fifty boats for clearing cargoes at both the coasts. Their cargo company had connections with the British Steam Navigation Company. They owned salt pans at Kayalpattanam and exported the salt to Colombo and other ports. They were having a boat building yard at Kayalpattanam and built boats and sold them to the English Company. Cholukar Marakkayar family and Maniya Marakkayar family were the other important ship owning families at Kayalpattanam. All the above maritime traders had palatial buildings near the sea shore at Kayalpattanam, the remnants of which can be seen even to this day. The small traders who survived the economic storm had to depend on the facilities afforded by the above shipowning families for their overseas trading and interportal activities.

At Kulasekarapattanam, Hassankhan Sirajudeen Marakkayar, Kadar Batcha Marakkayar, Gulam Mohideen Marakkayar, Vappu Naina Marakkayar, Syadulla Marakkayar and Abusali Marakkayar were the prosperous maritime traders and ship owners. Their vessels were engaged in interportal trade and overseas trade with Ceylon¹¹⁰.

Mohamed Kadarsha Marakkayar was a prominent shipowner and trader in Tuticorin. He had extensive business connections with English Company and English private merchants and in Ceylon. He represented the British India Steam Navigation

company at Tuticorin. Later he was conferred with the title Khan Bahadur by the British Government.

The shipowners and traders referred to above employed a large contingent of Muslim maritime workers. They were philanthropists and were responsible for the development of Arabic educational and religious institutions in the coastal towns of Coromandel and patronised Tamil poets and Islamic Tamil literary works in large number have emerged because of their liberal gifts. Further during the 18-19th centuries, Kayalpattanam became more an Islamic philosophic centre than a trading centre. Many Sufi philosophers who lived here attracted people to this town from various parts of the country and Ceylon. At a later period Kilakkarai also followed suit. The Marakkayar traders of Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam freighted in their ships passengers for pilgrimage to Mecca¹¹¹.

The archival records reveal instances where many Muslims of the Coromandel indulged in smuggling and clandestine activities as occasion demanded. Shank, pearl, pepper, spices, areca and textiles were the commodities involved in smuggling. The watchful English customs authorities could not detect or control such activities so easily. But whenever caught, they were punished. In an instance, Fakir Marakkayar, a merchant in Muthupet brought large quantities of areca from Ceylon to Muthupet. He paid the duty for a portion of the goods and carried away the remainder without the knowledge of the authorities which was found out and the nuts were confiscated¹¹². Baboo Mohamed Marakkayar of Nagore was a prominent merchant and owner of three ships namely Meera Mohideen Bux,

Kadar Bux, Kadar Mohideen Bux. He also owned many small boats. He had trade contact with Bengal and Ceylon. He was said to be a notorious smuggler in chank. His ships brought large quantity of chank from ceylon without paying customs duties. His ships with the contrabands were caught many times and the goods confiscated by the English authorities. Once the crew members of his ships were detained and fined for smuggling chanks from Velanganni port to Bengal. Baboo Mohamed Marakkayar's clandestine activities are referred to in many records of the English¹¹³. A letter to the board of trade from the Master Attendant of Rayapuram (near Madras) about the clandestine activities of the Labbai boatmen says that, "they concieve that no punishment can reach them and so all becoming more and more daring"¹¹⁴. The superintendent of Police in Madras alerts the government on their clandestine activities¹¹⁵. The smuggling activities of the Muslims in Kanyakumari district with the connivance of the local native officials is referred to in another record¹¹⁶. The Labbai and Marakkayar residents of Triplicane in Madras were found smuggling textiles and the attempt of the authorities to stop it was not fruitful. The residential area of such merchants was known among the British officials as "Thieving Bazaar"¹¹⁷.

Thus it will be seen that there was a slow and steady decline in the maritime trade of the Muslims of the Coromandel. The decline in trade started right from the emergence of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century and come to the point of liquidation by the end of the nineteenth century. The economic compulsions arising out of the presence of European companies pushed back the coastal Muslims. The lesser resources at the disposal of the Muslims

engaged in maritime trade made them retreat from active direct trading activities. Instead they became the agents of bigger and wholesale Muslim traders, and English private merchants and procured textiles, food grains, condiments and other commodities suitable for export and interportal trade and sold them to the waiting bigger merchants on the shore. Muslims owning small dhoneyys, vallams and boats moved along the shallow waters of the coast and procured the available commodities and brought them to bigger ports. Thus the chain of trading activities of the Muslims were kept up though the quantum was very less. The Muslim maritime community which once dominated trading fields in the maritime commerce on the Coromandel coast vanished devoid of any significance or glory at the end of nineteenth century.

Salt manufacture and its trade

Manufacture and trade in salt was one of the activities of many Muslim families of Coromandel coast for a very long time. The introduction of monopoly on salt by the English Government deprived many Muslims of the Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli coast from the manufacturing activity of salt. Prior to this, the salt pans of Ramanathapuram coast were rented by the Marakkayars of Kilakkarai. When salt monopoly was introduced a proclamation was issued directing the native manufacturers to hand over all the stocks of salt to the Government. Accordingly the Marakkayars of Kilakkarai stopped manufacture of salt and also handed over the stocks to the authorities. But those who possessed some quantity of salt clandestinely were penalised and the monopoly price of salt was collected

for the quantity in their possession. Alla Pitchai Marakkayar, Meera Sahib Marakkayar, Sheik Sadakathullah Marakkayar and Abdulkadar Marakkayar were some manufacturers of salt and rentiers of salt pans at Kilakkarai¹¹⁸. Habib Marakkayar of Kilakkarai collected the earth salt in the nearby islands like Anaipar and exported¹¹⁹.

The ships and dhoneyes of Muslims were engaged in the transport of salt, in the region. Henry Darner, a English private merchant in Tuticorin rented the ship of Sura Mudali Marakkayar to transport salt to Colombo¹²⁰. The dhoneyes and vallams owned by muslim traders transported salt from one port to another and bigger vessels carried the salt from the minor ports to the major ports like Tuticorin and Nagapattanam. Hasan Marakkayar of PortoNovo transported salt in his ship to Marakanam¹²¹. Mohamed Ali Baig was engaged in the shipment of salt in his ships to Alambaram¹²². A statement of capitalists in salt trade in the coastal region in 1887 shows that it was dominated by Chettair and English private merchants and there were no Marakkayar traders in Nagapattanam region. In Adirampattanam, Kadar Mohideen Marakkayar was in salt trade. In Thirunelveli coast Mohamed Aliar, Muthuvava Mohamed, Mohamed Mohideen, Mohamed Abdul Kadar Marakkayar and Ahamed Hasan Marakkayar were leading salt merchants¹²³.

Tannery

There is no strong evidence that in the first half of the nineteenth century Muslims were engaged in tannery industry. There was prevailing notion among

the people that it was infradig for a person to have anything to do with hides and skins. Mattison Mines is right in pointing out that the prejudice against the dealers in hides and skin seems to survive among the Muslims even now in certain areas¹²⁴. Tanning was the domain of the caste chakkiliar¹²⁵. Europeans entered into this trade during nineteenth century and they introduced new methods in tanning in Madras presidency¹²⁶. Towards the end of nineteenth century, we find the names of some Muslims as owners of tanneries. This might be due to the lucrative and monopolistic nature of the business. Labbais and Deccanis were mostly in this industry. But Marakkayars were engaged in the shipment of raw and tanned skins. Mohamed Meeran Rawthar established a tanney at Tiruchirappalli in 1883 and he was an exporter of hides to England and other European countries. Bangi Hayat Basha established a tannery in 1874 at Madras¹²⁷ and exported hides to England and European countries. 76% of the hides from Madras Presidency were exported to England¹²⁸.

Shipping professional expertise

The professional expertise of the Coromandel Muslims in shipping and connected activities made the English seek their help on many occasions and extended concessions. Since the Muslim boatmen were well trained in salvaging ships, the English Company entrusted such works to them. Labbai Mohamed Thambi of Kilakkarai and his team was engaged by the English East India Company to salvage ships that wrecked off the shore of Manaar. His large dhoney was suitable for this purpose and was in operation to salvage properties that could be saved. The divers in the team Ahamed Labbai and Uduman Labbai were experts in salvaging

wrecked ships. The English paid 1/5 of the value of the valuables that were retrieved from the wreckage¹²⁹. During the earlier days of the ascendancy, the English East India Company appointed only Muslim crew in their ships. Later, important positions among the crew were denied to natives. However the Company appointed native pilots of Kilakkarai and Pamban to handle their vessels. Of the thirteen pilots appointed by the English at Pamban in 1886 eleven were Muslims. These pilots were men of proven ability and technical knowledge and held licence to pilot vessels of any kind¹³⁰. The English East India Company preferred the ships built by the native Muslims. They purchased the ships of 100 to 500 tonnage capacity built by the Muslims of Nagapattanam¹³¹. Though the vessels owned by the company were manned by Muslim pilots they were paid lesser than the Europeans¹³².

The East India Company granted concessions and afforded every encouragement to the Muslims for the development of their shipping activities in the early years. Considerations were shown to persons who had rendered special services to the Company. Towards the end of eighteenth century when the British East India Company took over Nagore they imposed certain duties on exports and imports. The local Muslim Merchants claimed concessions from such duties on the ground that the king of Thanjavur had issued certain cowles granting tax concessions and hence they had come and settled down at Nagore as traders and made Nagore a flourishing commercial town. Their request was looked into¹³³. The company extended concessions to the Muslims who rendered service to the company. Mohamed Kasim Marakkayar the principal merchant of Nagore had helped the company in their trading

activities. A cowle had been granted to him by the English with a concession of 50% in customs duties and other taxes. After his death his son Mohamed Ackel claimed the same concessions¹³⁴. The ancestors of Abdul Kadar Sahib Marakkayar of Tondi was so influential that cannons were mounted in his ships and they were fired on the occasions of ceremonies in his family. The English government granted special permission to Abdul Kadar to retain the cannons¹³⁵. Chinna Marakkayar Malumiar a ship merchant of Nagore was appointed as the member of the landing and shipping committee at Nagapattanam¹³⁶. As a special gesture English colours were given to the ships of Mohamed Ali Marakkayar of Nagapattanam and Naina Malumi of Cuddalore¹³⁷.

But the claim of the residents of Kayalpattanam for exemption from certain taxes was rejected by the English administration. In a memoandum to the company in 1820, the Muslims of Kayalpattanam had represented "that they came from Arabistan and purchased the village of Kayalpattanam where they had created sixtyfour mosques and brought up palmyrah and coconut topes to defray the expenses of the mosques. They had been the inhabitants of the place for the past 900 years during which period their honour was preserved by the favour of the Rajas and the Nawabs with special concessions. They were enjoying those concessions till the tenure of the previous Collector. But the new Collector demanded taxes for the palmyrah and coconut topes". They prayed for the continuance of the concessions hitherto enjoyed by them¹³⁸. Their request was considered in detail finally it was rejected by the English government on the ground that they were all prosperous at that time¹³⁹.

Pearl and Chank Fisheries

The antiquity of pearl fishery and pearl trade in Tamil nadu goes back to the Sangam period. Sangam Tamil works like Patthupattu, Ahananuru, Purananuru, Kalithogai, Narrinai, Silappathikaram, and Manimekalai refer to the pearls of the Pandya country and connected matters. Tamil Bakthi literary works like Thevaram, Nalayirathiviyaprabandam, Seevakasinthamani etc. describe various ornaments made of pearl¹⁴⁰. Inscriptions and copper plate grants of various rulers of the Tamil country refer to pearls and pearl fishery. The Thanjavur inscriptions of Raja Raja speak of numerous grants of pearl ornaments made to the temple¹⁴¹. We get a splendid account on pearl fishery from the 13-14th centuries starting from the account of Marcopolo.

The Arabs were the principal traders in pearls. Arab writers, traders and geographers of tenth century like Suliman and Abuzaid refer to the pearls of Tamil country and pearl trade¹⁴². The documents of the Portuguese, the Dutch the English and the accounts of European travellers give very valuable information about pearl fishery. The people who were engaged in the pearl fishery were the Parathavars (Paravas) who were the traditional fishermen in the coastal area. Pearl oysters were rich along the Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli coasts and in the Gulf of Manaar. In fact the Portuguese called the Thirunelveli coast as "Piscaria" or "Fishery" Coast" in view of abundance of pearl oysters and chank.

Korkai of the Sangam period gave way to Kayal. From the thirteenth century Kayal become the headquarters of pearl fishery. The Muslims by this time had captured the pearl fishery as renties. The Pandya

kings successfully conducted the pearl trade by extending great favours to the merchants, the main traders among them being the Arabs. They exchanged the imported horses for pearls. The ports of Kayal, Vedalai, Devipattinam, Kilakkarai, Tondi and Pasipattinam were the pearl exporting centers. A considerable part of the Tamil maritime population had embraced Islam by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and they began to take pearl fishing also as an occupation. The Muslims of Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam were known for their specialised diving skill. The Muslims attempted to outreach the Paravas¹⁴³. The wealthy Muslims of Kayalpattanam and Kilakkarai managed to keep pearl fishing in their hands. The Paravas became practically their hired hands and were feeling oppressed. However many of the Muslims in the coastal towns moved into shipping and gem trade from the humble profession of diving. Some others moved up the ladder by establishing themselves as pearl and chank traders and boat owners controlling large populations of Muslim divers in the lower strata of the society¹⁴⁴. This shows the occupational and status mobility among the Muslims of the Coromandel.

After the arrival of the Portuguese in the Coromandal coast, the missionary Mannuel Defries baptised a considerable number of Paravas in 1575. Joa Froles, the Portuguese captain and factor of the pearl fishery seized the pearl fishery and extracted rent from the Muslim headman and a force was kept to superintend the fishery¹⁴⁵. From then onwards the Portuguese became the masters of pearl fishery in the Coromandel coast and Manaar. The Pattamkattis (head man of Paravas) became the local authority in pearl fishing. The Portuguese levied toll and taxes from the

Paravas also which were very high. They levied such taxes from the Paravas since they were obliged to protect them from the Malabaris (Tamil Muslims) who used to come with armed boats to capture Parava fishers¹⁴⁶. The Portuguese rivalry forced the Muslims of Kayal to move to a nearby place and improve the new town of Kayalpattanam. The Paravas made Pinnaikayal their main settlement. Later Tuticorin became the headquarters of pearl fishing.

The Muslim Mudaliars of Kayalpattanam became the lease holders of the pearl and chank fisheries during the second quarter of the sixteenth century paying tributes to the Portuguese¹⁴⁷. Here Mudaliar means superintendent or headman¹⁴⁸. (The title Mudaliar is born by affluent Marakkayar merchants of Thirunelveli district even to this day).

The traditional pearl market shifted from Kayal (Palayakayal) to Kilakkarai by 1531 where the Marakkayar pearl merchants were concentrated. During the sixteenth century the pearl merchants had to pay $\frac{1}{2}$ panam for every 100 pearls sold and it was used for the Ninaithathai Muditha Vinayakar temple at Kilakkarai, according to an inscription in the temple¹⁴⁹. Ceasar Frederick, the Venetian merchant who visited the Thirunelveli coast by about 1563, says that the divers engaged by the Portuguese in pearl fishery were Christian Paravas. It will be seen that the Muslim divers were left out with aversion¹⁵⁰.

Arunachalam goes to the extent of saying that the Muslim Labbai and Marakkayar divers who were not encouraged in their lawful pursuit in pearl fishing became discontented and might have joined the pirates¹⁵¹. However, the Muslim divers of Kayalpattanam, Kilakkarai, Periapattanam, Soundarapandiapattanam,

Karaikkal, and Adirampattanam participated in the fisheries conducted in the respective regions of course in lesser number¹⁵². Thus the Portuguese were enjoying mastery over this maritime industry (till they were ousted by the Dutch) to the detriment of the Muslim traders and pearl fishers.

The Nayaks of Madurai were content with the free stones and privileges in pearl fishery given to them by the Portuguese. But later at a point of time the Nayaks supported the Muslims against the Paravas, in pearl fishing. Thirumalai Nayak who came to power in 1623 entered into an agreement with the headman of the Muslim community at Kayalpattanam and extended concessions to them in pearl fishing. He diverted the free stones given to his account to the Muslim community leader Mudali Pillai Marakkayar and he was authorised to superintend the activity as the agent of the Nayak¹⁵³. The Sethupathis also established similar connections with Kilakkarai Marakkayars. They encouraged the Marakkayar pearl merchants and established pearl trading centres at Rameswaram and Periapattanam¹⁵⁴. These pearl trading centres were called "Muthupettai" and "Muthuchavadi". The street at Rameswaram where the pearl market was situated is called Muthuchavadi street even to this day. The Sethupathis donated the free stones allowed to them to the temple of Rameswaram and Thiruppullani. Fishing for the above free stones for the temples was entrusted to the Marakkayars of the region. Fishing for Rameswaram temple was entrusted to the family of one Sultan Marakkayar of Rameswaram¹⁵⁵. These are few examples of the patronage and considerations shown by the Hindu rulers to their Muslim subjects without any religious bias. Thus the cordial relationship between the

Hindu rulers and the Muslim trading community helped them in their economic activities.

The Dutch took over the pearl fishery from the Portuguese in 1658. During the first fishery conducted by the Dutch in 1663, the headman of Muslim community at Kayalpattanam allowed the accustomed number of boats free of tax as under the Portuguese¹⁵⁶. But with regard to the taxes on unexempted boats, the Dutch levied more taxes from the Muslim than the Paravas. The Muslim boat owners also had to give one day's collection of pearl oysters to the Dutch, the particular day being left to the choice of the Dutch authorities¹⁵⁷. Prominent operators in pearl fishing in Kilakkarai during the period include Adam Labbai, Chinna Marakkayar and Periathambi Marakkayar. Periathambi Marakkayar owned the largest fleet with twenty one fishing boats. Hussain Marakkayar dominated in the Thanjavur coast and he was the owner of six boats and an employer of thirtynine divers. During the 1691 fishery the Dutch allowed the headman of the Muslim community of Kayalpattanam nine free stones. Earlier under the Portuguese, the Nayaks of Madurai allowed ten free stones from the privileged stones granted to him. But the Dutch themselves directly allowed nine free stones to the Muslim Mudaliar. However this was very low when compared to the free stones allowed to the Parava Pattamkattis. Arunachalam says, "By stone a diver is meant", but the Thirunelveli District Gazetteer mentions "By stone, one diving for each diver as consisting one stone"¹⁵⁹. But the former seems to be correct, in our view.

From the year 1746 the Dutch abolished all types of free stones. By this time the Nawab of Arcot became the political masters in the Carnatic. The Dutch had

confrontations with the Nawab in sharing the profits of pearl fishery. This made the Dutch suspend pearl fishery from 1749 to 1784, resulting in hardship to many of the Muslim divers also since they were thrown out of employment. The Muslim pearl merchants too had to resort to other trades¹⁶⁰.

The economic impact of the suspension of pearl and chank fisheries was felt by the Dutch colonial authorities and the Nawab. By a treaty the Nawab ceded the chank fishery to the Dutch in 1758. By another treaty in 1788, the produce of the pearl and chank fisheries were divided equally by the Nawab and the Dutch. Practically there was no fishery in Tuticorin after 1796 and the Dutch lost their monopoly and hold in pearl fishing.

The English took over the Thirunelveli coast in 1782 and began the pearl fishing operations. The entire coast of the Carnatic came under them in 1796 and all the Dutch possessions were taken over in 1825. The pearl fishery suffered from 1796 to 1825, since the English were interested in the consolidation of their power. When the English took over the Thirunelveli coast in 1801, the privileged stones in pearl fishery were abolished except in the case of the Pattamkattis, the Parava jathithalaivan. Only he was favoured by the government¹⁶¹. However in the fisheries conducted in the Ramanathapuram coast maniam boats were given to the Muslim merchants (Marakkayars) of Kilakkarai as a special privilege¹⁶².

The English ran the pearl fishery in the Coromandel coast at irregular intervals. For instance after the fishery of 1830 there was no fishery for thirty years

till and 1860. After 1862 fishery was conducted only in 1889. No fishery was conducted between 1889-1900. By 1900, the Coromandel pearl fishery deteriorated completely¹⁶³. But some of the Muslim divers took up pearl and chank fishing on their own in the Ramanathapuram coast during the last quarter of nineteenth century. Marakkayar pearl merchants advanced money to them liberally on condition that it should be settled in the ensuing fishing season¹⁶⁴. This shows that the English were not very serious about pearl and chank fishery.

The Marathi Modi records in Thanjavur Saraswathi Mahal Library give some details about pearl fishing activities in the Thanjavur coast¹⁶⁵. The Maratha rulers received considerable income from pearl fishery¹⁶⁶. Pearl and pearl oysters were exported to Malacca in the ships of the Marakkayars from the Nagore port¹⁶⁷. Pearls and chank divers were permitted to participate in the fisheries conducted in Ceylon coast¹⁶⁸. The pearl fishery was conducted in Nagapattanam, Tranquebar, Tirumullaivasal but it was meagre when compared with those in the Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli coasts. The Muslim divers (Labbias, Sonakars) dominated pearl fishing activities in the Thanjavur coast.

Chank fishing was a trade associated with pearling and was a lucrative maritime trade and brought good revenue to the pre colonial rulers of the Coromandel. The conch shells had been prized by the Hindus since ancient times and chank bangle making was an important industry in Bengal¹⁶⁹. Chank diving often served as a cover for illicit pearling operation¹⁷⁰. Along the coast of the Coromandel chank was fished in the coastal belt of Thirunelveli, Ramanathapuram,

Thanjavur and South Arcot. The chank fishery of Thirunelveli and Ramanathapuram coasts were very prosperous compared to those in the Thanjavur and South Arcot coasts¹⁷¹. Chanks were exported to Bengal and it was sold at good profit.

Chank fishery also shared the fate of the pearl fishery having suffered many ups and downs in the hands of the colonial European powers and the native rulers. The Muslims in the coastal towns engaged in chank fishery were affected by this. After 1796, the Dutch gave up chank fishing by themselves and rented it to the highest bidder. Most of such renters were Muslims. Though the pearl fishery became irregular, at the hands of the English from 1801, chank fishery was conducted from Tuticorin from October to May every year. The divers had to move about to collect the scattered shells. The chank collected was sold by auction. Labbai divers of Kilakkarai were more active in the chank fishing in Ramanathapuram coast. The English also rented chank fishery to the highest bidder till 1876 when it was taken over under direct government management. The English government encouraged the divers by giving the same coolie rate as given by the private contractors, i.e. rupees 20.00 per 1000 chanks. The chank fishery yielded a rich revenue to the English.

The Rajas of Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga enjoyed chank fishery rights in the Ramanathapuram coast¹⁷². But the chank fishery of Thirunelveli coast alone were in the hands of the English administration. The Sethupathi exported chanks to Bengal in his own vessel and in the vessels of the Marakkayars of the region. It brought good revenue to the Sethupathi's treasury. In 1794 alone the Sethupathi sent about 11,20,000 chanks

to Bengal from Devipattinam port in the ship of a Marakkayar of Kilakkarai. Meera Naina Marakkayar of Ramanathapuram acted as the agent of the Sethupathi in Calcutta¹⁷³. The Sethupathi encouraged the Marakkayar and Labbai divers and traders in chank fishery activities in the coast.

In the Thanjavur coast the fishermen of Nagapattanam, Tranquebar, Thirumullaivasal and Adirampattanam collected the shells. Here the chanks were collected with net and not by diving¹⁷⁴. The chank fishery of the Thanjavur coast was in the hands of the Thanjavur Maratha rulers. The Modi records of the Marathas speak about chank fishery in the coast and coolie charges to the divers. It was 14 chakram, per 1000 chanks. Further the English permitted the chank divers (Muslims) in the coastal areas to go to Ceylon for fishing. Shells were sent to Malacca from Nagore port¹⁷⁵. In the south Arcot coast the chank shells were collected by renters and also by individual fishermen. The collection of the shells was done with nets as in Thanjavur. Chank shells were smuggled from the South Arcot coast to Pondicherry where it fetched a higher price¹⁷⁶.

The Coromandel chank shells had a good market in Bengal and hence were exported there in large quantities. From there they were sent to Tibet and Butan. In Bengal the chank was in wider use as ornaments like bangles and earlets. It was also used in many social functions. We find references to the export of chank to Bengal from the Coromandel in the writings of the Arabian and European travellers. The Muslims of the Coromandel were wholesale merchants in chank in Calcutta. Kilakkarai was an important centre of chank export to Bengal.

A large number of Muslims of Coromandel were engaged in pearl and chank fishing and trade from very early times. Pearling and diving for chank were regarded as low occupations but this did not stop these Muslims from using their special skill as a bridge to this more prestigious and lucrative maritime activity¹⁷⁷. Persons in the lower strata of the society were engaged in diving and collecting activities while the affluent were in trade and export¹⁷⁸. From the early times, the Arab pearl divers were considered to be better than the Tamils¹⁷⁹. Since Thirunelveli and Ramanathapuram coasts were rich in pearl and chank, the majority of the coastal population among the Muslims took up diving as a profession. The writings of the Europeans praise the superiority of the Coromandel Muslim divers. The Kilakkarai Muslim divers were very industrious and liked by the English. They specially designed boats suitable for chank and pearl fishing and these boats differ from every other kind in the world. The great majority of divers in Kilakkarai were Labbais, of course there were also Marakkayars and Sonakars. The superiority of the Labbais over the Paravas in the number of seconds they remained under water, collecting greater number of oysters per dive made the work of the former more productive and powerful. The stones under the Muslims fetched more¹⁸⁰. Hence the Muslim divers were paid higher than the Paravas and the Karaiyars.

At Kilakkarai a certain contribution of the catch was also generally allowed to be set aside by the divers for the benefit of their mosque¹⁸¹. The English recruited Muslim divers of Kilakkarai and Periapattanam for chank and pearl fishing in the Ceylon coast¹⁸². Similarly the Muslim divers of Thirunelveli coast were also of proven ability. The English authorities sent the Muslim divers

from Thirunelveli coast to Tennaserim for fishing pearl¹⁸³. In view of the attractive income in chank trade many of the Muslim shipowners and divers resorted to smuggling.

The Marakkayars of Kilakkarai were continuing to flourish in pearl and chank trade during the eighteenth, nineteenth centuries. Syed Abdul Kadar Marakkayar of Kilakkarai figures very often as the rentier and merchant in pearl and chank since 1789 in the Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli coast. He was having factories at Kilakkarai and Bengal. He enjoyed the patronage of the Sethupathi Vijaya Raghunatha Muthuramalingam (1762-1795). English records speak about the trade standing of Abdul Kadar Marakkayar who could transport chank shells along with other merchandise to Bengal in his own ships, could afford a higher rent for fishing than any other person and his security was unquestionable. The English East India Company authorities preferred him over other competitors and had conferred renting rights to him in pearl and chank fisheries in Thirunelveli and Ramanathapuram coasts on many occasions¹⁸⁴. He was carrying on a vast trade from the ports of Kayalpattanam, Kulasekarapattanam, Vembar, Kilakkarai and Tondi. The Sethupathi had given him the privilege to trade in his ports on payment of a reduced duty. When these concessions were curtailed later by the English authorities, (the Collector of Madurai) in 1802, the Board of Revenue intervened and afforded adequate remedy to him. The Company sold the grains collected from the people in the region to Abdul Kadar Marakkayar. The Nawab of Arcot also had granted him some concessions. Many of the European private merchants were jealous of the reputation and concessions enjoyed

by this Marakkayar from the English authorities. His son-in-law Haneefa Lavai Marakkayar was also a prominent trader and exporter in chank and pearl¹⁸⁵. Syed Mohamed Marakkayar of Kilakkarai was the rentier of chank fishery in 1825¹⁸⁶. Varisai Ibrahim Marakkayar was the rentier of pearl fishery in the Madurai coast in 1833-34¹⁸⁷. Quadir Meera Pillai Marakkayar was another trader and rentier in chank fishery from Kilakkarai¹⁸⁸.

Levey Mohamed Marakkayar was the chank and pearl fishery rentier in the Thirunelveli coast in 1810-11¹⁸⁹. Kaleel Mohamed Marakkayar was a prominent rentier of the fisheries during the second quarter of the nineteenth century and he had a factory at Bengal¹⁹⁰. Marakkayar Thambi Marakkayar, Sali Naina Marakkayar of Kilakkarai were exporters of chank to Bengal and they had trading centres in the Thirunelveli coast¹⁹¹. Mohamed Kasim Labbe Marakkayar of Kilakkarai was the rentier of chank fishery in Thirunelveli coast in 1819. He was also the chank fishery rentier in the South Arcot coast during this period¹⁹².

The system of renting chank fishery was discontinued by the English from 1876. The English government looked upon the chank fishery as their prerogative and conducted it annually in the Thirunelveli coast. The shells collected were sold in one lot in the month of July, to the highest bidder. In the Thanjavur coast, the individual fishermen collected the shells and they were purchased by the customs department at a fixed price. In South Arcot it was farmed out to the renters on yearly basis. At the close of the nineteenth century, the Labbais in the coastal villages continued as chank divers and there were many Muslims in chank trade and they exported them in their native crafts to

Bengal. The Muslim divers of Kilakkarai, Periapattanam and Kayalpattinam participated in the pearl fishery in the Ceylon coasts where they got good remuneration¹⁹³.

The pearl and chank fisheries were an important source for the economic development of the region during the eighteenth - nineteenth centuries. A detailed account of the profits from the pearl and chank fisheries in Thirunelveli coast from 1810 to 1900 will show the part played by these fisheries in the economic life of the people of the region¹⁹⁴. By their active participation in this sphere of activity, the Marakkayars of Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli coasts particularly those of Kilakkarai and Kayalpattinam, contributed much for the economic development of the region and for the livelihood of a large contingent of people in the lower strata of society.

The name "Pearl" is very closely associated with the Islamic society of the Coromandel. Muslim women loved ornaments made of pearl. Muslims in the coastal towns prefixed Muthu (Tamil word for pearl) to their names. Muthu Ibrahim, Muthu Mohamed, Muthu Nainar, Muthu Hussain are a few such very common names. The Marakkayars call the paternal grand father as Muthuvappa (vappa-father). The habitations of the Muslims in the coastal towns were called Muthupattanam. Muthu Mahal, is very commonly used to name the Muslims' houses. No doubt that the long association of the Muslims of the Coromandel with pearl fishing activities have brought about these effects in their social life.

Fishing

A considerable population of Muslims in the coastal areas were fishermen from ancient times. Like pearling and chank diving, fishing was also regarded as a low occupation. But the fishermen who were poor among the Muslims had to depend on those who were in the upper strata. Rich Marakkayars owning vessels controlled groups of such people under them. The inhabitations of these fishermen were separated from others. They were grouped along with Muslim weavers. It is apparent that a large part of the Tamil maritime population who were specialised in pearling, chank diving and fishing had embraced Islam. All of them could not have come out of their earlier occupation and had to continue it¹⁹⁵.

A large number of Muslims (Labbai, Sonakars, Marakkayars) were engaged in sea fishing in places like Kovalam, PortoNovo, Thirumullaivasal, Nagore, Tranquebar, Velamkanni, Karaikkal, Topputurai, Point Calimere, Muthupet, Adirampattanam, Ammapattanam, Tondi, Kilakkari, Kayalpattanam, Kulasekarapattanam and in many other small villages along the stretch of the east coast. Many of the Muslims were selling fish and dry fish. Dry fish was one of the important commodities in coastal trade. The Muslim fishermen used champan or sampan, catamarans, dhoneyes and boats for fishing. About fortyfive types of fishing nets were in use in the Coromandel. In Nagore and Karaikkal the Muslim fishermen were numerous and were experts in deep sea fishing. Since pearl fishing was seasonal, during the rest of the season fishing might have been their main occupation. When the pearl fishery became irregular, the Muslims engaged in this activity had to resort to sea

fishing which was an easy job for them¹⁹⁶. From the third quarter of nineteenth century many of the minor ports decayed and trading activities were abandoned. The Muslim labourers who were in sea faring activities were thrown out of employment and many such minor ports naturally turned into fishing villages. When fishing was leased out by the English, the rich Marakkayar and Labbai traders became the rentiers and a large contingent of Muslim labour class worked under them¹⁹⁷.

The fishermen among the Muslims were the people in the lower strata of society. This is the condition even to this day though they are called Labbais, Sonakars or Marakkayars, they are segregated from other Marakkayars and Labbais in social and economic status. The long association of the Muslims with fishing is evident from the names of fish like Sonakan Thirukkai, Sonakan Valai, Sonakan Kezhuthi¹⁹⁸. The Labbai and Marakkayar fishermen also had good knowledge in astronomical data, weather conditions, and oceanography like those who were engaged in high sea fishing. The knowledge on these maritime subjects have been handed down to generations by tradition verbally and they are being followed and practised even to this day in the coastal villages of Tamil Nadu. The past glory of the maritime community is seen only in such vetiges¹⁹⁹.

Ship and Boat Building

The talents of the ancient Tamils in sea craft and navigational technologies are attested by the occurrence of many terms about sea, crafts and trading activities in the Sangam Tamil classics and in the later Tamil literary works. We find about twenty terms for various kinds of

ships and boats and also names of the parts of the vessels and the building techniques²⁰⁰.

The vessels were built in various sizes and shapes. Their length varied 10 feet to 176 feet. For example the front face of the vessel by name Ampu was in the shape of an elephant or buffalo or lion. Some others were built in the shape of a peacock, alligator, serpent and tiger. Vessels like navoy, vankam and kalam were used for overseas and long distance voyages and trade. toni, otam, pataku and similar vessels were in use for short distance and coastal voyages and trade²⁰¹.

The boat builders followed astrological and astronomical data for favourable time to start boat building. The timber used in boat building were Karumaruthu (*Terminalia crenulata*) Ventek (Berrya cordifolia) Palai (Palanquin ellipticum) Punnai (*calophyllum inophyllum*) Teak (*Tetra grandis*) Ayini (*Artocarpus hisutus*) Vembu (*Azadiachta indica*) Naval (*Syzigenum cumini*) Vengai (*Plerocarpus marsupium*) Puvarasu (*Theslpesia opeinea*) and Illuppai (Mahuvo). The ships were propelled by wind and had sails for this purpose. The ship after completion set sail at an auspicious time²⁰². The use of iron was said to be taboo in yuktikalpataru, the sanskrit text on seacraft technology. It was the tradition to build boats by hull of planks joined together by ropes and wooden pegs²⁰³. The ship and boat building is started on an auspicious occasion. The keel which is the back bone of the boat, is prepared first. On either side of the keel, a plank called ottupalagai is fixed by pegging. The length of the keel is the length of the craft. Then the skeleton is built by adding rib (manikkal) at the full base from stem to stern end and adding rib extensions as the plank is

built upwards. For example a craft of 110 feet has 50 manikkals in each side. Its length in the middle is 31 feet and reduced towards either end. Ribs are generally made by joining two pieces. These ribs though inside the boat have to be sturdy and load bearing. The rib timber is not straight, it is in 'U' shape or sharply angular. Short and medium sized tropical hard woods such as vembu and poovarasu are ideally used for manikkal in many places. Side fitting of the plank is done by perfect plank fit. The planks were sewn or stitched with holes at close distance to the rims of the planks and the sewing coir is taken through the holes for fastening. (At present iron nails and bolts are used for fastening). Caulking with cotton fibre choked with a viscous resins and lime mixture ensure leakproof fitting. The side planks are to be below the water level are carefully chosen looking to the durability under water and resistance to insects and wood borers. After fully planking the vessel seasoning is done with vegetable oil with lime and applied upto the supposed water level.

Before fully fixing the ribs the stern end is about one third of the height of the vessel and the stern height is about one fourth. The rudder (sukkan) is fixed in the stern end with the help of a bronze ring in such a way that it can move in all directions. Sukkan has the height of the stern. The mast (paimaram) is provided with a straight and strong log to withstand the wind. For small masts, slender spars and yards casurina poles are used. For example for a vessel of 110 feet length two masts of 60 feet and 40 feet are used, with 2 feet and 1.5 feet in girth. Sails are made of thick cotton fabric. The length of the sail is double to one and half of the length of the craft. Yard in the pole used for tying the sail. Pully is used for spreading the sail.

The Arab ships appeared in the Indian waters as early as second century A.D. The Persian and Arab ships were also built of wooden planks held together with coir ropes. They were capacious and lightly built and swift before the wind but were not really able to withstand the strong monsoon winds in the long voyages. Marcopolo writing in the later part of fourteenth century mentions the risky nature of Arab ships²⁰⁴. The ancient Tamil maritime communities coming in contact with the Arabs used to adopt the best features of their construction techniques in ship building for their mutual advantage. With the Arab patronage, the ancient Tamils built ships of high quality. The Arab merchants might have brought their own carpenters in their vessels for their maintenance. Some of them might have also permanently stationed in the ports of the Tamil country for attending to such works in Arab ships. So the Arab colonies in the eastern coast included their carpenters also. Manimekalai the Tamil epic of second century A.D. mentions about the Yavana (Arab) carpenters²⁰⁵.

The rulers of the Tamil country in the medieval period patronised ship building and maintained large fleet of vessels. Their naval expeditions and colonial conquests across the sea to Ceylon, Lakshadweep, Maldives, Andaman and Nicobar, Burma, Malaya, Java Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries attest their naval power²⁰⁶. Inscriptions and copper plates of the Pallavas, the Pandyas and the Cholas right from the seventh century A.D to the fourteenth century A.D., speak about their naval strength and victories. The vessels were not only used for warfare but also for overseas trade²⁰⁷.

The Indian shipping industry developed remarkably by the end of the fifteenth century. By

European standards fairly large ships were built in South India. The ships as they have been recorded were of 350 to 800 tons burthen. Some of them were bigger than the Portuguese ships in the Indian ocean. The Navayet Muslim merchants of Gujarath built very beautiful ships. The Muslim communities of peninsular India had contributed much for the development of shipping in Indian ocean²⁰⁹. The ships of the Bay of Bengal region were generally built in sturdier fashion to withstand the occasional cyclones in the area but they were slower to sail and they had to sail in time of favourable wind and weather²⁰⁹. Thomas Bowray who visited the Coromandel coast in 1670 mentions about the superior crafts of the coast. The Muslims of the Coromandel owned many types of vessels for their sea faring activities. The labour and technical skill to operate them also came from them. The Portuguese records speak about the carpentry occupation of the Muslims of peninsular India and Ceylon. No doubt many of them were boat builders²¹⁰.

When the English appeared in Indian waters in the seventeenth century they found that the Coromandel ships were better than their ships. The English ships were built of oak tree, fastened with iron nails, the corrosion of which consumed the very metal which is supposed to unite the planks. Hence the English turned to the south Indian technology and began to build crafts with teak wood engaging local craftsmen. In 1821, timber was declared as state monopoly and small boat builders were not able to get teak wood for boat building²¹¹.

The archival records of the English shed some light on the ship building activities of the Muslims of Coromandel. Periathambi Marakkayar, the seventeenth century commercial magnate of the Coromandel owned

many vessels of various descriptions and he built those vessels in his ship building yard at Kilakkarai. The English East India Company utilised the yard of the Marakkayar to repair their ships²¹². Many other merchants of Kilakkarai also built ships of their own for their maritime activities engaging local carpenters, among whom there were many Muslims. As trial run the ship owners of Kilakkarai freighted passengers in their vessels to Mecca²¹³. The Muslim merchants in Nagapattanam and Nagore also built ships of considerable burthen upto 500 tons in the port itself not only for their use but also for the merchants of the western coast. The English also purchased such vessels from the local Marakkayar merchants and the Company also utilised their technical skill²¹⁴. The Marakkayars of Kayalpattanam built ships for their activities and they also sold vessels to the English East India Company²¹⁵. Similarly the maritime Muslim communities engaged in seafaring and fishing activities throughout the stretch of the Coromandel coast built ships and boats of their own with the available local skills. It is interesting to note that at present the Marakkayars and Labbais who are engaged in fishing in Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram, and Thirunelveli coasts build boats of their own. There are also a number of Muslim carpenters engaged in the work²¹⁶. They build such vessels with traditional technology as handed down from generation to generation²¹⁷.

Indigenous Seafaring Traditions

The maritime Muslim community of the Coromandel coast with their long association with the monsoon dominated oceans, have inherited the knowledge and techniques of navigation as handed

down to generations by oral transmission. Such knowledge of practical navigational utility include the knowledge of topography of litoral seas and adjoining coasts, sea circulation including tides, waves, currents, sea-life, sky and weather conditions in different parts of the year, cloud typology, wind, foul weather system, star recognition in relation to their movement in the sky etc. Repeated observation of these phenomena over time and space have generated practical tips for use in open sea sailing.

The sea faring communities of the present times do not stay in the sea for longer periods - day and night. Yet they are trans-oceanic in character for generations. Though the surviving sailing tradition, coasting in character, even the coastal navigation is not so easy. Much of the experience and skills are common to both open sea and coastal voyages. Even the fish workers are to fight continuously with the surroundings and working in turbulent water is not an easy task. The fishing pursuits are not only integrated with deep based technological procedures but also with the practical application of native science that has been developed through thousands of years of experience. These traditions are getting lost under the impact of modern shipping and navigational technologies and the vestiges of the dying past can be studied as in use in the former minor port areas in remote locations where the country crafts are still in use. Trading activities with vessels of larger burthens have ceased in these areas and all of them have been reduced to fishing harbours, still the oceanic traditions are followed by the present day sea going people in their activitiy mostly fishing. Extensive field studies were undertaken in the coastal

villages of the Tamil coast and the information collected from sea-faring Muslim community are described here in brief.

The masted sailing ships plaid in the ocean under the power of winds and currents. The safety of the voyage solely depended on the vessels in rough seas and the sailors perception of sea environment. Every mood of the sea has to be understood by the sea-men. Elderly sea men, by experience, have inherited and conserved such ideas. The living experience and guidelines followed by the present day sea faring people, unpublished folk documents, folk songs and oral traditions are the sources for this subject.

The former shipping professionals were classified into various categories with specific job requirements, such as Naghuda, the captain of the ship who fixes the course of the ship; Malumi, the navigator, who is always a master in astronomy, sea and related navigational matters; Thandal, the chief sailor; Shirang for superintending the landing of the ship and the yard master; Bandari, accountant; Sukkani, helmsmen who steers the ship according to the advice of the malumi; Panjari who looks out from the top of the mast and gives notice when sea or land or ship or strong winds are sighted and Kalasis the common sailors. The practice followed by the seamen in their sea faring activities can be studied under the following headings.

Nautical Measurements

The depth of water in the deep sea is measured with a rope with a stone or an iron ball at the end. The unit of depth, paham, is the distance between

the extreme ends of horizontally stretched arms at shoulder height. It is equivalent to a fathom (2 metre or 6 feet). To find the depth in shallow water long bamboo pole is used. Some times the colour of the sea itself is taken into account for estimation of depth. The basic direction during the day is well recognised with reference to rising and setting of the sun. The fraction of hour is assessed by pointing out the first finger of the hand upright to the sun and from the length of the shade the time is calculated. The moon and the pole star (Dhuruva) are used as an indicator of time at night. The distance travelled could not be physically measured at sea. It is measured as time distance sailed in a given unit of time. The traditional unit of time distance was yamam or zamam. One yamam is equal to 7.5 naligais, each naligai being calculated equal to 24 minutes. Yamam is the unit of time distance equivalent to single watch of 3 hours. Eight yamam constitute a day's sailing. The traditional calculations were in the memory of the seamen.

Seamen have also found affinities of practical use between the direction of rising or setting of specific stars during sailing. Every star has a fixed path in the skies rising on the eastern horizon on a fixed direction and setting on the western sky on a corresponding fixed direction. Thus the rising and setting of a star becomes an useful indicator for direction. For example Dhuruva for north, Aarameen for east, kappalvelli for north east and siluvaivelli for south east and the like. Each star may be useful for about two hours. Hence about six to eight stars will be necessary for a whole night to indicate a specific direction. In the Tamil coast the stars mainly used for finding direction are the planet Erinjan velli

(Jupiter), Vidi velli (Morning star-Venus) Vada velli (Pole star it is also called as mathivelli and Dhuruvanakshatram) Kappal velli (Saptha Rishi, ursa majoris) Koottu Nakshatram (Orionis or Ardha and Mrig) Siluvai Velli - Kuruz velli (the southern cross or Acrux) Aaara Meen or Araankottai (Krutika or Pleadies) Nalu velli (Simha or Leo-nagh) Iranai velli (Odakol) Punarvasu (Castor or pollux) Ottrai velli (Agastya canopus) Ulakkai velli (Cygum) Sanku velli (Alpha Phonenix) Tarasu velli (Tula centaurus) Sothi velli (Swathi Arctrus) etc. With the help of these stars the approximate time may also be calculated with reference to their position. For example the Kappal Velli can be seen in the north east direction from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. The time is determined by the brightness of the star. Idayanai Eaicha Velli (Star that cheated the shepherd) seen in the north direction above the head at 2 p.m. Vidi velli appears from 3.30 a.m. Tharasu Velli seen in the south direction and appears by 9 a.m. and it moves above the head as the time passes on. Moonankkutta Vellis seen in the western direction from 3 a.m. Intham Koottuvelli seen in the north direction from 3.30 a.m. to 4.00 a.m. and as time passes, it comes down. Thus the stars were in guidance to find out the direction as well as time in the open sea. In practical use the guidance of the stars for navigation is through cumulative experience and it is still in use among the seamen of the Tamil coast.

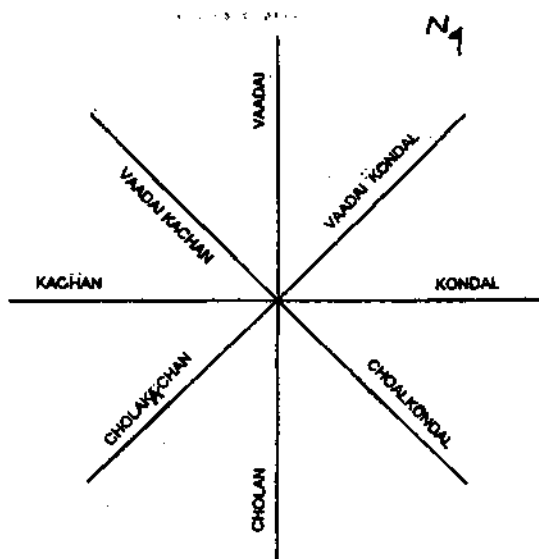
Wind

There is intimate association between wind, weather and direction. The seamen find a strong association with wind and weather since wind brings the weather and sailing is regulated by wind direction and speed. The winds are named in different ways.

Some are named from the direction of origin, as for example the Vaadai for the the north wind and thenral for the southerly. Seamen in Ramanathapuram coast name the wind from land to sea as Vaadai and the wind from the sea to land as chola katru. In some areas the purakatru and karaikatru are the names respectively for sea and land breezes. These winds have been traditionally taken advantage of for sailing out (Karaikatru) and in (Purukatru) by the fishing crafts. Winds from the west to the east is called Kachan, and the name is associated with Kutch, indicating the direction of its origin. Wind from the east to the west is called Kondal. In some parts at the coast the east wind is called Eelakatru. Wind from intermediary directions are: from north-east Vaadai-kondal, south east, chola kondal. The wind that determines the change in direction is called theerkatru. The direction of the wind is denoted by the sail of the vessel. The waves are always directed towards coast. Sea lore associates specific winds with foul sailing weather, for example, the Vaadai-Kachan is said lead to capsizing of cargo boats in the Tamil coast. Fisher folk songs describe the huge swell of waves that develop when the Vaadai Kachan blows causing the boats to break along their seams and the ship masts to tremble. During this time the fishermen assert that the brightness of the stars will change which is also an indication in this respect. The cyclone brought about by Kondal (wind of cloud) leading to breaking of the mast and tearing of sails was felt in the Pandya coast. Further the Kondal will bring rains. The foul weather, cyclones and depressions are well recognised with the help of the changes that occur in sea life. It is believed that on the approach of cyclone fish like Thirukkai appear with upturned tail, and sea snakes will float like balls etc.

Waves and Sea - Currents

Intimate knowledge of the waves, tides and currents is an empirical acquisition of cumulative experience through sailing in different months of the year had provided the seamen of the Tamil coast with a range of ready reckoning rules which are used judiciously have helped them to steer through difficult and foul weather on the one hand and to avoid adverse weather through reading of premonitory signals on the other. The seamen categorise the sea of the inner shelf as the karaikadal where sailing in and out depends upon the flood and ebb of tide and purakkadal of high depth. Foul weather is always associated with high waves. The perception of the rise and fall of the tides is familiar to the sea faring communities. The low tide and high tide days are



Name of the winds

calculated through the new moon or full moon. According to the Muslim fishermen who follow the lunar reckoning say that the sea recedes to low tide or Kruruneer, during the 3rd, 14th-17th, 28th-30th days from the new moon day. To the Hindus and Christians the high seas in the coastal waters are associated with the period of Ekadesi (11th day) to 4th day the new or full moonday. Thus the maritime people had a sound knowledge by tradition about occurrence of high and low tides and their effects and utility.

The sea current, drift flow direction is traditionally recognised thus: a slightly moist ball of ash is thrown into the sea on the stern side and observed for its long grey trail as it slowly disperses and can be traced over a good distance. Sea currents are identified as *neerottam*. Different types of currents are identified in relation to their flow directions and named such as *Valli vellam*, *Valli memari*, *Choli memari*, *Choli vellam* etc.

Land Marks for Shore

Fixing of location in the open sea is invariably a technique of resection using two or more known positions to fix the unknown. If the vessel is coasting and is within a visible range from the shore, objects can be distinctly recognised either by their prominence and dominance in the local shore landscape. Temple gopurams, churches, minars of mosques, trees, etc. are used for identification. The palms projecting indicate the correct position of the shore in many areas. The modern port of Nagapattanam has a light house. Most of the minor ports had no light houses. The vessels approaching the shore recognise the particular shore

with the help of lights in tall buildings and lights in the adjoining shores and big trees in the particular shore during day time. The use of birds like sea gulls and sea crows to identify shore and land when shores are invisible is a practice that finds references in ancient works. The sailors recognised that the birds will fly at the distance of 15 to 20 miles from the shore. From this it could be inferred that the shore was at a particular distance. Colour of the sea water, types of sea life including snakes and fish also held to identify the coast and is a well known tradition. Estimation of location away from the shore in open sea in the absence of any identifiable landmark anywhere in the horizon poses a formidable challenge to the navigator. On such occasions the location is estimated by the direction and distance hitherto travelled. As we have put it earlier the distance is calculated as time distance.

Coastal Topography

The seamen of the Tamil coast ordinarily go upto 100 feet or 15 paham depth for fishing. Sometimes to the maximum of 100 pahams. To ascertain the depth in a particular spot in the sea a rope is let into the sea with a clay mass or an iron ball at the tip. As the clay or iron ball touches the ground, some sand or rock piece will stick on to the clay and the rope is drawn up and the depth is calculated. Further the availability of a particular species of fish is determined from the type and smell of the sand sticking to the clay mass or the vegetation that are being felt through rope. Different types of sand, mud, gravel and rocks are recognised to determine an anchorage site in the sea. Stone anchors were used in the past. Thus the traditional knowledge about the sea and it's environment is a living tradition

and is studied among the Muslim fishermen on the Coromandal coast and brought to light²¹⁸.

End of the Enterprises

The maritime enterprises of the Muslims of the Coromandel coast declined to near total by the end of the nineteenth century. Only a handful of influential merchants withstood the storm, others went in search of better opportunities. Many were reduced to poverty. The labouring class was the worst affected. No more sails to far off countries. The pearl banks were left unexploited. Many of the busy minor ports decayed and were reduced to fishing outlets. Various causes contributed to the decline of the maritime enterprises of the Coromandel Muslims.

It is a fact that the Muslims of the Coromandel were ruined by the ruthless attack of the Portuguese. Their maritime enterprises met with a sudden economic misfortune. Many withdrew from the scene. But in the course of time the Muslim traders began to accommodate and cooperate with the exploiters. There developed a symbiotic relationship between the two even with mutual freight space on board on each others ships but it was too late for the Muslims to tide over the situations. With regard to the Southeast Asian markets the Muslims avoided the Portuguese and shifted to alternative trade centres. However the superior naval power and higher capital resources of the Portuguese continued to be the real challenge to the Muslims²¹⁹. With their half shattered economic condition the Muslims had to face the new competitors, the Dutch.

On their arrival in the Coromandel the Dutch also found the Muslims as the major rivals to their trade

prospects and were extremely hostile to them. The restrictive policies of the Dutch in the Coromandel - Ceylon - Malabar trade deprived the Muslims of their legitimate trading activities, eroding their economy. They were forced to adopt clandestine methods like smuggling for their livelihood. The injuries inflicted by the blows of the Portuguese developed into an ulcer under the impact of the additional blows of the Dutch. With the adversely affected economic structure they met the English in the seventeenth century.

The English had no religious bias against the Muslims like the Portuguese and the Dutch. From the second half of eighteenth century to the first half of nineteenth, the English East India Company encouraged the Muslims particularly the Marakkayars in the maritime trade. They extended to them concessions and treated them with consideration. However from the second quarter of the nineteenth century the economic ambitions of the English marginalised the Muslims also. In the period of our study the English emerged as the major political power in India and they were the purchasers and exporters of Indian goods. It was but natural for their subjects to turn in the direction of England for their trade prospects. But the policies of London were detrimental to Indian traders including the Coromandel Muslims.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the encouragement of the British administration to the Lankashire Jenny resulted in the import of cotton piece goods from Britain in to the South Indian market, making the then export and import pattern topsy-turvy. Because of this, the export of cotton piece goods was sealed along with the fate of thousands of native weavers,

intermediaries, traders and exporters. Among them there were considerable number of Muslims. Economists state that this has no parallel in commercial history²²⁰.

English administration in India bowed to the pressure of a group of individuals (both in India and England) who influenced the policies of the Company. Accordingly they began to feather their own nest at the cost of the natives. The prohibition of Indian ships and sails to enter British ports and restrictions on Indian shipping and ships employing Indian sailors had a crushing effect on the native maritime profession. The Muslims who were in the shipping profession were suddenly necked out to despair. There was racial discrimination in collecting tariffs. Higher tariff rates on the ships of Indians affected their profitability. Muslim ship owners and nagudhas had to run with lesser profits. Grains were an important commodity in the Coromandel coastal trade and indo-Ceylon-Malabar trade. Increase of customs duty on grains was injurious to these trading activities and export of grains declined in course of time. The value of coastal trade in the Madras Presidency in 1805 was Rs. 2075339/- but in 1845-46 it was only Rs. 362534/-

In the course of nineteenth century, the minor ports along the stretch of the Coromandel coast were neglected. There were no dockyards for landing or repairing facilities. Bigger vessels could not call on these ports. The District collectors suggested to enlarge the facilities in these ports. The officials in Fort St. George were sleeping over the recommendations of the officials in the district administration. The Marakkayar ports on the Coromandel had to starve on this score. Moreover, trading activities of the Company were concentrated in

Madras and it was not with in the reach of the small traders²²². A heavy duty was imposed on the import of the spices. Hence spices trade declined²²³. Further, cinnamone, cloves and other spices were introduced in the gardens of the Company in places like Courtalam and the Nilgris to cater the local needs. This made the merchants restrict the import of spices²²⁴. The English free merchants, the Nabobs, entered the fray in export and import trade, salt trade, rentership of fisheries and inland trade. They had bigger resources with them and had the blessings and support of the Company. The Muslim merchants could not withstand the competition and it brought down adverse consequences on them.

The prospects of foreign trade of the Coromandel Muslims were linked with the political condition of the nations with which they were trading. Even during the eighteenth century the kingdoms of Southeast Asia were in a political mess. The Madras based English private merchants offered to help such kings in case of attack by enemy nations. They kept armed men on the shore of these countries for this purpose. For example the king of Ache granted many concession to the English private merchant Jourdan in 1768, in return for the military help arranged by him. He shipped about 75 Muslim men from Nagore for this purpose. Jourdan also enjoyed the favour of the kingdoms of Kedha for arranging similar help. The Danes in Tranquebar also supplied sepoys to the kingdom of Kedha. Thus trade with traders who assisted them in their defence was preferred by the Southeast Asain Kingdoms. The English merchants well utilised such opportunities and readily accepted the invitation for alliance in defence and trade²²⁵. This is an illustration of the condition which thrust the political power into the hands of

European traders. Thus the Europeans got a preference over the Coromandel Muslim traders even though they had been frequenting these coasts for a very long time. In this way the Muslim traders were pushed to a second position in the trade of the Southeast Asian countries by the end of the eighteenth century.

The various wars fought for supremacy by the European powers on south Indian soil brought economic instability, among the natives. Money became scarce, there was none to purchase grains and export commodities. The trading vessels of the natives were subjected to hardship at the hands of the opponent European powers. For example in 1798, many ships of Coromandel Muslims were captured by French privateers resulting in great loss of property. Similarly the English fleet also harassed the native vessels with French or Danish flags and colours. The Muslims of Nagore, Nagapattanam and PortoNovo were the worst affected during this period because of the hostile operation by the Europeans.

The import of Arab horses and the trade with that was in the hands of the Muslim Rawthars and Marakkayars for centuries. But it slipped into the hands of the English private merchants and they imported in to India small handy and fast ponies from Pegu and Manila. The venue of the horse fair shifted to Hydrabad which became the centre of local horse trade. Thus the Muslims of Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam lost their lions share in horse trade by the end of eighteenth century²²⁶. The pearl and chank fisheries suffered due to the interference of the European powers. These fisheries became irregular. Even this was conducted according to the whims and fancies of the particular power which

engaged in them at that time. The vast majority of the coastal Muslim population in the lower strata of the society who were engaged in these fisheries activities were thrown out of employment. Such workers became fishermen and many migrated to Ceylon for better livelihood. The pearl and chank merchants had to enter into other trades. A few of them became gem dealers. A large number of petty merchants, shipping personnel and others of the labour class migrated to Ceylon, Southeast Asian countries and Burma in search of better jobs. Such migrations affected the balance of Coromandel maritime professional activities and the economic condition of the coastal belt.

Apart from all the above external factors, the internal deficiencies among the Muslims also contributed to the decline of their maritime commerce and other activities. Right from early times, the Indian Ocean trade was based on the commercial success of numerous individual Muslim merchants. Adherence to a common religious faith some times enabled the building of a commercial link and network and the evolution of a mechanism of credit. But Muslim merchants competed fiercely with each other. They were by far the most numerous though they generally operated individually or in groups according to their ethnic origin and never as one cohesive group. The concept of high and low in terms of ethnicity, descent and culture and social position etc. created a social situation characterised by the lack of solidarity and cooperation among people and these in turn fail to produce a collective consciousness among them to change and develop their society. It is a fact that *laissez faire* doctrine promoted by Adam Smith postulates that individual pursuance of self interest will bring great happiness in the economy but in the changed

modern capitalistic pattern of society, the monopoly of the Europeans and the formation of corporations (joint stock companies etc.,) proved a real challenge and competition to the free enterprises²²⁷. This is true in the case of the Muslims of Coromandel too.

Most of the Muslim traders were men who operated with limited capital resources and at times obtained loans from the money lending Chettians at high rates of interest. There were only a few rich Muslim merchants and ship owners who seldom undertook voyages across the sea but advanced money to small maritime traders, on the condition that it should be returned doubled on return. The Coromandel Marakkayars and Labbais could not compete with the large capital resources of the European adventurers. According to available statistics, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the bigger individual Muslim merchants of Nagapattanam and Nagore operated with a limited capital of Rs. 35,000 to 50,000 whereas the English private merchants had liquid capital several times higher than this²²⁸. Though the Chettiar merchants in the coastal towns could not compete with the Muslims in commercial voyages and maritime commerce, they were better in financial resources. They financed large sums at high rates of interest, to those who were engaged in overseas trade. Many Muslim traders obtained loans from them for their trading activities²²⁹. So the capital resources of the Muslims could not keep pace with the developed European capitalism. The Muslims took no serious note of the growing global modern capitalism and its characteristics. Further their economic activities were conditioned by their religious doctrines, as rightly put forth by Max Weber in his famous work. "Protestant Ethics and Spirit

of Capitalism". For example usury is prohibited in Islam. Even though the Muslim traders paid heavy rates of interest to the Chettiar money lenders and others, they could not collect interest for the credit they themselves advanced. As strict followers of religious tenets almost all of them were ready to forego such an income whereas the co-religionists enriched themselves by such profits (there are a few exceptions in that some Muslim traders have received a lower rate of interest). Thus religion also played its own role in the economic system of the Muslims.

In the whole period of our study we do not come across business men of the stature of Francico of Nagapattinam or Achuthappa chetty or Chinnana Chetty, or Malaya Chetty, among the Coromandel Muslims. The only exception is Periathambi Marakkayar in the seventeenth century. To overcome the destructive circumstances of the wars, famines and financial crisis in south India during the eighteenth century, the English merchants organised themselves into agency houses with definite partnership, since the individual capital resources were inadequate in the changed situation. Many such agency houses emerged in Madras, like the Chase Sewell and Chinnery, Tullah, Connell, Brodie, Reoibuck, Abbot and Maitland. These agency house transacted business of every kind. They advanced money, bought and sold commodities on commission conducted business of their own and their shipping activities were wide²³⁰. The maritime Muslim traders never realised the importance of the modern capitalism and its economic strength and also the viability of organisation like joint stock companies. They did not rise up to the occasion to build up their economy. It is a great fault on their part that they did not enter into such ventures. No doubt

such ventures would have rescued them from major economic misfortune and downfall. Further, there were no motivating agencies to guide their economic activities. The role of the reforming agencies at that time was practically insignificant.

The Coromandel Tamil Muslims had no occasion to enjoy the political patronage of the local ruling houses (except that of the Sethupathis). Such political support constitute an essential factor in the development a community. For instance the Paravas who were fishermen, pearl and chank divers under the Muslims and other affluents, emerged stronger with the support and encouragement of the European colonial powers. In course of time they became traders and shipowners and challenged the Muslim enterprises. The Muslims were never offered such a support by the European powers or the local rulers.

The Tamil Muslims also stood away from the political activities of the period. They did not clamour for state owned financial or military assistance. They had no ethnic or kinship relationship to them among the ruling houses. The difference would not have proved a hindrance if they had a will to enter politics. But by nature it seems they had no quest or ambition for power. They adjusted themselves to the changed political situation keeping away from confrontation. Whenever their rights were denied they accepted it quietly. They had no aptitude to warfare technologies and were not bold to counter attack either in the sea or land to protect their maritime activities and they simply avoided clashes. In the absence of a state owned military support to them they bowed down to the forces let loose on them. Thus without utilising

the proper political forum for their development, they tightly remained in the pre-capitalistic shell in seclusion where individual tradition dominated unmoved by the concept of modern economic institutions²³¹.

The Coromandel maritime Muslims did not attain any significant economic development under the Nawabs of Arcot. The Nawabs themselves were struggling for their political life and were always in need of large sums of money. The Nawabs were in favour of the English merchants since they advanced loans to them, which the Coromandel Muslim traders could not. Hence they were never close to this Muslim power throughout the period of our study. Still it is interesting to note that the trade of the Carnatic court was in the hands of the Armenian merchants. These merchants minted in lakhs by supplying fancy goods and fragrances to the Nawabs²³². Thus the hundreds of years Muslim rule in Tamilnadu also did not bring any special prosperity to the local Muslim population.

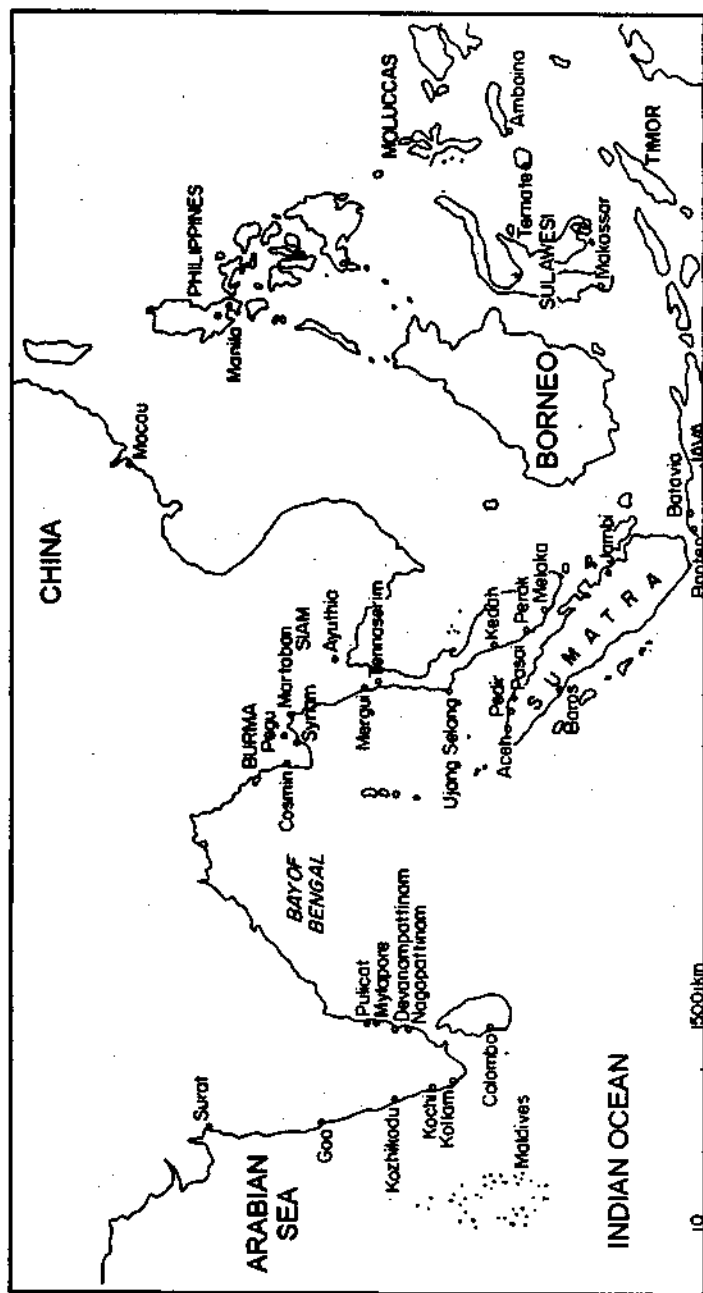
The introduction of railways came as a hurdle to the small traders who were engaged in interportal and coastal trade. In his famous minute of 1853 Lord Dalhous, the Governor General of India advocated construction of railway lines in each presidency connecting the interior parts with the chief ports to serve the commercial interests. Accordingly railway lines were laid connecting the coastal port towns with interior hinterland villages. It was advantageous for the hinterland traders to convey the commodities directly to the chief ports and other far off towns without waiting for the small traders²³³.

There was lack of creativity and innovations in thought even among the elite Muslims in relation to modernising and developing the society as a whole. They did not adopt themselves to the the new age, being inert to the needs of the time. The Coromandel maritime Muslims failed to pick the modern navigational technologies. They used only the sails for the interportal, coastal and overseas trades. This was the condition till 1900. But steamers were introduced by the English in Indian waters and the first steam vessel arrived on the south Indian coast in 1826 itself. From 1850 the traffic of English steam vessels became regular in the Coromandel and called at the ports of Nagapattinam, Pamban and Tuticorin²³⁴. The old sails were no match to the steam vessels. Thus the Muslims neglected the modern technology and ultimately lost the fruits of it.

The educational backwardness of the Coromandel Muslims was also responsible for their economic stagnation. In the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries the Muslims lagged far behind in English Education. The progress of their education was very slow owing to their strict adherence to the faith. They totally abstained from Hindu schools where they had no chance to study the teachings of Islam. When the fellow religionists were crowding in schools and colleges the Muslim sat apart held back by conservatism and a spirit of exclusiveness. They thought that conversion to Christianity was due to the English education in the missionary institutions. They were prepared to forego the advantages of English education rather than risk the faith of their children. They opposed the opening of schools for modern education in their settlements. For achieving higher social status many Muslims of middle income groups

were interested in religious education and preferred theology oriented institution like madarasa. These madarasas were outmoded educational institutions where the education imparted was mainly theocratic in nature that did not evince any interest in the teaching of science and technology. Religious leaders wielded much influence on the Muslims of the older generation. The appointment of Muslims in public services was negligible. Not knowing the technological revolution around them they were satisfied with their traditional way of life and learning. In the last decades of nineteenth century in the Madras Presidency there were only about 80 Muslim students in Arts Colleges. There were only 450 students in secondary schools and the number in primary schools was 45915²³⁵. Thus the aversion of the Muslims for modern education and technologies widened the gap and caused a barrier to their social and economic development ²³⁶.

By 1900, the masters of maritime commerce, the Marakkayars, Labbais, Sonakars and Rawthars who stayed on the Coromandel region, were reduced to small and petty traders and intermediaries to the English and local artisans and peasants. Their independent economic stability and social standing were cut short due to the various causes enumerated above. Thus at the dawn of the twentieth century the enterprises of the Coromandel Muslims became story of the past and forgotten and unsung.



4. Ports in the Indian Ocean

Notes and References

1. *Prabandha Thiruttu*. Dr. Anne Thomas, (World Tamil Research Centre, Madras 1981), Stanza.351
 “நீரோட்டஞ் சங்கெடுத்த னித்தல சலாப
 நீத்திநீர்க் குளித்தல் வலையின்மீ னிழுத்தல்
 பார் நீட்டமறிதல் மீனூலத்தல் மீன் விற்றல்
 பாறுமுதற் பின்னோப்பல் வெள்ளுப்புப் படுத்தல்
 காராட்டங் காணல்மீன் கோட்பறையோடத்தி
 கண்டை கோட்டல் வலைபாட்டுச் சுழறலம்பியோட்டல்
 சூர் காட்டல் பிறந்தேசம் புகுதல்”.
2. Vangam, used for long distance voyages across the seas. *Pathirrupathu*, 52; *Ahananuru* 255; *Maduraikanchi*, 356, 544.
3. *Ahananuru* 29, 187
4. *Thirukkural*, 496; *Purananuru*, 66,126; *Maduraikanchi*, 78, 88; *Perumpanarrupadai* 319, 321; *Seevagasinthamani*, 2793;
5. *Perumkathai*, 36, 162-64; *Seevagasinthamani*, 967
6. *Thirukkural*, 605; *Ahananuru*, 149; *Silappathikaram - Manaiyaram* 7-8; *Seevagasinthamani*, 1231; *Perumkathai*, 42-77-178; *Kalingathuparani*, 475
7. *Seevagasinthamani*, 505
8. *Namadeepa Nigandu*, Sivasubramaniya Kavirayar (1930; Rpt. Tamil University, Thanjavur) *Sudamani nigandu* 1915, *Divakara nigandu*
9. R. Raghavan, *Nam Nattu Kappal Kalai* (Madras 1968), p.76; N.Ethiraj, *Kappalin Varalaru* (Madras 1990); *Kappal Sastram*, Madras Government Oriental Manuscript series No.1 The word Kappal appears in usage at a very late period only. We find early reference in a copper plate of Krishnadeva Raya in the year 1513.

10. Auguste Toussient, "Shifting power balance in Indian Ocean, *Indian Ocean its political Economic and Military Importance* (ed) Alwin J. Herol and R.M. Barrel (New York, 1973), p.4.
11. K.M. Panikkar, *op.cit.* p.23
12. *Tarikihi Wassaf*, in H.M. Elliot and John Dowson III, pp. 24-35; S.Krishnasamy Iyengar *op.cit.* p.69-71; K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *Foreign Notices*, *op.cit.* p.179, S.M.Kamal, *Islam* pp.72-73.
13. K.Indrapala, "The role of Peninsular Indian Muslim trading communities in Indian Ocean trade,". *Muslims of Srilanka* - (ed) M.M. Shukri, (Sri Lanka 1986)
14. Susan Bayly, *op.cit.* pp.78-79.
15. M.N. Pearson, *Merchants Rulers in Gujarath*, pp. 11-12; D.G.E., Hall, *op.cit.* p.176
16. O.K. Nambiar, *Kunjali Admirals of Calicut*, (London 1963), pp.24-31.
17. Kernial sing Sandhur, *op.cit.* pp. 25-26
18. D.G.E. Hall, *op.cit.* p. 176
19. Kernial Singh, *op.cit.* pp. 28-29
20. D.G.E. Hall *op.cit.* pp. 28-29
21. *Ibid.* pp. 199-201
22. Kernial Singh, *op.cit.* pp. 28-29
23. *Ibid*
24. S. Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, *op.cit.* pp. 100-108
25. Kling applied to the people of the Coromandel - Hobson and Jobson
26. R.J. Verhoeven, *op.cit.* *JRASMB* 1955 vol. XXVIII p.III
27. L. Andaya, *Kingdom of Johore*, p.70-72
28. S. Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce*, *op.cit.* p. 121

29. Ibid pp.126-127
30. Ibid p. 131
31. Ibid p. 141
32. On Seethakkathi (Periathambi Marakkayar) and matters related to him: *F.S.G. Diary and consultations book* 1686, December 2-9, 1687, January 1-30; Van Thomas, *Memoirs of Columbo*, 1915, pp. 36-37; David Shalman and Sanjay Subramanian, "*Prince of poets and ports, Citakkati the Marakkayar of Ramnad 1690-1710*," Susan Bayly pp. 83-84; S. Arasaratnam, *Commercial policy*; and also A note on Periathambi Marakkayar; N.A. Ameer Ali, *Vallal Seethakkathiyin Vazhvum Kalamum*, S. Mohamed Hussain Nainar (ed) *Seedhakkathi Nondi Natakam* (Madras, 1939) Ka.Mu.Sheriff, *Vallal Seethakkathi*; N. Abdul Hakkim and N. Abdul Razack, *Sethunattu Periathambi Vallal Seethakkati* (Madras, 1991); S.M. Kamal, *Islam* and also *Sethupathi Mannar Seppedugal* (Ramnad, 1992); K.S. Abdul Lathiff, *Kayalpattanam*", (Kayalpattanam 1993); Namachivaya Pulavar, *Seethakkathi Thirumana Vazthu*;
33. M.M. Uwaise and P.M. Ajmalkhan, op.cit. vol. I. pp. 425-434
34. FSG Public consultations, vol. XXIX, 10th March 1695 H.D. Love op.cit. v. II, p.40
35. B. Andaya, *Perak the Abode of Grace* (Kulalampore 1979) p.50; L.Andaya, *The kingdom of Johore*, p.208.
36. S. Arasaratnam, *Companies and Commerce* op.cit. p.146
37. L. Andaya, Johore, op.cit. p. 70, 75-76; B. Andaya, 'Soudagar Raja in Traditional Malay Courts', *JMBRAS* Li - I (a), 1978 p.157
38. Chief of PortoNovo to the chief of Cuddalore 15th July 1685, *Factory Records* IOL/G/14/3; Cuddalore consultations, PortoNovo, 29th March 1685/6; *Factory Records*, Cuddalore IOL/G.9/14/2.
39. S. Arasaratnam, *Commercial Policy*, op.cit.

40. Ibid., p. 196
41. Ibid, p. 198
42. TNA Public sundries, No. 21/25, Jan. 1772
43. *Some Account of Kedah Factory Records in the Strait Settlements* IOL/G/345/1/1789; R. Bonney, *Kedah 1771-1821*, (Kulalampore 1971) pp. 53-5; S. Arasaratnam, *Maritime commerce and English Power (South East India 1750-1800)*. (New Delhi, 1996) - pp. 261-2
44. TNA Public Sundries vol. 21
45. Report of External commerce 1802/IOL/339/76; S. Arasaratnam, *Maritime Commerce and English Power*, op.cit. p. 262-3
46. G.W.Earl, *The Eastern Seas*, (London 1971), p.392
47. TNA Selection from the records of the Madras Government. Dutch record Vol. 10 *Dutch in Malabar, Memorandum on the administration of the Malabar coast, 1743 by Julius Valentign to his Successor Reinios Siersma*, (Madras, 1911) pp. 218-220
48. TNA Tanjore District Records, Vol. 3174, p. 103-5, 12 May 1806; Vol 3177, p. 248, 15 December 1800; Vol. 3201 pp. 21-22, 18 Frb 1799; B.O.R. Vol. 219; Susan Baily, p.79
49. TNA Tirunelveli District Record, Vol. 3587, 1811 pp.428-37; Vol. 3594 p.2415; Pate, *Tirunelveli Gazetteer*, p. 216, 372-4; TNA Public consultation Vol.184/A/12.2., 1793 pp.862-65
50. FSG Diary and Consultation Book, 1740, p.65, 71, 79, 99, 120, 133, 137, 148, 164, 180, 207; 1754, p.157
51. *ibid.*, for the year 1743, p. 133; 1749-50, p.16, 35; 1759 p.42; 1745, p.64,76
52. *ibid.*, for the year 1742, p.67
53. *ibid.*, for the year 1746 pp.53, 63; 1745 p.72, 184

54. *ibid.*, 1746 p.98
55. *ibid.*, 1746 p.27
56. *ibid.*, 1754 pp. 88, 115, 168, 176
57. A.R.P. Diary, II p.201; Fort. St. David Consultations, 1747 p.181
58. Diary and Consultations Book, 1750, pp. 111-112
59. *ibid.*, 1755, p.108
60. *ibid.*, 1754, p. 19-20
61. *ibid.*, 1753, p. XVI - XXX
62. TNA MCC Vol. 44 A 1793 p.55; Revenue Consultations Vol. 62 A pp. 1796 - 97; TNA Madurai District Records, Vol. 1178, pp. 470-472; S. Raju, *Inscriptions of Thanjavur Marathas* (Tamil University, Thanjavur 1987) pp. 147-149; Thanjavur Saraswathi Mahal Modi Script (Tr) Nos. 37 (5) 1852/108C; 23 (1) 1784 / 109C X, 14(2) 128C, 14 (3)/128C, 14 (4) 1777/128C, 13 (6)/1806.
63. Pleadings of Mayor's Court, 1742 - 43, Vol III. pp.68-82
64. *ibid.*, p. 106-114;
65. *ibid.*, p. 1745 Vol. II pp. XV - XXI
66. Selections from the Records of the Madras Government, No.XIX (Madras 1855), pp. 61-2; S. Arasaratnam, *Maritime Commerce and English Power*, *op.cit.* p.266
67. TNA Public Consultation, Vol.339/1808 pp. 1314-1315.
68. *ibid.*, Vol 339 pp. 1317-20
69. TNA Thanjavur District Record, No. 3174, 31 March 1806, p. 71; TNA Public Consultation, 1st June 1808.
70. TNA Public Consultation, Vol. 340, 15 March 1808, pp. 2137-50
71. *ibid.*, pp.2450-60/1 April 1808
72. *ibid.*, pp. 2137-50
73. *ibid.*, Vol. 610, 9 April 1833, pp. 4950

74. *ibid.*, Vol. 614, 2 October 1833, pp.25-26
75. *ibid.*, Vol. 614, 30 October 1833, p.28
76. *ibid.*, Vol. 615, 22 October, 1833, pp. 9-10.
77. *ibid.*, Vol. 636, 18 May 1835, pp. 30-31
78. *ibid.*, Vol. 641, 25 August 1835, pp. 74-75
79. *ibid.*, Vol. 666, 18 April 1837, pp. 75-76
80. *ibid.*, Vol. 667, 16 May 1837, pp. 45-50
81. Strait Settlement Factory Records, Vol.I 1769-95 pro. 1.9.1787
82. Proceedings of the Legislative Council of Strait Settlement, 1900 P.C. 117.
83. Kernial Singh Sandhdur, *op.cit.* p. 121
84. TNA Public Consultation, Vol. 831, 28 November 1848 pp. 7-9.
85. *ibid.*, Vol. 852, 12 December 1848
86. TNA BOR, 1st March 1875, p. 1408, Thirunelveli Gazette, Vol.VI. No. 194, December 1862, p.8
87. TNA BOR, 1875, 20 January pp. 305 - 307, 10 March, p. 1673
88. TNA Public Consultation, Vol. 898, 7 December 1852, pp.8-10
89. TNA Public Department, 2 October 1888, Nos. 1006, 1006 A, 1007 and 1008; 15 May 1888 Nos. 513 - 14, 516, 51- , 512; 1888 23 June No. 79 - 80, 8 March 1888, No. 254-256; *Administration of Madras Presidency 1866 - 67*, (Madras 1867) app.V.
90. Somerset Playne, *op.cit.* p.4686; Particulars collected in an interview and also from the family records from PR.MKM. Mohamed Abdul Kadar Marakkayar, Grandson of Kasim Mohamed Marakkayar, Mandapam, in July 1993.

91. G.O. Ms. No. 455, Forest and Fisheries Department, Government of Tamil Nadu 11.4.1987
92. Mohamed Yusuf Kokan, *Arabic and Persian in Carnatic 1710 - 1960*, (Madras 1974) p.455; M.Idris Marakkayar, *Keerthimigum Kilakkarai* (Madras, 1990) c.pp.40 - 41, 46-48; Particulars collected from the family documents maintained by M. Idris Marakkayar, Kilakkarai, in December 1990.
93. *Rajanayagam*, Vannakkalanjiya Pulavar; M.M. Uwais and Ajumalkhan, op.cit. pt. II, pp.112-114; Selections from the old records of Madura Collectorate, p.30
94. *Fat-hud-dayyan*, (Colombo 1963) p.XXII; Shaiku Nayagam Souvenir, Kilakkarai 1967; M.Idris Marakkayar, op.cit. p.93
95. Ramanathapuram Registration office document, No. 535/1881
96. TNA Madurai District Record, Vol. 4674/1826/pp. 11-18
97. TNA Tanjore District Records, Vol. 3337, p.45; 3349 p.5; 3174, p.174; 3352, p.69; TNA Miscellaneous Records, Vol. 268 (Gen 1835) 25 July 1814.
98. TNA Political Consultation, 27 October 1857
99. *Speeches and interpolation of Honourable AKG Ahamed Thambi Marakkayar, Khan Bahadur, in the Madras Legislative council*, (Swadesamitran Press, Madras 1920) and also from particulars collected in an interview with Mohamed Gouse Marakkayar grandson of Ahamed Thambi Marakkayar at Nagore in July 1993.
100. *Indian Law Reporter*, Madras series Vol. XXII, 1899, January - December pp. 26-31; Sarada Raju, p.190
101. TNA Tanjore District Record, Vol. 4252, pp.148-149
102. Jayarajan, op.cit. pp.138-139
103. S.Raju, *Tanjore Marattiar Seppedugal* - 50, op.cit. p.188

104. M.E. Mohamed Hasan Marakkayar, *Marakkayar Samoogam oor Aaivu* (Madras 1991) pp. 41-43; particulars collected in an interview with M. Sayabu Marakkayar, Karaikkal; Advocate, Ameerudeen Marakkayar, Karaikkal and M. Farook Marakkayar Pondicherry.
105. Shaik Abdul Kadar Nainar's, *Kulthub Nayagam* (1810), Stanza 29; Thirumanimalai (1816) Staza 33.
106. Henry Dodwell, *op.cit.* p.22; Fifth International Islamic Tamil literary Conference Seminar Souvenir, Kilakkarai, 1990, pp. 180-182
107. Thirunelveli gazette, Vol. VI. No. 194, p.8, December 1862
108. *ibid.* Vol. VI. No. 240, 21st October 1871, p.470
109. *ibid.* XIV No. 622, October 1871, p.470
110. On Kayalpattanam and Kulasekarapattanam shipping families, particulars were collected from the family records and interview with M.A. Jinna Marakkayar of Kayalpattanam who is the descendant of the family of Ahamad Hussain Marakkayar of Kayalpattanam and interview with M. Sulaiman Marakkayar of Kayalpattanam, during October 1993; On Kulasekarapattanam interview with Maroof Marakkayar; Christopher John Baker, *The Indian Rural Economy 1850 - 1955, The Tamil Nadu Country side*, (Oxford 1984) p.337.
111. Yusuff Kokan, *op.cit.*p. 458, 461
112. TNA Tanjore District Record, Vol. 4326/1823, pp.14-15
113. TNA Tanjore District Record Vol. 3336/1812, pp.38-42 and p.174; No. 3337/1813 pp.88-91; TNA Public Consultation, Vol.397, pp.5012-5018 letter to the Honourable Governor in Council FSG from the Board of Trade, 19 August 1812, BOR, 16 July 1812 pp. 628-29; BOR Vol. 1028 p.6613, proceedings of the FSG 28 July 1825 and BOR Vol. 1152/1828 p. 6919.

114. TNA Public Consultation, Vol. 405/1813 pp.1739-1740, Letter to the Board of Trade from the Master Attendant, Anderson.
115. Ibid. Vol. 633/1835, p.947, letter dated 24th February 1835 to the Chief Secretary to the Government of FSG from EP Elliot, District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police, Madras.
116. TNA Political consultation, Vol. 550. p.2005, 15 April 1855
117. TNA BOR Vol. 1100/1827, p.4613, letter to the President and Members of the Board of Revenue from L.G.K. Murraray, Collector of Madras, 20 April 1827 and also Vol. 1237/1830 p.5062.
118. TNA Madurai District Record, Vol. 1154/808 p.143; Vol. 4681/1833, pp.83, 88-89; Vol. 4684-B/1833, pp.33-35
119. *ibid.*, Vol. 4684 - B 26 February, 1833, pp.33-34
120. *ibid.*, 1180/1800, pp.133-35
121. A.R.P. Diary, II. P.69
122. *ibid.*, p.143
123. TNA BOR - Separate Revenue, No.395/23, August, 1887
124. Mattison Mines, *op.cit.*
125. A Chatterson Alfred, *A Note on Chrome Tanning in Madras Presidency* (1904)
126. A Chatterson Alfred, *Tanning and Working in Leather in Madras Presidency* (1904)
127. Somerset Playne, *op.cit.*, p.491 and 703
128. TNA BOR - Separate Revenue, Vol.IV., July 1887
129. TNA Commercial Consultation, Vol. II, proceedings of the FSG, 1 March 1815; TNA Marine consultation, Vol.II, p.674, 22 January 1823.

130. Report of the Public Service Commission 1886-87, Calcutta 1888, p.112
131. TNA Tanjore District Record, Vol. No.3334/1810, pp.28-31.
132. TNA Judicial Consultation, Vol.242 A.p. 2932, 13 December 1831; TNA Marine Consultation Vol.32, 185-205 - 11 March 1805.
133. TNA Tanjore District Record, Vol. 3325, p.65, 24 November 1795.
134. TNA BOR Vol. 404, pp.1842 - 1848, 18 March 1805
135. TNA Judicial Consultation, Vol. 497, 24 July 1890.
136. TNA Marine Consultation, Vol. 497, 24 July 1890
137. TNA Tanjore District Record Vol. 3338/1814, p.37; Diary consultation Book, 1740, p.207
138. TNA Thirunelveli District Record, Vol. 3571/1820 pp.220-30
139. TNA BOR, Vol.449, pp.5692-95, 9 June 1828
140. *Ahananuru*, 3,27, 130, 201, 280, 296, 350; *Purananuru*, 45, 53, 58; *Kalithogai*, 13:1:22, 9:11:15:16, *Narrinai*, 23:1:6, 172., *Pathuppattu*, 11, 56-58; *Madurai Kanchi* II, 138-139; *Silappadikaram*, 14, 11, 193-196, Canto. 27, Canto 14,5; *Manimekalai*, Canto 19,28.
141. *South Indian Inscription*, II, P.398, 399, 410, 411, 436; A.R.E., 680 of 1919.
142. S. Arunachalam, *The History of the Pearl Fishery of the Tamil Coast* (Annamalai Nagar, 1952) p.57
143. S. Arunachalam, op.cit., pp.82-85; Susan Bayly, op.cit. p.322
144. Francis Xavier, op.cit, p.311; Susan Bayly op.cit. pp.323-24; TNA BOR, vol.556, 18 November 1811. PP1398-1409
145. James Hornel, *Sacred Chank*, op.cit. p.4

146. Jean Baptiste Tavernier (Tr. From French), second edition (ed) William Crook, (Rept. 1889, New Delhi) Vol.II, p.93
147. Francis Xavier, op.cit., p.320
148. Dalgoda II. p.61-62
149. Rangacharya, *Inscriptions of Madras Presidency*, Vol.II., p.1167; A.R.E., 396 of 107; Francis Xavier, op.cit., p.320
150. Bishop R. Caldwell, op.cit, pp. 73-74
151. S. Arunachalam, op.cit. p.100
152. James Hornel, *Sacred Chank*, op.cit., p.175; Francis, Xavier, op.cit. pp.311-314.
153. Susan Bayly, op.cit, pp.322-324; S. Arunachalam, op.cit., p.115
154. TNA BOR Vol. 556, 18 November 1811, pp. 1138-409; James Hornel, *Indian Pearl Fishery in Gulf of Manaar*, op.cit., p.25; TNA Tirunelveli District Record Vol. 7966, 26 October 1836, pp. 252-253.
155. S.M. Kamal, Islam, op.cit. p.102 and *Sethupathi Mannar Seppedugal*, op.cit. pp.71-72, 117-119, 339-340
156. S.Arunachalam op.cit., p.123; James Hornel, *The Indian Pearl Fisheries of the Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay*, p.29
157. Tavernier, op.cit., p.93
158. James Hornel, *Indian Pearl Fisheries*, op.cit., pp.172-174
159. S. Arunachalam, p.113; Tirunelveli Gazette, Vol. VI. No. 200, p.4, 14 February 1863.
160. James Hornel, *Sacred Chank*, op.cit. p.6
161. S. Arunachalam op.cit., p.151; James Hornel, *Sacred Chank*, op.cit.pp.8-10; TNA BOR, vol.143,7 January 1796, pp.82-87
162. TNA Madurai District Record, Vol. 4681/1833, pp.182-183.

163. James Hornel, *Indian Pearl Fishery*, op.cit. pp.47-48
164. Particulars collected from the family records maintained by T.S.M. Tummani Marakkayar of Rameswaram.
165. *Thanjavur Maratha Mannar Modi Avana Tamilakkamum Kurippuraiyum*, (Tamil University, Thanjavur, 1989) p.150; (Modi Record No. 13/1798 as referred to in the book)
166. Modi Record, op.cit. No.2-120-121; 3-164.
167. *ibid.*, no. 13-6
168. *ibid.* no. 7-813
169. James Hornel, *Sacred Chank*, op.cit., p.4-6
170. Susan Bayly, op.cit., p.322
171. S.Arunachalam, op.cit., p.2
172. S.Arunachalam, op.cit. p.170; James Hornel, *Sacred Chank*, pp.4-5.
173. TNA Military Consultation, vol. 105, A. p.263/1800; TNA Revenue Consultation, Vol. 62 A/1795, pp.1769-97
174. James Hornel, *Sacred Chank*, op.cit., p.34
175. Thanjavur Saraswathi Mahal, Modi Records 1-334; 7-530; 7813; K.M. Venkataramayya, *Administration and Social life under the Maratha rulers of Thanjavur* (Tamil University Thanjavur, 1984) p.398
176. James Hornel, *Sacred Chank*, op.cit., p.34; S. Arunachalam, op.cit. p.170
177. Susan Bayly, op.cit., p.222-23
178. TNA BOR, Vol. 556, 18 November 1811, pp. 1398-409.
179. James Hornel, *Sacred Chank*, op.cit. p.23
180. James Hornel, Fisheries Buero Bulletin, No.XVI, p.35
181. James Hornel, *Sacred Chank*, op.cit., p.32

182. TNA Madurai District Record, Vol. 4673/1825. pp.157-158
183. TNA Public Consultation, Vol. No.547 pp.10-11, 23 Feb. 1827; Vol. 549 pp.8-9, 17 Apr. 1827; Vol. 551 12 June 1828.
184. TNA Thirunelveli District Record Vol. 3586/1810 pp. 246-247; Vol. 3573/1810 pp. 229-230
185. TNA Madurai District Record Vol. 1178 pp. 470-72, 17 Nov. 1802; Vol. 1140 pp. 140-141, 18 Nov.1802; TNA Revenue Consultation, Vol. 91-A, pp.45-64, 15 Dec. 1797.
186. TNA Madurai District Record. Vol. 4763 pp. 190-191
187. *ibid.* Vol. 4681/1833 pp. 468-70, Vol. 4863, pp.109-12
188. *ibid.* Vol. 4678/1830. pp.31-44
189. TNA Thirunelveli District Record Vol.3586/1810. pp. 72-77
190. *ibid.*, Vol. 3590/1823 pp.205-6
191. *ibid.* Vol. 4710/1822 pp.105-6
192. *ibid.*, Vol. 3597/1820, p.92; Vol. 4693 p.60; Vol. 4704 pp.160-6; Vol. 4712 pp.431032
193. S. Arunachalam, *op.cit.*, pp. 164-70
194. James Hornel, *Sacred Chank*, *op.cit.* pp.173-75
195. Susan Bayly, *op.cit.* pp.322-323
196. James Hornel, *Fishery Bulletin* No.18, 1924; *Bulletin* No. IV; *Bulletin* No. XIV.
197. TNA Tanjore District Record, Vol. 4325 p.25; *A manual of Administration of Madras Presidency*, Vol. II p.131
198. *Tamil Lexicon*, (Madras University 1932) p.3395; M. Abdul Rahim, *Islam in Nagapattinam*

199. Particulars collected from M.A. Jabbar Marakkayar and AJ.M. Ebrahim Marakkayar of Vedalai.
200. *Ahananuru* : 101; 12-13; 149; 9-11; 172; 11-13; 175; 1-5, 180; 20-24, 186; 9-11,190; 3-4, 199; 6-1, 280; 7-11;
- Kalithogai* : 106; 25-26, 136; 1-14; 149; 1-3
- Ainkurunuru* : 98; 2-3, 168; 2-3
- Kurunthogai* : 168; 5, 304; 1-4,
- Natrinai* : 110, 258; 11-7-10
- Maduraikanchi* : 75-85; 320-324
- Purananuru* : 11; 126, 14, 16, 24; 3-4
- Silappathikaram* : 13, 176-177;6, 141-142;14; 72-75, 26; 176-177, 165-166
- Manimekalai* : 29; 1-11, 16; 11-12
- Seevakasinthamani* : 580
- Perumkathai* : 1, 33, 206-207
- Kambaramayanam* : 2:7:3:3-4, 2:12:56:1-2
- Naladiyar* : 136:1,
- Periyapuramam* : 2798, 3-6
- Kulothungan - Pillai Tamil* : 38, 1-2
- Thayumanavar-Thiruppadal* : 12:2:7-12
201. V.S. Arulraj and G.Victor Rajamanickam, "Traditional Boats in Tamil Literature", *History of Traditional navigation*, op. cit.
202. *Kappal Sastiram*, op.cit.p. XX11;

- R. Thirumalai, "A ship song in the late 18th century in Tamil", paper presented in the International symposium on Maritime History, Pondicherry University, Feb. 1989; Moti Chandra, *Trade and Trade Routes in Ancient India*, (New Delhi 1977) pp-153-158
203. R.K. Mukherjee, *History of Indian Shipping*, p.51; B.Arunachalam, "Timber Tradition in Indian Boat Technology, *Ship Building and Navigation in the Indian Ocean Region (1400-1800 AD)* (ed) K.S. Mathew (New Delhi 1997) pp. 12-19.
204. *The Travels of Morcopolo (Tr)* by R.E. Lothawn, (London 1958), p.36
205. *Manimekalai*, Siraikkottam Arakkottam aakkia Kathai, 108
206. About Naval Powers of the Rulers of Medieval Tamil Country; A. Appadurai, *Economic condition of South India 1000 - 1500 A.D.*, Vol.II, (University of Madras 1990); pp.483-86; K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *Pandya Kingdom* (London 1929); *The Cholas*, (Madras University 1935); George W.Spencer, *The Politics of Expansion, The Chola, Conquest of SriLanka and Sri Vijaya*, (Madras 1983); Kenneth R.Hall, *The Trade and State Craft in the Age of the Cholas*, (New Delhi, 1990)
207. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vols. 1-6, (ed) Huzlitz.
208. M.N. Pearson, *Coastal Western India Studies from Portuguese Records*, (New Delhi, 1981), p.8 and 128
209. J.H. Parry, *The Discovery of the Sea*, (London 1974) pp.5-15
210. TBH Abeasinghe, in, *Muslims of SriLanka*, op.cit. pp. 5-15
211. Report of the Customs Committee, 26 March 1821
212. FSG Diary and Consultation Book, 6 December 1686.
213. Ka. Mu. Sheriff, Op.cit. p.109, *Islamnia Nesan*, mothly (Ceylon) December 1909.

214. TNA Tanjore District Record, Vol. 3325, p.65
215. Particulars collected from the family records of Jinnah Marakkayar, Kayalpattanam.
216. Particulars collected from interview with K.A. Jabbar Marakkayar Vedalai; M. Jaffar Mohaideen Marakkayar, Nagore, Abdul Kadar Thandal, Keelakkarai and Meera Marakkayar of Kayalpattanam.
217. *Pudukkottai District Gazetteer*, (ed), Gopalakrishna Gandhi, (Madras 1983) p.362.
218. Particulars collected in field study from various coastal villages in South Arcot, Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli Districts from the Muslim fishermen and thandals.
219. Sanjay Subramanian op.cit. p.195; M.N. Pearson, *Merchants, of Gujarat*, op.cit., p.4.
220. For details; C.W.E., cotton op.cit., p.94; C.Ramachandran op.cit. p.132; M.Rathnasamy "Some influence that made the British Administrative system in India", Sir. Williams Mayor Lecture, 1936-37, (London 1936); Sarada Raju, op.cit. 200.
221. Sarada Raju, op.cit. pp. 200-201
222. *ibid.*, p.222
223. Memorandum of Madras Presidency, Vol. II, p.2-339
224. C.Ramachandran, op.cit. p.35
225. Henry Dodwel, op.cit. pp.132-134
226. *ibid.*, p.133, 137
227. C.R.De Silva, in *Muslims of Sri Lanka*, op.cit; Seikh Rahim Mondal, *Dynamics, of Muslim Society* (New Delhi, 1994) p. 198; Samuel Koenig, *Sociology An Introduction to the Science of Society* (New York, 1957) p.85-86,

228. Bor Letter from the collector of Thanjavur to the Board of Revenue, 12 September 1834; Sarada Raju op.cit., p.190; Henry Dodwel, op.cit. p.135
229. *Indian Law Reporter*, Madras Series, Vol. XXII, 1899, January - December, pp.26-31; Sarada Raju, opt.cit. p.190
230. Henry Dodwel, op.cit. pp.138-139
231. "Indian Merchants and their trading Methods", *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, III, No.I, March 1961, pp.85-95.
232. Meserevob Jacob Sethi, *Armenians in India*, (Rpt) New Delhi 1992) pp. 529-30
233. R.C. Majumdar, *British Paramountacy and Indian Renaissance pt.I*, (Bombay, 1965) p.234
234. Annual Volume of Seaborn Trade, 1876, - 77; R.C. Majumdar, op.cit. 386
235. Report of Public Instructions 1901 - 02 Vol. I. pp.91-92
236. A.M.Azeez, op.cit.

Chapter VII

Society

Social history primarily concerns itself with the daily life of the people and the character of family and household life. It also deals with the human and economic relations of the different classes to one another. the social stratification of groups and occupations. Culture, arose out of these general conditions and the reflection of this culture as religion, literature, arts, architecture, learning and thought. Intimately connected with this there appears the history of ideals and aspirations of manners, customs, beliefs superstitions.

Islamisation on the Coromandel at its very inception was interlinked with the commercial enterprises. The followers of Islam religion are called Muslims. The Muslim colonies swelled through intermarriage of the native women to the Arab migrants and merchants and multiplied by the conversion of the local population through the influence and efforts of the merchant missionaries and Sufis, the Muslim mystics who enjoyed the liberty to preach the faith¹. Thus the Coromandel Islamic society was founded in the eighth century itself.

The activities of the zealous Muslim missionaries and the Sufi mystics, flourished on the evils of the

Hindu society. When Islam stepped into peninsular India, there was a rigid caste system in the Hindu social order. The caste system divided the Hindu society into a number of distinct castes which practically prevented any free social mobility among them. The caste system also inflicted inequality, injustice and inequity on the so called low caste people. They were menials never to rise in economic and social status and they were treated as untouchables, unapproachables and often harassed by the higher caste Hindus². In this social situation the teachings of Islam produced a profound effect on the social and political structure and attracted the population towards its fold. A brief account of Islam, its principles and its footing in Indian soil is necessary here to remove misunderstanding on the subject.

The Tamil country has always been the meeting ground of various cultures either due to wars or friendly contacts, cultural and commercial. And hence Tamil culture has always been one of synthesis and continuity. The process of assimilation had no serious difficulties with regard to the people of different regions but with the same religious practices. But they had totally different experience when Islam stepped into this soil. Its simple but definite creed like equality of all men was a challenge to the Hindu set up which in actual practice was an antithesis to such a creed. Interaction between the two led to conversion and as a result two dissimilar and different cultures attracted each other and led to fusion and mingling of population. The Arabic word Islam connotes submission, surrender and obedience to the Omnipotent, Allah. He is one. He alone is to be worshipped. There is no priesthood in Islam. Islam offers a complete political and social system. Democracy is its key note. The individual is

protected in the collective society. Private property is sanctioned and safeguarded. A certain portion of the income of a man must be given to the poor and downtrodden. Usury is forbidden. Drunkenness, gambling and hoarding are declared antisocial. It gives freedom to the human intelligence. Islamic brotherhood is an institution. The sacred law is one for all. It abolished all distinctions on the basis of caste, colour and gave the lowliest and most degraded, the status of equality with the highest. The prayer in the mosque is on equal terms without distinction of colour, rank or social superiority³.

The three major aspects of Islamic culture which clashed with the culture in India were (1) the unshakable faith in monotheism, (2) the broad outlook of universal brotherhood and (3) the belief that life is not an illusion but to be lived in all seriousness⁴. But the assimilative power of India succeeded in fusing this culture into unity and Islam stood as a product of assimilation. To the natives, particularly to the lowest class, conversion to Islam symbolised emancipation, equality and prosperity⁵. With conversion they entered the brotherhood of Islam getting freedom from bondage and an opportunity for uplift.

The laws of Islam governing the woman was intended for her benefit, for her health and happiness and for the betterment of her material and social position. In this Hindu widows who were subjected to humiliation and indignities and deprived of all worldly pleasures, were shown liberty. A widow became a bride once again. An untouchable drew water from a common well to which he had been denied access earlier. Thus human dignity was assured in Islam. In Malabar, a Mus

lim could sit by the side of a Nambudiri Brahmin, a privilege denied even to a Nair and his Imam or religious leader known as Thangal could ride in a palanquin, besides the ruler⁶. Thus the process of voluntary conversion brought large communities into the Islamic fold in peninsular India and Islam was not spread with the sword as commonly believed and written.

Though the women, the Arabs consorted with and the converts belonged to different regions and languages, Islam unified them. Because of this, we find a confused picture about the Muslims of the Coromandel and their origin. We find numerous linguistic, territorial and occupational sub divisions⁷ among them. As we have put it earlier the Muslims of the Coromandel are known by the following names: Marakkayars, Labbais Rawthars and Deccanis. A study of Islamic society on the Coromandel - Tamil region from the early days of its inception right up to modern times shows that the essential principles of Islam and religious practices are inheritable. But we can find same changes in the customs and practices over the centuries due to social mobility. But this has not altered in any way the basic religious life of the Coromandel Muslims.

Islam and its sects

A few words about the main sects of Islam will not be out of place here and it will facilitate a better understanding of Islamic society. Though Islamic society is one and an indivisible social organisation as recognised by the Cannon Law some divisions cropped up on the basis of Khilafat (political) movements. The two main sects of Islam are Sunny and Shia. The former

is principally an Arabian phenomenon, the latter Persian. Each sect has acquired its own individual characteristics by adding different values and customs to the basic Islamic philosophy. Though these sects have originated from the same source they have differences in their rites and customs. There are also many other small dissident sects and subsects spread throughout the world^a. The people professing the Sunni faith are called Sunnis, meaning a traditionist, a term generally applied to the large sect of Muslims who acknowledge the first four Khalifas as the rightful successors of Prophet Mohamed i.e. Hazrath Aboobakkar, H.11-13/632-634 A.D., Hazrath Umar H.13-23/634-644 A.D., Hazrath Usman H.23-35/644-656 A.D., Hazrath Ali H.35-40/656-661 A.D., Khalifa being the title of the president of the Islamic democracy in Arabia after Prophet Mohamed. The Sunnis are by far the most predominant sect of the Muslim world.

Islamic society follows the Cannon Laws, the Shariath, from two sources, the Holy Quran, and Hadeesh. It is the belief of all Muslims that in addition to the revelations contained in the Holy Quran, Prophet Mohamed received Wahy (unread revelation) whereby he was enabled to give authoritative declarations on religious questions either moral, ceremonial or doctrinal. Prophet Mohamed's traditions are therefore supposed to be uninspired record of the inspired sayings, known as Sunnah. The Sunnis follow the Sunnah, a term used to express the customs, and manners of Islamic life. Hence the tradition which records either the sayings or doings of Prophet Mohamed, what he did, enjoined and what was done or said in his presence, which was not forbidden by him are the traditional law which is handed down as the Hadeesh. The Arabic word for

tradition is Hadeesh. Later the theologians included into the Hadeesh, the authoritative sayings and doings of the companions of the Prophet Mohamed also. The principles of Shariath are oriented in such a way that these could be classified into five categories. 1. obligatory, 2. prescriptive, 3. permissible, 4. disapproved, 5. tabooed. The difference in the interpretation of the Shariath (Islamic law) by Ulemas and Alims led to the formation of various theological schools of Ismamic jurisprudence the works and activities of which are responsible for the emergence of subjects resulting in diversity and heterogeneity with in the Muslim society. Social standards and practices prevalent in a particular locality or different political affiliation, difference of opinion on fundamental theological questions etc., were the factors which helped to shape these divergent legal doctrines. As a result there eventually came into existence several schools or versions of the Shariath laws.

Without changing the basic ideas and principles of the sources of Canon Law, it was expanded and amplified by judicious interpretations in later periods. Islamic jurisprudence plays an important role in the main schools of Islamic Sunni sect. Based on the schools of jurisprudence, the Sunni Muslim society is divisible into four subdivisions (or madhhabs, as it is called), the Malikia, Hanbalia, Hanafia and Shafia. Malikis are a religious group of orthodox Muslims who adopted the doctrines of Imam Malik-ibn-Anas of Medina, 711-791 A.D.⁹. Hanbals are the followers of the school of theology, law, morality which grew up from the teachings of Imam Ahamed-ibn-Hanbal of Saudi Arabia 780-855 A.D. A great number of Hanbals are Sufis¹⁰. Hanafis are the followers of the school of

religious law Hanafia, named after its founder Imam Abu Hanifa of Persia, the great Sunni Imam and a judge 699-767 A.D.¹¹. Shafis are the followers of the school of jurisprudence founded by Imam Mohamed ibn idris-Ash-Shafi of Syria 767-820 A.D.¹². The followers of the four madhhabs are spread all over the world. Without changing the main principles of teachings of the Sunnah and the Holy Quran, the founders of the four madhhabs, have interpreted the Islamic laws according to their readings, and so there are some minor differences in their customs, ceremonies, prayer and food habits. However these madhhabs do not constitute castes or class as in Hinduism.

The Shias are the followers of the fourth Khalifa, Ali, the first cousin of the Prophet Mohamed and the husband of his daughter Fathima. The Shias maintain that Ali was the first legitimate Imam or Khalifa or successor to the Prophet and therefore reject the first three Khalifas of the Sunni faith as usurpers. The Shias maintain that they are the orthodox Muslims. They consider that the Khalifa is a divinely appointed leader. They have profound veneration for Ali and regard him as the incarnation of divinity. The Shia school of jurisprudence is the earlier one. There are many differences in their ceremonies and civil laws when compared with that of Sunnis¹³.

Among the Muslim population of the Coromandel the Marakkayars belong to the Sunni-Shafi madhhab, who also claim descent from the region's early Arab migrants. The Labbais, Rawthar and Deccanis belong to the Hanafi madhhab. But the sub sects of the Coromandel Muslim society are merged with each other. The identity of a particular subsect is based on religious practices only.

Is there a caste system in the Coromandel Islamic Society?

There is no place for caste or class in Islam. Caste is ordinarily a distinctive institution of Hinduism. Social incompatibility with regard to either intermarriage or interdining, whether due to difference in race or occupation or geographical position is one of the most essential attributes of caste. But as such Muslims are endogamous. Islam preaches equality and universal brotherhood. In theory Islam does not recognise any social distinction or discrimination based on ethnicity, lineage and occupation. The idea of equality and brotherhood was established during the early days of Islam by its democratic form of political organisation. Inequality based on birth and descent is supposed to have no relevance in Islamic theology. Any ranking and divisions based on heredity, occupation etc. have no place in the ideal pattern of Islamic society¹⁵.

However, prejudices like those of castes are most commonly found among the Muslims of Coromandel which leads one to think there exists a caste like institution among them. For instance, the Deccanis look down on the Marakkayars and other Tamil speaking Muslims. They claim to be of more honourable birth than the mixed race. They also claim to be of Mughal and Turkish origin. While the Deccanis hold themselves socially superior to the Marakkayars, the Marakkayars consider themselves better than the Labbais. However, there is no religious bar to intermarriage among these different sects and subsects and such unions are brought about by the strong social and economic status. In Muslim strongholds several subsects are assigned separate streets to live in. There are separate mosques

for Hanafis and Shafis. But there is no bar to worship in each other's mosques and living intermixed.

Islam does not formulate any caste system, (Jathi). Still the Muslims of South India particularly of the Coromandel will look as if affected by the influence of the Hindu social system. The Muslim subdivisions in the Coromandel are not hierarchially ranked. All sects, sub sects or sub divisions are of equal status. Ranking as in the caste system does not occur at the level of sects or subjects as one expects. But ranking exists on the level of individuals and is based primarily on the individual conduct, his age, wealth, personal character and religiosity. Some occupations are considered undesirable and those who perform them have turned to other professions. This kind of social mobility is very common in Islamic society. There is no untouchability among the Muslim groups. Interdining freely occurs at feasts and functions with all participants sitting shoulder to shoulder¹⁹.

Islamic society is highly egalitarian. Members of the sects have equal economic opportunities. But the egalitarian ideology does not apply in the realm of matrimony among the Coromandel Muslims. Most of them consider sect and subsect identity as an important factor in selecting a spouse. In opting for intersubsects, the overriding concern is not however one of trying to maintain purity of blood as in Hindu caste ranking. The concern is for matching spouses who have the same economic background and same cultural and religious traditions since religious and social practices differ among the sects. Nevertheless intermarriages occur among the sects. As rightly pointed out by Mattison Mines the mixed couples and their children are not

ostracized²⁰. Thus the Coromandel Muslims are endogamous, not socially ranked and there is no bar for interdining. These essential features of a true Islamic society are being followed for generations and there was no caste or class among the Muslims at any point of time.

The Tamil speaking Muslims identify closely with the Hindu Tamils and they are different from that population only in ethos and social structure. Their customs, dress, food and manners have been influenced by the larger society. Islam seems to have affected its followers here only to a certain extent in this respect. For the rest they remain indistinguishable from the uncovered members of their previous order. Customs continue to be practised in the age old way having most often nothing to do with those prescribed by Islam. Thoburn laments (though a sweeping remark) that "one third of the Muslims are only Muslims in name"²¹.

Manners

The Muslims had been taught and trained in the Holy laws, manners and etiquette right from the early times. Basic instructions in Arabic is given to read Holy Quran. As soon as the child starts speaking it is taught to recite the Kalima, to memorise it and to understand its meaning. From an early age boys are encouraged to go to the mosque for prayer. Every Muslim has some obligations towards fellow Muslims. While meeting a fellow Muslim they greet saying "as - salamu - alaikkum" (may peace be upon you) in reply to the greeting as "wa-alaikkum-salam" (similarly, peace be upon you). When a fellow Muslim cries for help, the other should assist him. When a Muslim falls sick his fellow members should visit and enquire about him. When a Muslim

dies others should attend his funeral. On occasions of happiness they congratulate others saying Masha-Allah (all praise to Allah) while fixing an appointment or programme or function they say Insha Allah (if Allah wishes). Similarly for each and every act they recite same verses in the name of Allah. Tutored and bred in this way such practices become routine and a second nature with them²².

Marriage

Islam discourages celibacy and enjoins marriage on men and women as an obligation. Procreation is indeed one of the main objectives of marriage. Islam lays down rational and just laws about marriage and divorce which satisfy the human heart and brain. Marriage in Islam is a social contract entered into by the parties on a footing of equality and by free consent of the parties. At the time of marriage the bridegroom has to make a settlement of dower or mahar on his wife which is regarded as a debt on his part.

Muslim marriage is a simple process in that the ingredients are the consent of the bride and bridegroom, payment of mahar or dower, a sum to be given by the groom to the bride in the presence of a wakil usually the father of the bride or her close relative and two witnesses and a Khazi. Solemnisation of the marriage becomes complete by reciting the Kuthba by the Khazi. In Muslim marriage alliance, the prohibited degrees are mother, step mother, daughter, step daughter, sister, paternal and maternal aunts, sister's daughters, niece, foster mother who suckled the individual, foster sister, wife's mother, wife's daughter, father's wife and daughter in law. Union with the above categories of women is unlawful²³.

The elaborate rituals and ceremonies that are being followed in the marriages of the Tamil Muslim subdivisions are due to the influence of the larger Hindu society. Most of the social customs followed by the Tamil Muslims are not strictly in consonance with the Shariat, the Islamic social law. Still they have become a part of their regular life and one deeply rooted. To quote a few such customs, betrothal, planting of muhurthakkal or muhurthakombu, tying of marriage badge (thali) with string of black beads, distribution of sandal, pansupari and coconut to the assembled kuluvai or kuravai (a musical roar by women), not celebrating the marriage in certain months and on certain days, considering certain days and dates as inauspicious and the practice of taking arathi and still there are many more. According to Islamic Shariat law, it is the bridegroom who has to pay dower or mahar to the bride to marry her. But the Muslims have fallen victims to the much reprehensible custom prevalent among the Hindus who demand dowry from the bride²⁴.

A number of families of the descendants of Muslim maritime traders in various places were interviewed for information on marriage customs. It was informed by them that they follow the customs which were in practice for generations as handed down by tradition. It is interesting to study that "saithakkathiru Marakkayar Thirumana Vazhthu", a seventeenth century Islamic Tamil literary work which describes the marriage of Periathambi Marakkayar of Kilakkarai. Since it is a contemporary work it can be taken as a primary source on the marriage customs of Marakkayars. Field studies among the traditional maritime Marakkayars at Kilakkarai reveal that most of the marriage customs resemble those found in this literature. Hence a study of the present

day marriage customs among the Muslims of the Cormandel region show an antiquity of several generations. A brief account of the marriage customs is given here.

The parents of the grooms search for suitable match. Among the Marakkayars it is usually between the siblings in the same house or street or at the most in an adjacent town. Close kinship overrides other considerations in the choice of bride and bride groom. When a suitable girl is spotted, the women of the groom's family go to assess the suitability of the bride. The would be bridegroom is not allowed to see the bride. Horoscope is not consulted on both sides (Muslims generally did not maintain horoscope in olden days. But at present some the Muslims maintain horoscope but not taken very seriously). The parties settle the amount of money which the bride's father will give to his daughter and this sum - the dowry - called Kaikuli or price of bride's hand and also jewels and household articles. Dowry or kaikuli was very high in Coromandel Islamic society. An inscription of the sixteenth century at Kayalpattanam states that even the rich among the residents of the place found it difficult to pay the dowry amount for their daughters. Because of this many teenaged girls remained unmarried. Hence the residents decided on a ceiling on the amount of dowry or kaikuli to be paid to the bridegroom. This inscription gives very valuable information about the Islamic society of the period. No wonder the dowry payment is being continued even to this day²⁵.

The betrothal takes place on a fixed day. The relatives of both the parties are invited and the ceremony is held at the residence of the bride where a part or

whole amount of dowry or kaikuli is paid to the bridegroom in the presence of the members of the Jamath. The acceptance of the money by the bridegroom's father constitutes an inviolable betrothal. In some places it is verbal, but in some places the whole agreement is recorded with the signatures of the parties and witnesses. This is just like the "Muhurtha Olai", or marriage agreement paper of the Hindu marriages. Fatheeha (invocation in name of Allah) is recited and a feast is offered, the sugar offered in the fatheeha is given to the bride. The bride is decorated well and seated, the elders and relatives put the sugar in her mouth and bless her. Similarly the sugar is taken to the bridegrooms house and he is dressed well and seated and the relatives and elders put the sugar in his mouth and bless him. In view of this the entire ceremony is known as "Seeni Poduthal".

The day of the marriage is fixed according to mutual convenience on an auspicious day and time. Certain months of the year, certain days of the week are considered inauspicious. Some time the local astrologer is consulted. The relatives of both the sides are invited individually or jointly for the marriage ceremony. In the past when printing was rare, invitation was extended personally or through messengers. A few days before the marriage, a pole called muhurthakkal or muhurthakombu or auspicious marriage pole is planted in the front yards of the houses of both the bride and groom (the poles are usually of bamboo in which some yellow cloth soaked in turmeric water is twisted round and at the top of it is tied a bunch of mango leaves). The frontage of the houses are adorned with pandal with plantain trees and coconut and mango leaves. These practices are very much in the Hindu fashion.

On the night prior to the marriage day henna paste is applied in feet and hands of the bride and groom in an auspicious ceremony called "Nalangu", in their respective houses. During the nalangu ceremony the important relatives particularly women congregate and decorate the bride and the groom in their respective houses and bless them to ward off evil spirits. On the morning the bridegroom is dressed in his best, seated in a chariot drawn by horses or seated on horseback and taken round the town in procession to the bride's residence. (In modern times the groom is taken in procession in an open car) Francis while giving a picture of Marakkayar marriages at the beginning of this century writes that the groom is conducted in procession to the bride's residence²⁶. Whereas in Arabian countries it is the bride who is conducted to the groom's house in procession²⁷. In olden days lighted torches which burn with oil called deevattis were taken in the procession for lighting. Islamic songs in praise of the Prophet and his companions are sung by the troupe of singers with small drums in their hands. This music party is called 'Thabs'. The procession is always routed through a mosque or a dargha where fatheeha is offered by the marriage party. The relatives of the bridegroom stop the procession in front of their houses and offer milk and presents to the groom.

On arrival at the bride's residence, the bridegroom is given a red carpet welcome. To ward off evil spirits, arathi is taken (arathi is turmeric water mixed with lime - orange red in colour - in a plate with pieces of betal leaf, charcoal and chillies) The plate is waved round the head of the bridegroom three times clock-wise and three times anti-clockwise and he is asked to spit in it three times and this water is poured

in the road. Arathi is generally taken by a male related to the bride. Apart from arathi, a plate containing rice and a goat's head is also waved round the head of the bridegroom and it is given to the family dhobi (washerman). The groom is conducted to the stage where the Khazi, the muthavalli (Head of the Janmath) of the mahalla and other relatives are assembled. The bride is adorned with jewels and the auspicious marriage saree provided by the bridegroom and seated separately in the ladies apartment.

The details of money, jewellery, other household articles and properties given by the father of the bride and the *mahar* (bride price money compulsory on the part of the groom) amount given by the bridegroom are announced to those who have assembled. The father of the bride or in his absence a near relative acts as "*Vakil*" and offers the bride in marriage to the bridegroom in the presence of two witnesses and before that the consent of the bride is obtained and announced in public. (From the later years of the nineteenth century the entire proceedings of the marriages, are recorded in a note book called "*Nikhanama*", which is being maintained in every mahallah. The names of the couple and their fathers, witnesses and the Khazi who solemnized the marriage are entered and their signatures obtained and the details of the mahar, jewellery, presents and other properties are also entered therein. This practice is followed even to this day and this register has social and legal value in the life of the Muslims. Then the father of the bride puts his hand on that of the bridegroom with the help of the Khazi and says, "I give my daughter, (by name), in marriage to you, in the presence of the said two witnesses, for such an amount of mahar settled upon her, do you consent to it". The

bridegroom replies, "with all my heart and soul, I consent, consent, consent". to my marriage settlement made up on her. After this the Khazi offers supplication to heaven, saying "Oh! Great God, grant that mutual love and affection and reign between this couple as that which existed between the Prophets of Allah and their wives". Thus the solemnization of the marriage is over. When the Khazi is reciting the supplications one of the eldest woman relatives of the groom or the eldest sister of the groom ties a string of black beads in the neck of the bride amidst chanting of Kulavai (a musical sound in chorus by the women). This string of black beads is provided by the bridegroom's side. The bridegroom then offers salam (salutation) to the gathering and the near relatives hugs him. Friends and relatives offer presents.

The tying of black beaded string to the bride is similar to the tying of the thali or mangalyasutra in Hindu marriages. This custom has been accepted due to the influence of Hindu culture. A researcher has come out with a finding that there was no blackbead tying in the marriages of the family of the Nawabs of Arcot²⁸. A scholar opines that the practice might have been copied by the Tamil Muslims from the Marathas who migrated and settled in this part of the peninsula²⁹. On the fortieth day after the marriage, the blackbeaded string is removed and retied with some gold pendants.

Though after the completion of nikah formalities, the bride and bridegroom are considered husband and wife, the bridegroom is taken to the bride's apartment by a learned elderly man, who joins their hands together and blesses them. This is called Kaiazhithuviduthal or Kaiserthuvidal (joining the hands) and is an exclusive custom among Marakkayars.

The nikah ceremony is followed by the feast (walima feast) offered by the bride's side. It is usually non-vegetarian food, either rice cooked with meat (biryani) or Pulavu (ghee fried rice) with separate meat sauce. This food is supplied in big plates called 'Sahan' and a group of four persons seated round the plate take the food. This practice might have been copied from Arabian society, where it is still followed. Serving meals in sahan is the practice in almost all the Marakkayar settlement towns in the coastal region of the Coromandel. In some places like Kilakkarai, Tondi and Kayalpattanam even a group of six persons eat in a plate. Of course, individual small plates or leaf is also offered to the friends from other religious groups. Sahan meals is a type of joint feeding in Muslim society. But in the hinterland, in Muslim marriages, whether Marakkayar or Labbai or Rowthar, food is served only in individual plates or leaf. After the feast betel leaf (pan) is offered.

After the ceremony of joining the hands the bridegroom and the bride are seated side by side. To create mutual affection and understanding amusing games are arranged. The paparakkolam, Pallankuzhi vilayattu are some of the items. In Paparakkolam - as described by Thurston³⁰, the bride is dressed like a Brahman woman and holds a brass vessel in one hand and a stick on the other. Approaching the bridegroom she strikes him gently and says did not I give you butter milk and curd? Pay me for them. The bridegroom then places some tamarind seeds in the brass vessel but the bride objects to this and demands money, accompanying the demand with strokes of the stick. The groom then places some copper, silver and gold coins in the vessel and the bride returns triumphant. This ceremony is peculiar to the Marakkayars alone. But the origin and

meaning of this ceremony is obscure. However this practice has disappeared in Marakkayar marriages at present. In many families of among the Marakkayars, the groom ties a chain in the neck of the bride. This is another ceremony equal to thali tying by the bridegroom himself. This practice is in vogue even to this day among Marakkayars.

Among the Marakkayars after the marriage the wife stays with her parents in the house given by her parents. The husband visits her and takes food and pays a sum to meet the expenses, a sort of paying guest husband and not as a *veettu mappillai* (the groom who stays permanently in the father in law's house leaving his parents) of some Hindu households. Gift of a house to the bride is not seen in any other part of India or in the Arab countries or among other sects and subsects of the Coromandel Muslims.

This practice of the wife living with her parents is closely allied to the matrilocal residence found among the Arabs of pre Islamic times. Most probably this practice originated from the circumstances of the Arab husband being away for a long periods on business in far off lands. The practice of gifting a house came to be followed in the Coromandel Muslim Marakkayar society perhaps because the early Arab settlers here had no house of their own when they came here as traders. Naturally they had to stay in the house of the wives after marriage. Whenever they ventured into sea for trade opportunities for months together they left the wives in the safe custody of their parents. Thus the gift of house and matrilocal residence are simply the continuation of the custom which had some utility and necessity when the sea faring husbands were away from

their families for a long duration of time. When Islam spread in the west coast, first, the practice of matrilocal residence of the Malayalam society coincided with that of the Arabian customs and hence was well received and then this custom was copied by the Coromandel Muslims too. Matrilocal residence became a social necessity in the interest of the two families. It did not create any impact in the economic activities. This custom did not create any joint venture too. Both the families run their business with their own interest.

The Marakkayar family system is very peculiar in this respect. It is a combination of joint and independent family systems. It is joint in the sense that they include married daughters and their children and that brothers and sisters are co-owners of the family properties and partners of business firms, independent in the sense that each family has a house or a portion of a house of its own and independent source of income. Recent statistics in a Marakkayar town shows that 80% of the houses are in the name of women³¹. This is because of the marital gift of houses to women.

Parallel cousin marriage or marriage between the sons and daughters of brothers is usual among the Marakkayars. This type of alliance is not common among other Muslim sub sects like Rawthar, Labbai and Deccanis (But the majority of the Labbai and Rawthar families practices cross-cousin-marriage (muraimappillai) much in Hindu fashion). A scholar is of the view that the most probable reason for the parallel cousin matrimonial alliance is that siblings yearn for remaining among themselves close to each other and hence they want their children to intermarry and this demonstrate sibling solidarity³². Some think that parallel cousin

marriages are concluded to keep blood ties and property intact³³. But it is probable that this is an inheritance from the early Arabian society. This type of marriage was also practised in the family of Prophet Mohamed. Scientists are of the view that marriages among close relatives may lead to childlessness or mentally or physically retarded children. The Marakkayar population neither approves nor disapproves this thesis though childlessness and physically and mentally affected children are common among them. At the same time there are Marakkayar families with good number of children who are physically and mentally robust³⁴. The Muslims of a particular sect is not averse to matrimonial alliances with other sects or subsects or segments. There is no religious bar also. The overriding consideration in such cases are financial, economic or social status or superior accomplishments. There are instances of Marakkayar brides marrying a Labbai, Rawthar or Sheik or Deccani bridegroom, vice versa. Generations back Muslim marriages were celebrated for eleven days. Later the duration was reduced to seven days and further to three days. But in modern times it is a one day affair. In earlier times Muslim marriages were solemnized in the predawn hours. At present marriages are celebrated during day time either forenoon or afternoon.

Most of the ceremonies connected with the marriage of the Muslims are influenced by Hindu customs and culture. But these customs have been in vogue for very long periods (say, centuries) and handed down through generations to the present day. We find authentic evidence in Islamic Tamil works of the seventeenth century "Saithakkathiru Marakkayar Thirumana Vazhthu". The poet 'Umarkathab', a

contemporary of Periathambi Marakkayar had seen the marriage in person and has described each and every ceremony in great detail³⁵. A few among them are, betrothal in bride's residence,³⁶ planting of muhurthakkal,³⁷ pandal (shamiana) arrangement for marriage decorated with flowers and coconut bunches, jack fruit, plantain fruits, sugarcane, and areca bunch³⁸, lighting of kuthuvilaku³⁹, decorated stage for marriage⁴⁰, keeping of coconut flower bunch in a pot in the marriage dias (much in Hindu fashion)⁴¹, decoration of the bridegroom with silk cloth, ornaments made of precious stones to the groom, fragrances and flower garlands⁴², kulavai or kuravai, the chorus music by women⁴³, procession of the bridegroom in an elephant⁴⁴, different kinds of musical instruments taken in the procession⁴⁵, lighting arrangement in the procession by theevati - open oil lamps⁴⁶, alathi or arathi to the grooms⁴⁷, bathing the bride with turmeric water⁴⁸, decoration of the bride⁴⁹, etc... Mahar was fixed and the marriage of the couple with their names and names of their parents was recorded⁵⁰. During the ceremony the bridegroom and the bride seated side by side and the bridegroom himself ties mangalyam - blackbead - in the neck of the bride⁵¹, gift of house to the bride by her parents⁵². These are some of the marriage customs that find reference in this literary work. As such it gives a vivid picture of Muslim society in the seventeenth century and this literary work can be considered as a social document of the Muslim society of the seventeenth century. Seerapuram, an important Islamic Tamil Literary work of the seventeenth century which describes life and deeds of the Prophet Mohamed in Tamil literary tradition also throws light on the marriage customs of Tamil Muslims. Though it is the biography of Prophet Mohamed, cultural settings is that of the Tamils. We find a reference as to have

the Prophet Mohamed was taken in procession on a horse back³³ and how he tied thali to the bride. All the above customs are handed down through generations and are in practice even to this day.

Birth

Procreation is of the main objective of marriage in Islam. Pregnancy is eagerly awaited one in the life of all couples. To ensure safe delivery a healthy child, several precautions are taken. The mother avoids new clothes and ornaments since all these will attract the evil eyes. The pregnant woman does not eat during the lunar eclipse⁴⁴. A ceremony similar to Valaikappu (a Hindu custom) is performed during the seventh or ninth month of pregnancy (the valaikappu or bangle wearing ceremony is believed to ward off evil spirits hovering about a pregnant woman she is considered more susceptible to the influence of such spirits. During this auspicious ceremony the pregnant woman is decorated with a large number of glass and lac (Kankanam) bangles and elderly women bless her for a safe delivery.

Gone are the ages of female infanticide. Yet birth of a male child is preferred. As Jaffur Shureef writes, "though the desire for a male offspring does not influence the Muslims to the same extent as Hindus who believe that it is only a son who can perform the funeral rites which admit the spirit of his father to the company of his sainted ancestors, still among the Muslims the craving for a male heir is often intense⁵⁵. To the Muslims a female child is an expensive luxury. But, born, the girls are brought up with love and affection.

As soon as the baby is born azan (general call for the prayer) is recited in the right ear and ikamath

(call for jamath prayer) in the left ear by a Khazi or a learned man. The idea behind this practice is that from the very beginning of its life the child should imbibe the name of Allah and the Muslim confession of faith. The fifth day of birth is celebrated with pomp and show in the (child's) mother's house. Relatives and friends are invited for a feast. The women folk sing lullabies in the name of Prophet Mohamed, Nagore Andavar and other holy persons. On the seventh day or on a suitable convenient day, the child's head is shaved ceremoniously in its mother's house. On this occasion one goat in the case of female child and two if the child is male (as per Shafi school) are sacrificially slaughtered. The sacrificed animal is divided into three equal parts, one is given to the baby's nurse one to the orphans and the poor and the other is used by the members of the household. This sacrificial offering is called "Akika", and is meant to safeguard the child from the influence of evil spirits and all sorts of misfortunes⁵⁶. The hair of child is weighed and an equal weight of silver is given to the poor or religious mendicants⁵⁷. These practices were widely prevalent among the Marakkayars.

Like the namakaranam or naming ceremony of the Hindus a customary ceremony is held to give a name to the child. This ceremony is generally held on the fortieth day after the child's birth. But in Marakkayar families in places like Karaikkal, traditionally naming of the child takes place within half an hour of the birth⁵⁸. Muslims mostly give Arabic traditional names prefixing the attributes of Allah, the name of the Prophet and his distinguished companions and the members of the family of the Prophet and also the names of Aulias, saints who are entombed in the respective areas. Female children often receive the names of the wives and daughters of

the Prophet and his companions. The names help to preserve the identity of the Muslims and to strengthen the individual's faith. But we find many Hindu names and terminations among the Muslims like Chinnathambi, Periathambi, Nallathambi, Amabalam, Servai and Muslim names with Hindu terminations like Allahpitchai, Kuppai Mohamed, Fakirappa, Seeniappa and so on⁵⁹. Such names were accepted as Muslim personal names due to the influence of Hindu culture and shows the humanitarian affection and bond between the different religious groups which set a foundation for unity in diversity. A scholar in his recent book has written that Muslims began to use Hindu names and terminations to conceal their identity to escape the attack and wrath of the Portuguese. This is totally misconceived⁶⁰.

On the fortieth day function, which is considered to be the end of the period of pollution, the mother and the child are bathed and the mother offers prayers. Sweet candy is prepared and distributed to the relatives. A grand feast is offered to the friends and relatives by the mother's household. Jewels and decoratives are offered to the child by the father in the case of Marakkayars and by the maternal grandfather of the child in the case of other subsects. The child is placed in a new cradle and songs of Islamic themes are sung to the accompaniment of kuluvai. The functions are very elaborate for the first child and lesser to the subsequent ones.

In the birth ceremonies Hindu customs and beliefs have freely crept into Muslim society. When a woman is pregnant she appeals to the saints for the safe delivery and vows to contribute her mite. The movements of the pregnant woman is restricted during

lunar eclipse. A period of pollution for forty day is observed after child birth, to prevent the approach of evil spirits. Some people prepare horoscopes for their children. In the event of successive deaths of children, the new born is sold to a father of many children and named like Kuppai (waste) and purchased from him on payment of some quantity of rice barn. The mother is bound by self denial for forty days and not allowed to pray or fast and cannot touch the Holy Quran. Such customs are found in no other country among the Muslims⁶¹.

Khathna

Khathna (circumcision) among the Muslims is directed to be performed between the age of seven and fourteen though occasionally it is done either before or after that period. Should an adult of a different persuasion be desirous of embracing Islam but affraid of undergoing the opeation he is not compelled. So when a person embraces Islam, circumcision is not obligatory. The divine commend is that he shall be initiated into the tenets of the faith⁶². A Muslim traveller of the tenth century writes that the people of India were not circumcised⁶³.

Circumcision is not a Quranic injunction *it is all a tradition, Sunna*⁶⁴. Further there are no original sources to trace the origin of Khathna or circumcision in Islamic society⁶⁵. Circumcision was practised by the Jews and Arabss in pre-Islamic times. In the Old Testament it is stated "And Abraham cirscumcised his son Issasc on the eighth day⁶⁶. In popular parlance among the Tamil Muslims circumcision is called Sunnath or Khathna. In olden days circumcision was performed by the family barber and the medicines for

healing was administered by him (But in modern times it is being done by professional medical men). Among the Tamil speaking Muslims this ceremony is known as "Markkakalyanam", a sort of initiation ceremony into the religion much in the Hindu fashion. The maternal uncle of the child has to after presents to the child. Muslims celebrate this private domestic function with much fanfare⁶⁷. Relatives and friends are invited. Feast is arranged. Friends and relatives offer presents to the child to be circumcised.

If there is a girl in the house, the ear boring ceremony is also held along with the circumcision ceremony of the boy(s). In that case the maternal uncle has to present the earlets. In circumcision ceremony we also find the influence of Tamil or Hindu culture in all aspects. This custom is also handed down from generations and being followed to this day, of course with minor changes. It is interesting to note that some of the caste Hindus like Piramalai Kallars (Madurai district) have followed the customs of circumcision to their children.

Puberty Celebration

When a girl attains puberty in a Muslim family, the relatives are informed by the parents of the girl. It is a way of conveying the message that the girl is ready for marriage because in those days girls were married at a very early age. On the day of attaining puberty, the girl is bathed ceremoniously in the presence of the close relatives. The maternal uncle sends eggs, milk, fruits and sweets. In the case of Marakkayars the father's household sends eggs, gingely oil, black gram, coconut, etc. since the girl lives with her mother's family. A dish called 'kali' (a

combination of rice and black gram flour) is prepared and the girl is fed for a few days.

Puberty ceremony is generally celebrated on the seventh or eleventh day or in a day convenient. Relatives and friends are invited to the function. The girl is bathed, ceremoniously decked with new cloth and flowers and is taken to a decorated dias. In the case of Marakkayar girl she is conducted to the dias by the parallel cousin. The ladies and elder male members bless the girl by applying sandal in her cheek and also offer presents. A feast is arranged. The celebrations connected with puberty reveal to the influence of Hindu customs. Jaffur Shureeff says that this celebration is a preparatory function for marriage among the Muslims⁶⁸. Quadir Hussain Khan writes puberty celebrations are not found in the Islamic society of any other country⁶⁹.

Death

Every Muslim aspires to die with the Kalima (the confession of faith) in his lips. A man in death bed is exhorted by those around him to recite the Kalima. When a man or woman is about to die Quaranic verses are recited loudly in order that the spirit of the man by hearing it may gain an easy concentration. On the point of death relative pour drops of water down the throat to facilitate the exit of the vital spark. The moment the spirit has fled, the mouth is closed, the two great toes are brought in contact and fastened together with a thin ribbon. The corpse is called 'Zanaza' or maiyathu' (in Tamil). As soon as the death occurs the body is bathed in hot water. This is called kasappumatral. The relatives and friends are informed in those days through the barber. The dead are buried at the earliest. Before taking for burial, the zanaza is washed thoroughly, camphor

and scented materials are sprinkled over the body and wrapped in a new white cloth called kaffan. Permanent bier called sandack are kept in every mosque. It is brought to the house of the dead and the zanaza is placed in the bier and taken in procession to the mosque where a special funeral prayer is offered and the bier is taken to the burial ground. The body is placed in the grave pit dug for this purpose in north south direction with face turning to the west. The mourners throw handfuls of mud or sand into the grave. Some bamboo sticks are placed in slanting position in the pit. Palmyrah mat is placed as a cover over it and the pit is filled with mud so that the mud cannot fall directly on the dead body. The whole grave is piled with mud. fatheeha is offered for the eternal peace of the dead. After the burial, rice, salt, bread and coins are distributed to the poor in the name of the dead. The processionists return to the house and again fatheeha is offered and the moruners disperse offering condolence personally to the members of the family⁷⁰. As a general rule among the Muslims the dead are buried. But Lakshmi quotes incidence of burning the dead among the Tamil Muslims in some parts of Sri Lanka⁷¹. But such practice unheard of in India.

The third day after the death is called ziarath during which day the burial place called *kaproo* is decorated with flowers and sandal paste fatheeha is offered and sweets are distributed to the gathering. Feasts take place on the fifth, seventh, twentyfirst, thirtyfirst and fortieth days. The feast on the fortieth day is a grand affair. It is believed that the soul of the dead leaves the house on the fortieth day or returns on that day and makes a survey of the article offered at the fatheeha and takes a smell of them and departs. A

moulavi or a learned man reads the Holy Quarn in instalments for the forty days in the house of the dead. A tumbler of water and a lamp are kept for the forty days at the spot in the house where the spirit of the body left and the water is poured near some green tree daily in the morning. The death anniversary is also observed by offering food and drinks favoured by the dead. Feast is offered to the friends and relatives. Ziarath, fortieth day celebration and death anniversary are not part of orthodox Islam and all these are innovations, are considered unlawful. Yet these practices are being prevalent among south Indian Muslim society for centuries⁷². We can also see the influence of the Hindu social ideas in all these ceremonies.

There will not be any festivities in the house of the dead and family members do not wear new clothes on festive occasions for a year. At the death of the husband, the wife (widow) removes her thali (black beaded string) breaks the bangles, removes the toe ring, nose ring etc., in Hindu fashion. The widow observes iddat seclusion and confinement and abstinence for four months and ten days during which time she is prohibited to remarry. Though Islam permits remarriage of widows it is not universal in Tamil Muslim society⁷³. Islam does not permit any permanent structures, like Hindu samathis in the burial place of the dead. However, mousoleums and tombs have been constructed over the graves of martyrs, missionaries and men and women of eminance.

Food Habits

The Muslims are good eaters and are expert in the culinary art. Their food is rich, nutritious and variegated.

In Coromandel areas customary breakfast is idly, dosai. Idiappam, rotti, appam, vattalappam, julur etc., made of rice flour, egg, ghee, coconut milk and sugar and are the delicious special foods in breakfast. These food items are similar to those prevalent among the Mapillas of the west coast. Lunch and dinner is mostly rice. Non-vegetarian food is preferred. Mutton, chicken, eggs are cooked, fried, roasted with masala or cashew, badam, bista, almond and a variety spices. Pulavu (ghee fried trice) or biriyani (rice cooked with meat) is a must in feasts. Fish and dried fish occupy a pride of place in the kitchen. Most of these preparations of non-vegetarian food have the influence of Iranian and Turkish cuisine. Biriyani, an Iranian cuisine is the favourite non-vegetarian food of people in India irrespective of religion. Different sweet varieties are also taken. Sherbath and tea are the favourite beverages.

It is lawful to eat the flesh of sheep, goat, deer, hare, rabbit, cow, bull, female and male buffalo, camel, heron, duck, partridge, goose, snipe, pigeon, etc. These animals and birds have to be cut in the throat with the recitation of thakbir (Qurnic verse) and only such meat has to be taken. The meat obtained in this way is called "halal" (permissible). It is unlawful to eat the flesh of allegator, turtle, frog, hog, wolf, tiger and the like and birds like hawk, kite, crow and vulture. Fish found dead in the water is unlawful, but if is taken out alive and dies afterwards it is lawful to take it. It is unlawful to take intoxicating liquors and substances like ganja and abin (opium)

Achupaniyaram, inchikothupaniyaram, vellai appam, koovai, agar agar, nanahath, thamroti, feerni, sheerni, naan, and kabaab, halwa and jangiri are special

types of sweets liked by Muslims. Because of the influence of the food habits of the Muslims the names of a number of food articles have become part of Tamil speciality for example kurma, sherbat, salna, masala, halva and jangiri to quote only a few⁷⁴. The Muslims have contributed much to the culinary art in India.

Jewellery and Ornaments

Muslim women are madly fond of jewellery and ornaments. This is not only for decoration and ornamentation but to serve as a parameter of the financial status of the family.

We find references about the various ornaments, and jewels made of gold, silver and other precious stones which were in use in Tamil society in the Sangam and post Sangam works and Inscriptions. A visual representation of all these ornaments and their designs can be seen in temple sculptures, bronze figures and ancient paintings. The Tamil Muslim women also wear such ornaments besides some special types of their own. Sonakan sidukku, an ornament mentioned in Raja Raja's inscriptions at the Thanjavur Big Temple is worn on the head and might have been introduced by the Muslims⁷⁵. The Muslim women wear different kinds of gold and silver ornaments (like Hindu women) in their ear, nose, neck, arms, fingers, waist, feet, ankle and toe. Most of these jewels are in the Hindu pattern, differing in details and designs. Muslim women bore their ears and nose much in the Hindu fashion. Apart from the conventional ear ornaments, the Marakkayar, Rawthar and Labbai women bore their entire ear lobes and wear a gold ornament called vali arasilai or alarkothu which consists of rings made of thin wire with leaf design of peepal tree hanging from it. Arab and Persian

women do have such bores in their ears but they never bore noses⁷⁶. So boring of the nose might have copied by the Muslim women of Tamil region from Hindu women.

Muslim women wear different types of ornaments like thodu (earlet), thongattan (pendent from ear) mattal, (worn with ear stud and tucked in hair to counter the weight) Vali arasalai or alarkothu in the ears; mookuthi (nose stud) of different patterns; bangles, fingerings and kadagam in arms; parumani, gothumaimani, padakkam, attiyal, kasumalai, governor malai, black beaded string (Thali) studded with gold beads and precious stones, sarappalli, kothuvadam, kantasaram, mutharam (pearl pendent) and many other types of chains and pendants in the neck; Jadaipillai, Thalaivattam, pirai, and kondaipoo on the head; ottiyanam in the waist; thandai, silambu, and kolusu in the ankle; and toe ring for the toes (metti). In some rich families, the ornaments worn in the ankle are all made of gold. Most of the married Muslim women wear toe ring in the second toe or some times in the third and fourth also to signify their marital status as in the case of Hindu women. But among the Marakkayar women in some places like Adirampattanam wearing of toe ring is not found. In all these ornaments no figures of any kind are engraved. only floral designs, lunar, star designs and Arabic letters are found⁷⁷.

Islamic Tamil works give a long list of ornaments worn by Muslim women. Saithakkathiru Marakkayar Thirumanavazhthu (referred supra) excels in this respect where we find references to the ornaments and jewellery of the Coromandel Marakkayar women in the 17th century of which a special mention can be made of the nose stud and metti - (toe ring). Almost all the ornaments

described in this literary work are in use to the present day⁷⁸. Islam forbids decoration of menfolk with gold ornaments. But due to the influence of Hindu culture men also wear rings in their fingers and chains in their neck. Saithakkathiru Marakkayar Thirumana vazhthu also gives along list of ornaments worn by men of course the affluent⁷⁹.

Status of Women

The status of women in Islamic society has been of much interest and debate ever since the birth of Islam. But it was Islam that acknowledged a separate and independent human status and an honourable and noble position to women in the society. As a fundamental principle of its system, women and men are equal to each other and entitled to equal rights. Islam gave them the right to life and property like men. Liberal provisions are found in the Holy Quran about the rights and dignity of women. Though marriage is a social contract in Islam, in essence it is the union of two souls, which is one of the sacred Sunnats of Prophet Mohamed⁸⁰. Prophet Mohamed has expressed the opinion that the women should be consulted as to the choice of the husband⁸¹. The dower or mahar signifies the giving of something willingly by the groom to the bride on one's own accord in consideration of the contract, the marriage. Further, mahar is a debt on the husband. A widow can remarry if she desires so.

If a husband does not find his wife a suitable companion, he can divorce her. According to Quranic law, he has to pronounce his intention to divorce her (Talak) at the intervals of one month each for three times during which period the couple can reconcile so that the divorce can be avoided. If no reconciliation takes place

the divorce become absolute and both parties are free to contract another marriage. Similarly if the wife is not satisfied with the husband she can obtain divorce from him (Khula) on the condition of giving her right to mahar⁸²,

Polygamy is not an institution of Islam. It is an allowance made for ardent human nature. The Holy Quran does not enjoin it but recommends it in certain circumstances as better than leaving women helpless and without protectors⁸³. So Polygamy is an emergency law in Islam. It does not at all represent the fundamental principles of Islamic law. Holy Quran says "Marry a woman who seem good to you, two or three or four and if you feel that you cannot do justice (to so many) then marry one only"⁸⁴. Prophet Mohamed had made it clear that if a man marries more than one wife he has to treat them with equal status socially and economically. Thus the injunction virtually comes to imply that one should marry with one women only. The Islamic law favours in normal life monogamy rather than polygamy. During the life time of the Prophet Mohamed, in the wars (especially at Badar and Uhadh) a large number of men were killed and the balance of the sexes was seriously shaken. In such circumstances polygamy became a social necessity as a mesure to save the society from sexual anarchy. So prophet Mohamed encouraged men to marry poor widows in addition to one wife. Thus perhaps the institution of polygamy was instituted in Islam. But in later times men married more than one wife in cases of chronic disease or sterility. A majority of the population continued to be monogamous⁸⁵. In the Muslim society of Coromandel coast, the influence of Hindu culture has infiltrated into this field also and most of the Muslims considered marriage as a sacrement. They

prefer to be monogamous. The incidence of polygamy was at a very low percentage only. This is true even in the present day.

The purdha system is widely in practice among the Muslim women. In the northern districts of Thanjavur, South Arcot and Chengalpet the women come out covering the entire body from head to foot with a big white loose mantle. In Thanjavur district it is more strict. But in the southern districts like Ramanathapuram and Thirunelveli, the women do not veil themselves with a separate big cloth like the women in other districts but they come out with just a veil over the head, that even from the end portion of the saree. Some wear a burkha, a loose black garment. However, the veiling is an accepted custom among the Coromandel Muslims.

The Islamic tradition, the pure Arabic tradition, enjoins the veiling of the hair and neck as a modest conduct on the part of the Muslim women. The veiling itself is not an Islamic custom. It was prevalent in many cities of the east before the coming of Islam but not in the cities of Arabia. The purdha system as it now exists in India was quite undreamt of by the Muslims of the early centuries who had adopted a head veil and some other fashions for their women. The women folk when they came into the cities of Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia and Egypt appeared with a veil as a protection for not being misunderstood by the people. The people associated, unveiled women, with loose character. Later on it was adopted even in the cities of Arabia as a mark of civilization. The purdha has never been an universal custom. The great majority of Muslim women in the world are peasants who work with thier husbands and

brothers in the fields. For them, the veil would be an absurd encumbrance. The Egyptian, Syrian, Turkish or Arabian peasant women veiled themselves only when they had to go into the town. The purdha system was neither Arabic nor Arabian in origin. It was Zoroastrian Persian and Christian Byzantine in origin. For practical reasons it had never been adopted by the great majority of Muslim women. It was confined only to the women of great houses who had varied interests in life. It was never applicable to all classes of society and when applied to every class as now in India, it is a positive evil which the sacred law ever sanctions. It is a custom of the court introduced after the Kilafat had degenerated from the true Islamic standard under Persian Byzantine influence and had become more of an oriental despotism. It comes from the source of weakness of Islam and not from the source of strength⁸⁷. The following injunction is enjoined in the Holy Quran, "O, Prophet!, Tell Thy wife and daughters and the women of believers to draw their cloaks down their head. That will be better so that they may be recognised and not annoyed"⁸⁸. Thus it was very simple. Hence the peculiar purdha system practised by the Coromandel Muslim women probably originated to distinguish them from the women of other religious groups and became universal in the course of time.

Long before the onset of puberty, the Muslim girls in the Coromandel are trained to cover the head and upper part of the body with the scarf. When they attain puberty, they are secluded within the four walls of their zenana. When they have to go out, they wrap the whole body from head to foot (exposing only the eyes and nose) with a white mantle (called dupatti) which is very unwieldy. This cloth is very heavy in

Thanjavur district. This type of purdha is peculiar to the Marakkayar, Labbai and Rawthar women in the coastal belts. However this type of purdha has the advantage of an exterior cloth which can be worn or discarded with ease without disturbing the regular dress inside. Muslim women are accustomed to this for generations and it is being followed to this day⁹⁹.

Inspite of religious sanctions and Quranic injunctions the status of the majority of the Muslim women was not enviable during the 18 - 19 th centuries. Many of the rights of women were there only in letter and not in spirit. Women were suffering from several social disabilities. The girls were married at a very early age immediately after puberty. Unlawful forms of divorce were thrust on them. They were subservient to men. They were ignorant, uneducated and confined within the four walls. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the percentage of school going girls was only 0.49% of the total school going children among Muslims. No girl students were found either in colleges or in upper primary schools. (It is interesting to note that for the first time a Muslim girl joined a college in Madras only in 1923). Their economic role was very insignificant. However, they were taught Arabic to read the holy Quran. They were seldom allowed to learn languages like Tamil and English. But some of them learnt the newly developed script, the Arabic Tamil, i.e., Tamil language in Arabic character, to write the accounts of the household and other related matters. In marriages the consent of the women was a formal one and majority of them had little or no say in the choice of their life partners. Some elders observe that the payment of mahar was only in

theory in most of the cases. Though only mahar is enjoined in Islam, the social evils of dowry, perhaps a continuation of the Hindu practice was almost universal among the Muslims and proved to be an ulcer on the society. In spite of Islamic diktation on woman's share in parental property, they were deprived their respective shares for various reasons. Due to ignorance and isolation women were not aware of their legal rights. Isolation and segregation of the Muslim women resulted in very little social contact with the external world. There were instances of misuse of the sacred provisions of divorce and polygamy. Islam cannot be blamed for acts of contravening its teachings but the behaviour of individuals and their attempt to seek cover under fundamentalist ideas are alone at fault. The Muslim women of the Coromandel, a vast majority of them being the descendants of a converted a society had their own sacred concept of the marriage like the Hindu women. They were never willing to part with their husbands. In spite of the religious sanction for remarriage, most of the widows remained unmarried in reverence to their departed husbands⁹⁰.

Religious Life

There are mosques in all the Muslim settlements. In the coastal towns of the Coromandel we can find some of the earliest mosques in India. In most of the mosques in the coastal towns prayer is conducted according to shafi madhhab. There may be separate mosques for the Hanafi faith. The people living adjacent to a particular mosque constitute a group called mahalla and they elect themselves a muthavalli who will be the head of the trustees of the mosque. He is more or less a leader of the community in that particular area. The mahalla

committee under the presidentship of the muthavalli is responsible for the administration of the mosque and its properties. This committee also takes care of the religious and social needs of the people of the area. The committee maintains the records of the marriages that take place in the families in the mahalla. If a party of the bridegroom or bride go to another town to contract a marriage the muthavalli of the mahalla issues a certificate about the bonafides of the party without which marriage would not be solemnised in another town. In the event of a marriage celebration or other social functions or death in a house within the mahalla all the members of the mahalla congregate there.

The mahalla committee also acts as a caste panchayat organisation and settle disputes relating to properties, divorce and other social matters. The mahalla appeals for donation from philanthropists to build and repair or maintain the mosque, to help in the marriage of poor girls, to support the orphans and for institutions of Arabic learning. The Muslim philanthropists offer liberal donations in cash or kind for such religious and social causes. The funds so collected are maintained by the mahalla committee. The mosques and darghas built by the Muslim philanthropists right from the early centuries to the present day can be seen in various coastal towns in the Coromandel region. Among these the mosques and darghas at Kilakkarai, Kayalpattanam and Nagore deserve special mention. These mosques and darghas are constructed in typical Dravidian style with the combination of Islamic architecture.

The Muslims attach much importance to spiritual life and duties. Their faith in the fundamental

principles of Islam is unshakable. Most of them are punctual in their daily five times prayer and Friday prayer. Islam comprises of five divine commands. 1) Kalima or confession of faith, 2) Namaz or five times prayer, 3) Roza or fasting for thirty days during the month of Ramzan, 4) Zakath or alms giving, 5) Haj or pilgrimage to Mecca. These are the five pillars of Islam.

Every Muslim has to confess his faith in Allah, the Almighty, with the recitation of the first Kalima, "*La-il-la-hah-il-lul-la-hu-mohamad-oor-Rasoola allahi,*" which means there is no other God except Allah and Mohamed is the Prophet or messenger of Allah.

The divine law prescribes five times prayer daily. 1. Fazar or morning prayer from 5 a.m. or from dawn of the day to sunrise. 2. Zohar, midday prayer between 1.00 and 2.00 p.m. 3. Assar, or afternoon prayer, from 4.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. or till sunset, 4. Magrib or sunset prayer, 6.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. or usually after the sunset. 5. Iysha or prayer before resting to bed, 8.00 p.m. to midnight. In those days the time was calculated approximately with the help of the position of the sun, stars, call of the birds and by the bloom of flowers. Before every prayer one has to make ablutions or wuzu, i.e., washing of hands mouth, nose, face, arms head and back of the neck and feet. Every time the people are called for prayer by reciting azan or call of prayer, by the mouzzene, an employee of the mosque. On hearing the azan the people congregate and pray by standing in rows in military fashion without distinction or position, colour or rank⁹¹. Muslims also train their children to pray five times daily from the very early age.

During the month of Ramzan, the muslims undertake fasting for 30 days from dawn to dusk. Eating,

drinking, chewing betel leaves, smoking, snuffing or cannubial intercourse are prohibited during fasting time. Zakath or alms giving is obligatory on Muslims possessing property and to give away, a part of it every year for the welfare of the poor. Zakath is not an income tax but it is a property tax at the rate of 2 1/2%. It is intended to prevent the destitution of the poor. This will create love and gratitude on the part of the poor to the rich and the rich will look upon the poor as their comrades, thus making for a socialistic pattern of society. In olden days, in the Islamic States, the Zakath was compulsorily collected and deposited in the Baithulmal (the State treasury). But in later political administrative settings, the individuals themselves began to distribute the Zakath amounts to the poor people of their choice. Most of the Muslims calculate the Zakath share faithfully in tune with their properties and distribute it to the poor and destitute, during the month of Ramzan.

Haj or pilgrimage to Mecca, is a divine command to undertake pilgrimage once in their lives. It is meant for those who have sufficient means to meet the expenses and exigencies. The poor are not obligated to perform it but fortunately for the poor, the charitable minded opulent natives in the coastal towns operated ships named "fyz-e-billah" (God's grace of boundy ship) for pilgrimage to Mecca and transported the poor people bearing all expenses themselves.⁹² Labbai Naina Marakkayar of Kilakkarai, a descendant of Seethakkathi in the third quarter of the eighteenth century took a large number of Muslims to Mecca in his ship Hydroos at his own expense. The Nawab of Arcot, Mohamed Ali despatched every year two ships Safinatullah and SafinathulRasool with pilgims to Mecca at the expense

of the State⁹⁴. He also sent presents to the exalted pious nobles in Mecca and also to the poor in Mecca and Medina⁹⁵. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Coromandel Marakkayar ships transported Haj pilgrims to the west coast, in their mercantile vessels, from where they took ships to the Arab coast.

Pearson gives a very interesting account of Haj pilgrimage from Indian coasts. The journey from India to Mecca was very expensive and dangerous. In spite of that there was regular large scale passenger movement by sea for Haj. 15,000 people performed Haj, from India, every year in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Most of the pilgrims were urban dwellers. The Mughal emperors provided all facilities to the pious men and fakirs to perform Haj. Intending people from various parts of country perhaps including those from the Coromandel assembled in the port towns of the Mughals to take this opportunity. Political opponents of the Mughal rulers were sent on Haj, never to return. Women also undertook Haj pilgrimage. Trade was not the motive for most of the pilgrims. However they carried some goods with them. This was not intended to be sold for profit but rather sold on the way or in Mecca in order to provide the expenses of the voyage. Thus Mecca became the centre of exchange for Middle Eastern pious products⁹⁶.

Festivals

Generally, the Marakkayars, Labbais, and Rawthars do not celebrate with pomp and show the Muharrum festival, the mourning and lamentation of the martyrdom of Hossein and Husein, the grandsons of Prophet Mohamed as in the case of the Deccanis and Shias.

In some households a fatheeha is offered for the eternal peace of the martyrs. The Islamic calendar month begins from the month of Muharrum, consisting of 355 days.

Odukkathu perunal (festival) is celebrated as a household function on the last Wednesday of the month Saffar. This is not considered as an auspicious celebration. It is celebrated to ward off all misfortunes that befell in the year. The origin of this celebration goes to the indispositon of the Prophet Mohamed during this month (in 11th year of Hijira) and to thank the Almighty for his recovery. The first thirteen days of the month are considered extremely unlucky, on account of the Prophet having been seriously indisposed during those days and on the thirteenth day some changes for the better showed itself in his ailments. The last Wednesday of the month is celebrated as odukkathu perunal. It was on this day that the Prophet experiencing some degree of mitigation in the violence of his distemper, bathed but never, after, having on the twelfth day of the following month resigned his soul to God (Peace be upon him.) On the last Wednesday it is customary with every Muslim, early in the morning, to write on a mango leaf some Quranic verses with saffron water, wash of the writing in water and drink the liquid in the hope that it may preserve them from afflictions. On the above account it is highly proper on this day to take bath wear new clothes and offer fatheeha in the name of the Prophet, eat and distribute food to the poor and a walk in the garden with pleasure and amusements.

The Tamil speaking Muslims used to celebrate this day as an unlucky day. Houses and household articles are washed thoroughly on the previous day. On the night of the previous day some black gram, unboiled

rice and a small quantity of oil, a few paise of coins and eggs - one each for each male member of the household are kept in a plate over night. Next morning after bath, the plate is waved three times around the heads of the male members of the family and is given to the poor or some fakirs. Usually a cock is cut on this occasion cooked and fatheeha is offered. In the evening the ladies in particular go to the seashore or to gardens or groves and enjoy a pleasurable time. The Marakkayar women preserve the garlands that were worn by the bridegroom and bride (if there had been a marriage in their house during the year) and take them with them for being thrown into the sea ⁹⁷. But nowadays religious men discourage such celebrations.

The twelfth day of the month of Rabee -ool-awal, the day, Prophet Mohamed departed this life is celebrated praising and eulogizing him as set forth in the Hadeesh. Food stuffs are prepared and distributed to all. The Miraj or Mihuraj night which falls on the sixteenth day of the month of Rajab is considered to be auspicious. It was on this night only, the Angel Gabriel, conveyed his holiness the Prophet Mohamed to the Almighty, mounted on a booroq. (Booroq is a celestial animal like a mule with a human face, wings of a peacock with a speed of burg. (lighting) hence named as Booroq). Muslims regard it as an important religious occasion and sit all the night in prayer and reading Quran and in dikir (reciting verses in praise of Allah). The Tamil Muslims observe this night faithfully by participating in special prayer.

Ramzan is an important festival to all the Muslims. It is known as Id-dhul-fitr and celebrated on the first day of the month Shawwal,. Ramzan is

celebrated in continuation of the fast for thirty days during the previous month. On the day, the Muslims congregate for the special prayer. Before going to the prayer they distribute the fitra and alms to the poor. It is compulsory on the part of every Muslim to distribute the fitra - a fixed quantity of grain or the cost of it - to the poor before the special prayer. It is intended for the poor to feel secure and happy. Almost all the Muslims distribute the zakath amount to the poor and the needy prior to this festival, thus making the poor fellow beings feel happy and hence it could be called a festival towards socialistic pattern of society. On the day of Ramzan Muslims wear new clothes decorate the body with perfumes and fragrance and merrily walk to the prayer. After the prayer, when they reach their house the women take arathi. Delicious foods are prepared, usually non vegetarian. Friends and relatives are entertained in a feast.

Baqr-eed or Eed-ool-Zoha is another important festival which is celebrated on the tenth day of the month Baqreed or Zilhujja. Pilgrimage to Mecca takes place during this season. During this festival the opulent among the Muslims offer qurbanee, the sacrifice of goat or camel or cow in memory of the sacrifice (of his son) done by Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) at Mecca. The Muslims sacrifice as many number of goats or other animals according to their means. The poor are always exempted from such provisions and it is obligatory on those who can afford it according to the norms laid down in the Hadeesh. One portion of the flesh of the sacrificed animal is taken by the sacrificer, himself, the second distributed to the poor and indigent and the third to the relatives and friends. During this festival also the poor are taken care of in that those who cannot

afford to buy a piece of meat enjoy it through this. During this festival also the Muslims wear new clothes and celebrate it merrily. They congregate for a special prayer in the idgha maidan and share their joy with friends and relatives. Delicious foods are prepared and taken with family and friends.

The influence of many of the Hindu festivities can also be seen in Tamil Islamic society. Muslim children fire crackers and light sparklers in their houses during Deepavali. The Muslims gladly accept and relish the Deepavali sweets offered by the Hindu neighbours. They cook pongal (sugarcandy) like the Hindus during Pongal, the universal harvest festival of the Tamils. The Muslim industrial and trade establishments also wear a festive look along with those of the Hindus during Ayudha Pooja. Of course the poojas are performed by their Hindu employees.

Dargah Worship and Beliefs

Darghas or Tykhas are the tomb shrines of Muslim holymen who are known as Wali, Aulia or Andavar (Lord). In the earlier phase, these shrines served as a force in the expansion of Islam. Within these shrines the Muslim religious life is more flexible and accommodative rather than at the mosques. Further these shrines have moved between the high Islam and the supposedly humble folk traditions of the Muslim masses. The worship that takes place in these shrines tended to draw upon the local religious vocabulary and local style of verse, music etc.,

Many such clusters of dargahs are found along the coastal towns of the Coromandel as well as in the hinterland; among which the dargahs at PortoNovo,

Nagore, Karaikal, Muthupet, Kilakkarai, Ervadi and Kayalpattanam are very sacred to the Muslims as well as the Hindus. Some of the earliest dargahs in places like PortoNovo, Kovalam and Kolachel are said to have been associated with the contemporaries and companions of Prophet Mohamed.

The dargahs in folk tradition are revered as a place of power, a repository of barakath (blessings) and boons and a source of miraculous cure and a resort of pilgrimage. The Aulia entombed in a particular shrine may be a learned man, a scholar, a teacher, a missionary, a polemicist, a poet or a Sufi, whose original teaching place became a place of devotion and pilgrimage after his death. It was believed that apart from being learned holy men and missionaries such saints were also great hakims (physicians) and masters in occult science and had powers to perform Karamath (miracles.) The character of such saints attracted the masses.

Most of these dargahs are recent foundations. But the pirezadas (trustees) of the shrine claim a long antiquity and have created thirteenth or fourteenth century date of foundation in order to link the shrines to one of the great founder figures of Sufism such as Jalaludin Rumi or Ibn Al Arabi. Most of the region's historical Sufis were from the Deccan who fled to the Tamil region following the collapse of the Deccani Sultanates. But all the tomb shrines in the Coromandel coastal towns do not belong to such Sufis. Majority of them were Muslim saints of Tamil origin and they were literary laureates and missionaries⁹⁹.

Sufism or Tassawaf is Muslim mysticism. A Muslim mystic is called a Sufi. The Sufi spiritual leader is known as Peer, in Persian. Such individuals belong

to one of the Sufi order or Thariqua. Most of the Sufis of South India belong to Quadiria Tahriqua, founded in Bagdad by the famous Sufi, Abdul Quadir Jilani in the twelfth century A.D. The essentials of Sufism are self discipline, adoration of the Lord, love of Supreme Beauty, virtue and intention. Their spiritual policy was peace with all. They preached alike on equal terms to the Muslims and Hindus. In the Tamil region Sufism is said to be a mixture of Arabic, Persian, and Indian mysticism. The teachings of the Sufis were akin to those of the Tamil Siddhars (mystics) and many of the Muslim Sufis were included in the order of Tamil Siddhars, the mystics of Hinduism. In the Coromandel regions a large number of Sufis were Tamil poets and they enriched the Tamil language and spiritual literature by their literary works. Peer Mohamed Aulia Sahib of Takkalai, Sadakkathullah Appa of Kilakkarai were the prominent Tamil Sufi poets who lived in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and in the beginning of nineteenth century. Mastan Sahib was the well known Sufi Tamil poet among the masses. He was born at Tondi and buried in Madras. The tradition of Sufism continued in the Coromandel region and there were many more such Sufis. Their sayings and doings were responsible for the spread of Islam and its enlightenment. The tombs of such Sufis also came to be venerated by the masses along with those of other saintly persons.¹⁰⁰

According to Islamic tenets, Muslims can venerate such saints since they were seen and shown as dear to Allah. A Muslim can perform a ziarath (homage to the dead) in the shrine of the saint by reciting some verses from the Holy Quran (i.e. to plead with the Almighty to give an eternal, peaceful life to that saint.) It is said

that Prophet Mohamed himself had performed such ziarath to his elders¹⁰¹. But in due course of time the saints and Aulias came to be regarded as men of God and their birth and death anniversaries came to be celebrated as Kanthoori and Urus.

The celebration of annual festivals to the Aulias was in practice among the Arabs in the middle ages. It was known as mouldid (eulogy). Such festivals were celebrated with song and music and story telling. The writings of the Islamic scholars of the period condemn such practices since it was inconsistent with the spirit of Islam, vain, ignorant and erroneous, not ordered by the Quran or the tradition of the Prophet but invented by those Israelites who worshipped the Golden Calf¹⁰². Anyhow with all these varied opinions among the theologians and scholars, the belief in saints and worship in their shrines was not peculiar to Indian Islam. In fact, this came ready made to India along with the Afghans, Persians and Arabs to which Indian culture too added its share¹⁰³.

Almost all the celebrations in the dargahs here are much in the Hindu fashion. The influence of Hinduism on Islam is an interesting subject for study in this connection. The Dravidian form of worship seems to have appealed to the Muslims of South India. The reason for this is that most of them were converts from the Hindu Dravidan faith and the practice and worship (in the dargahs) were well suited to the heritage of the majority of the converted Muslims¹⁰⁴.

The urus festival was introduced in South India during the reign of the Bhamini Sultan Ahamed Shah I (1422 - 36) but it was celebrated as the death anniversary

of the king¹⁰⁵. In the course of time, it became a festival for the Muslim saints also and was variously called as Kanthoori, Urus, Santhanakoodu festival (Sandal anointing festival) much in the fashion of the Guru Pooja to the Hindu savants. Kanthoori (kanduri, Kandri) is a Turkish word and appears for the first time in the Islamic Tamil literary work Yakobu Siddar Padal of seventeenth century, where it is described as a festival to feed the poor on the birth or death anniversary of a saint.¹⁰⁶ In the Tamil region, in the later periods the celebrations were subjected to more Hindu influences. During the celebration a pot of sandal is carried to the dargah in a decorated car in procession, with music and fire works and people on the way pay respect to the sandal pot. This is much in the fashion of the ratham or car in which the Hindu deities are taken around the streets for the worship of the devotees. At the close of the procession, the sandal pot is received with respect in the dargah and the sandal is anointed on the tomb of the saint. This custom might have been introduced in dargah worship in the Tamil region at a later period¹⁰⁷.

The hagiology of Muslims in India is abundant and diversified which is probably due to the Hindu influence. As in all the hagiographic literature we find the historical personages have been canonized legends too have grown up around such names for which there are no authentic records. It is not always possible to decide whether a saint associated with a holy place really lived or not. The belief that the saints have not left any issues and the names given to them such as Sidi Mimum (My Lord of good luck) Sidi Bukarma (My Lord the master of the Fig tree) Sidi Burja (My Lord the master of hope), suggest their legendary origin. A very popular name for the dead saint is Sidi-i-Mahfi. (My

Lord the hidden one or unknown). Sometimes it is said of a holy place that a saint is buried there, nobody knows his name. If questioned the popular version of the residents of the area is that a saint from Arabia is buried there. For instance the saint at Nagore is given many names, he is popularly known as Nagore Andavar (Lord of Nagore) not many know his name i.e. Shahul Hameed wali. The fact that he left no issues also suggests a legendary origin¹⁰⁸. It is seldom possible to find any historical foundation for legends about the saints¹⁰⁹.

The local Hindu rulers liberally endowed the construction and maintenance of such dargahs. Pratap Singh the Maratha ruler of Thanjavur had endowed fifteen villages to the Nagore dargah and he took a keen interest in its maintenance and administration¹¹⁰. The Sethupathis of Ramanathapuram also endowed liberally to the dargahs at Rameswaram and Ervadi¹¹¹. The dargahs in the Carnatic region received the maximum attention of the Nawabs of Arcot. International trade of the earlier times fostered such dargahs along the coastal region. Ibn Batuta says that the agents of the shrines will meet the incoming vessels and collect offerings which have been pledged by those on board for protection against storms, pirates, and other perils¹¹². Much the same system of organized pledges and chief collections seem to have operated along the South Indian coast during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thus the process of community functioning was associated with the growth of international trade¹¹³.

The devotees, be it Marakkayars, Labbais, Rawthars or Deccanis, without exception, flock to these dargah shrines like bees to sip the sweet honey, where

(it is believed that) mental and physical afflictions are soothed and healed and all supplications are met. They sing upon the saints, "You who are beloved of God and his Prophet, rid me of my disease, shower your grace upon me"¹¹⁴.

Dargahs attract a large number of Hindus also who believe that the miraculous power of the Peer, entombed there will cure ailments of the mind and body including afflictions such as infertility and possession by malevolent demonic forces. Many of the dargahs in the Coromandel have become asylums for psychiatric patients. It is interesting to note that the parallel between the Muslim saint cults and Hindu Goddesses traditions involves more than a superficial similarity between the healing function attributed at the dargahs and Hindu Amman shrines.

The Thazkiras (hagiological texts and legends) on these shrines and dargahs are full of maimings and other acts of destruction wrought by the Aualis. As a protector the saint is portrayed as a figure of terror and destroyer of evils, like the blood taking Dravidian Tamil Goddesses. Susan Bayly who has undertaken an indepth study on the aspects of Muslim saints of Coromandel, has argued that the association of certain animals and weapons, as described in the Thazkira literature, are similar to the motifs found among the Saivaite and Vaishnavaites Gods, with the help of which they destroy the evil spirits and demons. For example Bayly suggests that the association of Natharwali, the famous Aulia entombed at Tiruchirapalli, with the lion is similar to that of the vehicle of the Goddess Durga. She adds that a common item of regalia to be found in dargahs is a wand made of peacock feathers bound at

the base with some ornamental silver bands. This is considered a ceremonial knock on the head of the devotee who make offerings to the shrine. This is considered to be a spiritual way of submission to the Peer or Aulia. According to Bayly this connects the Muslim saint cult with the divine Lord Subramanya-Karthikeya - whose vehicle is peacock¹¹⁵ Though this is a good study to interlink the different cults, I am of the view that the use of peacock feather wand in dargahs can be similar to the Hindu practice where the poojari in the temple of village Gods, use bunch of margosa leaf with which he strikes the face and head of the devotees to ward off evil spirits. To keep a permanent and honoured material in lieu of margosa leaf, the officiants in the dargahs might have invented the peacock feather wand. Further I have also seen that the learned Muslim officiants in dargahs use margosa leaf instead of the peacock feather wands.

Muslims visit the dargahs during the Kanthoori festival and also on Thursdays and Sundays of the week. They offer fatheeha with flowers and incense and sweets and plead for the fulfillment of their desires. They offer money and various kinds of votive offerings such as miniature of a cradle in pursuit of a child, miniature models of the body in metal (usually tin, but at times silver and gold) such as leg, hand, eye nose, ear, abdomen etc., to get cured of ailments in those parts. Children are brought to the dargahs and tonsured ceremonially. Almost all the devotees vow to contribute their mite and visit the shrine again if their desires are met. Some vow to tonsure. Some conduct grand feasts for the poor in the dargah premises. Psychiatric patients are taken to the dargahs for cure. Some dargahs in places like Ervadi, Kayalpattanam, Nagore and Papavor (near

Nagore) are considered more fruitful than the mental clinics and psychiatric patients are made to stay months together to get cure of their mental afflictions. Both the Muslims and Hindus have strong faith in the cure of psychiatric patients in the dargahs. After the harvest many of the farmers offer some grain to the dargah. The first yield of coconut or fruit bearing trees are offered to the saint. Pigeons are offered when one recovers after a struggle for life. Thus the list of offerings runs to a great length. The water of the tank in the dargahs is considered holy. Generally, dried rose petals and sweets are distributed to the devotees in the dargahs. But in some dargahs sacred ash blessed with verses of the Quran is also distributed. Though the Muslims do not apply the sacred ash in their forehead, they receive it with reverence and sprinkle it on the head and take it home for being kept there. Knotted black threads blessed with holy verses are distributed to the devotees on payment. Such threads are worn on neck, arm, ankle etc., both by men and women to save themselves from evil spirits.

Though all these practices are un-Isamic still they are widely in practice. Field studies reveal that such practices are there from time immemorial. Most of these customs are followed by the Hindu devotees also who visit the dargahs. The Hindus also have a strong faith in the barakath and power of the Muslim saints and in fact in some dargahs like Nagore the Hindus outnumber Muslims. Thus the dargahs serve as source for the peaceful co-existence of the masses irrespective of religious faith and as a symbol of National Integration. The time honoured religious customs and practices of the region, thus, have crept into the Muslim society due to the Hindu cultural influence. Though Islam and

Hinduism cannot go together in the basic ideologies like monotheism they fluctuate in the matter of rituals and ceremonies. Thus we find a total cultural synthesis in dargah worship¹¹⁶.

Kanthoori festivals differ from place to place. Generally the festival lasts for ten to twelve days. In the Nagore dargah of Shahul Hameed Aulia, it lasts for twelve days. The festival starts with flag hoisting. Special ceremonies takes place at the night time everyday. On the tenth day a sandal pot is carried to the dargah in a decorated chariot in a procession from Nagapattanam with music and amusements. Devotees both Muslims and Hindu throng the route of the procession and pay homage to the sandal chariot. When the chariot reaches the dargah at Nagore, the pot containing the sandal is received with reverence and anointed on the tomb. There will be a great scramble to receive a little of this sandal paste. Sweets are distributed to the devotees. By the beginning of the eighteenth century the leading role in the sandal anointment rituals of many great shrines were shared between the elite Muslim Pirzada lineage and representatives of the important local Hindu caste groups and communities¹¹⁷.

Dargah worship is much familiar among the Muslim women. Since there is no separate place for women to worship and plead for the welfare of their families they find it in the dargahs. (Muslim women pray for five times in their house itself. In some places like Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam there are separate enclosures for women in the premises of the mosques. But they seldom visit such mosques on ordinary days but congregate on festival occasions) A Muslim woman who comes to know about the blessings said to have

been showered on her Hindu sister because of her worship and pleadings in the shrines of Gods and Goddesses, naturally wants a similar soothing place where she can plead, for the betterment and welfare of her family and relatives. She copies such practices and offerings of the Hindu shrines in the dargah. Thus to the Muslim women, a dargah is a place to ventilate their emotions and stress of mind since they conceive it as a power centre. Hence Muslim women visit dargahs often than the men and they are more pious in this respect.

The orthodox Muslims claim that what is accorded to a saint is not worship as per Quran and Sunna. This is understandable to the elite. But the majority of the Muslims regard the Aulias as being the proper object of worship and in their place they feel the source of blessings. It naturally comes into conflict with the fundamental concept of the unity of God in Islam and leads to the association of other objects with Him in worship. The effect of Wali cult has fostered superstitions and beliefs in magic among the ignorant classes. The cult of local saints can often be shown to be the survival of an earlier faith which has passed on into Islam, under another guise¹¹⁸. Thus there exists a compromise between Islam and Hinduism. The propitiation of disease godlings, worship of patron saints and local deities, veneration of relics, preachings of black art, divination of the future, are more attractive to the rural Muslim population¹¹⁹. The festivals in the dargahs and pilgrimage to these shrines have become a recreation for the people. Any interference with the festivals connected with the saints and shrines or their abolition creates outbursts. The attempts to check saint worship has not proved fruitful¹²⁰.

Language and Literature

The Marakkayaras, Labbais and Rawthars are monolinguals. Tamil is their mother tongue. They are trained to read and write Arabic. They think, speak and write in Tamil. But in the spoken dialect and kinship terms among the Marakkayars we can find an admixture of some Arabic terms. This helps them to retain their individual identity. The Tamil Muslims also wrote Tamil in Arabic script and this new language was known as Arabic - Tamil. Europeans like the Portuguese, the Dutch and the Danes set up colonies mostly in the coastal towns and the Coromandel Muslims had opportunities to move with them directly and some of the words of their language are exclusively in use among the Marakkayars and Labbais in the coastal towns.

Muslims all over the world have inherited Islam with its language, Arabic. The religious terms and theological phrases of Islam are indispensable for every Muslim for the proper performance of his religious duties which are inter woven with his day - today life. It is difficult to translate the Arabic terminology into an indigenous language. This resulted in the absorption of indispensable Arabic words into the indigenous languages and such words came to be written in the Arabic script.

With the advent of Islam in peninsular India, a parallel development took place in the region. The contact of Islam with the languages of the region had changed the character of the languages by imposing Arabic script on them adding a new dimension to them. This resulted in the growth of Arabic - Telugu, Arabic-Malayalam and Arabic Tamil, by which the Muslims used to write the respective language dialects in Arabic script.

Arabic is considered to be a sacred language by the Muslims. They are familiar with the Holy Quran and as a result they are acquainted with the Arabic script. This makes them read easily any thing in Arabic script. Scholars and missionaries who wanted to communicate with the local Muslims of the average standard found it easy to express the ideas in the indigenous languages. Even those who are not competent enough to read their indigenous languages can understand if anything is expressed in the indigenous language written in Arabic script. Thus the use of Arabic script to write the indigenous language helped both the scholars who wanted to convey the ideas and the people for whom these ideas were meant. Thus the Arabic Tamil became popular on the Coromandel region.

The origin of Arabic Tamil goes to eighth century A.D. and it fills the vacuum found in the literary history of Tamil speaking Muslims. The Arabs who stayed in the coastal region consorting with native women had learnt to speak Tamil, and might have started to write Tamil in the Arabic character for the purpose of their trade and accounting. This helped the local merchants to communicate with their Arab counterparts.

Though Tamil was the mother tongue of the converts to Islam, most of them from the middle and lower strata of the society, were illiterates. To them anything written in Arabic script was sacred. Because of their practice of reading the Holy Quran they could understand Tamil in Arabic script. Thus they were able to understand Islamic theology written in the Arabic script. Islamic Tamil literary works at the earlier stage were also written in Arabic Tamil. Tamil had its own script and Arabic Tamil did not replace it, but existed

side by side. Whenever the Arabic letters were inadequate to express in Tamil, new letters and consonants were devised to enrich the Arabic Tamil writings. Thus a person who is familiar with the reading of the Holy Quran and at the same time understand Tamil will be able to understand the themes of Islamic Tamil literature written in Arabic Tamil.

Many of the Islamic Tamil works now in Tamil script might have been in Arabic Tamil. Later on when necessity arose, they were produced in Tamil itself. A large number of literary master pieces on Islamic themes, commentaries on Holy Quran, dictionaries, poetry, prose works on Islamic mysticism are in Arab Tamil character and are well preserved.

In Arabic language the term Arvi (Lisenul Arvi or liscenul Arvi) is used to indicate Tamil language. In Tamil, the Arabic Tamil was also called as Muslim Tamil and in Ceylon Sonakar Tamil. Arabic Tamil was used even in correspondence among the Muslims of the Coromandel and Ceylon. There were occasions when people printed invitations in Arabic Tamil. Further, it was familiar to Muslim women who were virtually lacking writing knowledge of Tamil. From linguistic point of view, it may appear to be a different dialect coming out of the mixture of Arabic and Tamil but not a separate language. It was only a language of script. Only those who can read Arabic can read Arabic Tamil. Some of the scholars are of the view that like Sanskrit to the Hindus, Latin to Christians, Arabic Tamil was the language of the Muslim elite but it was not very popular. Arabic Tamil began to decline by the end of the nineteenth century¹²¹.

The Muslims along the coastal region speak chaste Tamil even to this day. Original and antique words are in use unmultilated among them in day today life. Tamil is the language in every sphere of their life. Thus the Tamil Muslims live as Tamils in the main stream like any other religious group of people of the Tamil region.

The kinship terms of the Marakkayars are peculiar and not prevalent among other sects of Muslims. This may be due to the Arab ethnological connections and the Mapillas of the west coast. A few terms that are in use in the coastal region will go to show this fact.

Kinship term	Marakkayar	Labbai	Rawther
Father	Vappa	Atha	Atha
Mother	Umma	Amma	Amma
Father's father	Muthuvappa	Appa	Appa
Father's mother	Vappamma	Athamma	Athamma
Mother's father	Kannuvappa	Appa	Appa
Mother's mother	Kannamma	Nannima	Nannima
Father's elder brother	Periavappa	Periatha	Periatha
Father's younger brother	Chinnavappa	Sacha	Chinnatha
Mother's younger sister	Chaci	Chinnamma	Chinnamma
Elder brother	Kaka, Nana	Annan	Annan
Elder sister	Latha, Ratha	Achi	Akka
Younger brother	Thambi	Thambi	Thambi
Younger sister	Thangachi	Thangachi	Thangachi
Grand son	Peran	Peran	Peran
Grand daughter	Pethi	Pethi	Pethi

It will be seen that the kinship terms of Labbais and Rawthars are in Tamil form¹²².

Due to the contact of the Muslims with Westerners like Portuguese and the Dutch a number of vocables of their respective languages came into use among the coastal Muslims and a few such vocables are exclusively still in use among the coastal Muslims. (apart from many other words which are common to all)

Portuguese Vocables¹²³

English	Local usage	Portuguese
Kitchen	Kusini	Cozinha
Lantern	Lanthar	Lanterna
Saucer (porcelin)	Peers	pires
Room	Kamara	Camara
A hand spike	Alavanku	Alavanca
Hand kerchief	Lenchi	Lenco
Flat dish	Pingan	Palangana
Shirt	Kamis	Camisa"
A smll basin	Koppai	Copa

Dutch Vocables¹²⁴

A sauce	Sambal	Sambil
---------	--------	--------

Detailed linguistic study on Coromandel Muslim society awaits the attention of the scholars.

Literature is the mirror of society. It reflects and shapes life. It records the higherst ideas of the people who inherit it and promote art and culture. All the leading religions of the world have contributed to enrich

Tamil literature, in this the contribution of the Muslims is by no means small.

Islamic Tamil literature is made up of literary works in Tamil on Islamic themes. In Islamic Tamil literature, Arabic and Persian words are freely used to express the Islamic ideology. Many a literary masterpieces have adorned the Islamic literature.

Many epics and minor epics were produced right from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by Muslim poets in Tamil and as well as in Arabic Tamil. Many of these poets were Sufi mystics. All the grammatical and literary forms in Tamil are exemplified in these works. Some new literary forms have also been introduced into Tamil literature like Padaippor, Munajath, Machala which have no parallel in other non Muslim forms of literature. Minor classical literary forms like Arruppadai, Anthathi, Pillaitamil, Kalampakam, Sathakam etc. were also produced on Islamic themes. The life of the Prophet, progress of Islam etc., are Arabian in conception yet they are Tamilised in these literary works to make the Tamils identify themselves with them. The Holy Quran and books on Islamic jurisprudence were translated into Tamil. Altogether more than 2000 literary works have been identified most of them emerged during the period of our study. The mystic poems of Mastan Sahib, Peer Appa, Habeeb Arasar and other Sufi poets have accelerated the fusion of the Muslim and Hindu traditions.

Muslim philanthropists encouraged and patronised poets to produce fine literary works in Tamil. Right from the sixteenth century, Killakkarai, Kayalpattinam and Nagore, were important Islamic Tamil literary centres. The Killakkarai maritime magnate Periathambi Marakkayar's philanthropy was a boon to

Islamic literature in Tamil. It is said that he was responsible for the production of many literary works including the celebrated Seerapuranam of Umaru Pulavar. (But it is strange that his name is not at all mentioned in the verses of Seerapuranam. Instead we find the name of one Mohamed Kasim Marakkayar. He might have been close friend or relative of the former). Many more maritime trading Marakkayars were instrumental in the production of a number of Islamic Tamil literary works. The Tamil Muslims loved and patronised the Tamil language and their contribution to the progress and richness of Tamil literature has an honoured place in Tamil linguistic and literary history.

Muslims have enriched the vocabulary of the Tamil language by adding Arabic, Persian and Urdu words. These borrowed words, about 5000, have been mixed inextricably with the Tamil language and are in usage in day to day life. These words, as cultural indices indicate the intense interaction that has taken place between the two religions in this land¹²⁵.

The Muslims introduced the Unani system of medicine, (the medicinal system of the Arabs) into the Coromandel region. The men who practised it called Hakims, even attracted whole masses of people towards Islam. The influence of Islamic music is responsible for the introduction of two "ragas" (tunes) namely Arabi and Hussaini in to Carnatic music.

Islam also shot a fresh woof into the warf of Indian architecture. Islamic architecture was introduced in North India in the twelfth century by the early Muslim conquerors. Islamic architecture in its true form was introduced in the Coromandel region only in the

latter part of the seventeenth century, though the process of Islamisation started very early. The indigenous Tamil building style is called the "Dravidian style". The Muslims of Coromandel coast adopted this style in the construction of their place of worship, the mosque, the best examples of which can be seen at Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam. When Islamic architecture was introduced in south India the Hindus also adopted the style in their buildings and thus a new style emerged, "The Indo-Islamic architecture". When Islamic architecture gained access in the Coromandel region the Dravidian style mingled freely with it and the Coromandel Muslims innovated yet another new style "Indo - Dravidian - Islamic architecture"¹²⁶.

This study of the social customs and practices of the Muslims demonstrates that the time honoured customs have been handed down from generation to generation. The antiquity of the customs and practices which were in use in the Coromandal Muslim society reflect in the social life of the Tamil Muslims in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, a more specialised study of the social customs of the Muslims of the Coromandel region will yield very interesting materials for sociological research. A general study is attempted here. It is hoped that it would attract the attention of the scholars.

Notes and References

1. Susan Bayly, op.cit. 73-73
2. T. Jayarajan op.cit., p.22, S.M. Sulaiman and MM. Ismail, *Islam and Indian Religion and Tamil Culture* (Univeristy of Madras 1977) p. 11;
- 3 S.M. Sulaiman and M.M. Ismail, op.cit., p.3-4
4. Souvenir of the second world Tamil Conference, Madras 1968 (Eng) p.15
5. A.B.M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, (Allahabad 1967) p.15.
6. Jamila Brijbushan, *Muslim women in and out of it.*, (Vikas publishing house, New Delhi 1990), p.1
7. Susan Bayly, op.cit p. 73.
8. Nikshoy-C-Chetterji, *A Histroy of Modern Middle East*, (New Delhi 1987), pp. 6-7.
9. Encyclopaedia of Islam vol. VI. p. 278-82.
10. Ibid vol. III p. 158.
11. Ibid. p. 163
12. Ibid.
13. Dictionary of Islam, Thomes Patric Hughes, (New Delhi 1973).
14. Jaffur Shureeff, *Qunoon-Islam, or the Customs of Mussalmans of India, Comprising a full, and exact account of their various rites and ceremonies from the moment of birth till the hour of death* (New Delhi 1863). Rept. 1991) p.160.
15. Quadir Hussain Khan, *South Indian Mussalmans* (Madras 1910); p.59. Seikh Rahim Mondal, op.cit. p.34.
16. Quadir Hussain Khan, op.cit., p.61.
17. W.Francis op.cit., p.87; Edgar Thurston, Vol. V. p.2.

18. Quadir Hussain Khan, *op.cit.*, p.62; from interview with Sulaiman Marakkayar of Kayalpattanam and Jaffar Muhaiyadin Marakkayar of Nagor.
19. Mattison Mines, *op.cit.*, p. 162.
20. *ibid.* 164
21. J.M. Thoburn, *India its society Culture and Religion* (Jaipur, 1989) p. 114.
22. T. Jayarajan *op.cit.* p.45; particulars collected in field study in places like Nagapattanam, Karaikkal, Tondi, Kilakkarai, Vedalai, Kayalpattanam and Kulasekarapattanam.
23. Jaffur Shureeff, *op.cit.*, p. 95.
24. Mujib *op.cit.*, pp. 509-510; Quadir Hussain Khan *op.cit.*, p.70; S.M. Sulaiman and M.M. Ismail, *op.cit.* p. 708.
25. A.R.E. 104/1948.
26. W. Francies, *op.cit.*, 87-88.
27. Edward William Lane, *Arabian Society in the Middle Ages*, (New Jersey, 1987) p. 234.
28. Syed Abdul Razack, "Social and Cultural life of the Carnatic Nawabs and Nobles as gleaned through Persian Sources, 1746 - 1855", unpublished M.Phil Thesis, University of Madras, 1978.
29. Particulars collected in an Interview with Syed Mohamed Hussain, writer and publisher, Madras.
30. Edgar Thurston *op.cit* Vol.V. p.5.
31. T. Jayarajan, *op.cit.*, p.99
32. Shaik Akbar Hussain, *Marriage Customs among the Muslims of India*, (New Delhi, 1976), p. 142.
33. T. Jayarajan, *op.cit.*, p.100.
34. Information collected in at interview with Jaffar Mohideen Marakkayar, Nagore; T. Jayarajan, *op.cit.*, p.61.
35. "*Saithakkathiru Marakkayar Thirumana Vazhthu*", Ettayapuram Umarkathab Pulavar, produced in the last quarter of 17th century which contain 448 couplets.

36. Ibid., couplet, 87
37. Ibid., couplet, 124
38. Ibid., couplet, 130-140
39. Ibid., couplet, 146-148.
40. Ibid., couplet, 149.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., couplet, 162-169.
43. Ibid., couplet, 171.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., couplet, 190-199.
46. Ibid., couplet, 207-208.
47. Ibid., couplet, 313.
48. Ibid., couplet, 319.
49. Ibid., couplet, 323-330.
50. Ibid., couplet, 345-346.
51. Ibid., couplet, 363.
52. Ibid., couplet, 410.
53. *Seerapuranam*, Umaru Pulavar, Manampuri Padalam, 58.73.
54. S.M. Sulaiman and M.N. Ismail op.ci., p.8.
55. Jaffur Shureeff, op.cit., p.171.
56. Islamic Encyclopaedia, Vol.I; particulars collected in field study at Nagore, Kilakkarai and Kayalpattanam
57. Jaffur shureeff, op.cit., 11-20
58. Particulars collected from interview with Prof. Sayabu Marakkayar and Prof. Naseema Banu of Karaikkal.
59. S.M. Kamal, *Islamum Tamilagamum*, op.cit., p.54.
60. Thaikka Shuib Alim, *Arabic Arvi an Persian in Sarandib and Tamil Nadu* (Madras, 1993).
61. Quadir Hussain Khan, op.cit., p.66.

62. Jaffur Shureeff, *op.cit.*, pp.30-32.
63. S.Mohamed Hussain Nainar, *Arab Geographer's knowledge of Southern India*, (Madras 1942), pp. 104; K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *Foreign Notices in South India*. (Madras, 1942) p. 126.
64. Jaffur Shureeff, *op.cit.*, 30-32
65. Hasan Marakkayar, *op.cit.*, p.64; Syed Abdul Razack, *op.cit.*, p.46.
66. *Genesis* 21-4.
67. Quadir Hussain Khan, *op.*, cit. p.60; and particulars collected in field study in various coastal villages.
68. Jaffur Shureeff, *op.cit.*, p.36.
69. Quadir, Hussain Khan, *op.cit.*, p.36.
70. Jaffur, Shureeff *op.cit.*, pp. 278-881; T. Jayarajan, *op.cit.*, pp.97-78; Hassan Marakkayar *op.cit.*, pp. 70-8-; and particulars collected in field study.
71. S.G. Lakshmi "Tamil Muslims in Srilanka" unpublished M.Phil., Thesis, University of Madras, 1984. p. 119.
72. Jaffur Shureeff, *op.cit.*, pp. 285-187; Quadir Hussain Kahn, *op.cit.* pp. 77-78.
73. Particulars collected in an interview with prof. Naseema Banu of Karaikkal,
74. On matters relating to food habits; *Holy Quran* 2 : 173, 5:3 6 :118, 6:145; Syed Abdul Rajalk, *op.cit.*, p.34; Hasan Marakkayar, *op.*, cit., p. 87-88, Jaffur Shureeff, *op.cit.*, p.274-276; T.Jayarajan, *op.cit.*, p.49.
75. *South Indian Inscriptions* II, p. 93.
76. Quadir Hussain Khan, *op.cit.*, .46.
77. Particulars collected in field study in Nagore, Nagapattanam, Adirampattanam, Muthupettai, Tondi, Kilakkarai, Vedalai, Kayalpattanam and Kulasekarapattanam.
78. Saithakkathiru Marakkayar Thiruman Vazhthu, couplet, 323-417.

79. *ibid.*, couplet, 171.
80. *Holy Quran*, 30-21.
81. Mohamed Amin, *wisdom of the Prophet Mohamed*, (New Delhi, 1987).
82. *Holy - Quarn*, 2 : 226-233.
83. Mohamed Marmmuduke Pickthali, *The cultural side of Islam* (Madras, 1937) pp. 156.
84. *Holy Quran*, 4:3.
85. Mohamed Qutab, *Islam the Misunderstood Religion*, (New Delhi, 1986), pp. 90-131.
86. Particulars collected in an interview with Jaffur Muhyidden Marakkayar, Nagore.
87. M.M. Pickthall, *op.cit.*, pp. 139-141 and 145.
88. *Holy Quran*, 33:59.
89. Particulars collected in interviews in coastal Muslim settlements.
90. Sheik Rahim Mondal, *op.cit.*, pp.167-68; Report of Public Instructions 1901-1902, vol. II p.99; 1904-1905 vol. I p.30; 1926-27 vol. p. 123 and particulars collected in the field study.
91. Jaffur Shureeff, *op.cit.*, pp. 38-39.
92. *ibid.*, p. 41.
93. Ka. Mu. Sheriff, *op.cit.*, p. 109.
94. Thuzaki Wallajahi, pt. II p. 12; Susan Bayly p. 172.
95. Thuzaki Wallajahi, pt. II p. 89.
96. M.N. Pearson "Pious passengers - Motivation for the Haj from early modern India", paper presented in the International Symposium on Maritime History, Pondicherry University, February 1989.
97. Jaffur Shureeff, *op.cit.*, p. 150; Hassan Marakkayar, *op.cit.*, p. 101.

98. Jaffur Shureeff, *op.cit.*, p. 122 and 165.
99. Susan Bayly, *op.cit.*, p. 111.
100. S.M. Sulaiman and M.M. Ismail, *op.cit.* p. 7-8.
101. J.M. Salih *op.cit.*, p. 15.
102. Edward William Lane, *op.cit.*, pp. 70-73.
103. M. Abdul Rahim. "Dargah at Nagore", *Bulletin of the Institute of Traditional culture*, University of Madras (1973) Jan-June pp. 96-97.
104. *ibid.*
105. K. Appadurai, *History of South India (Madras 1971)* Vol. II, pp. 29-30.
106. M.M. Uwaise and P.M. Ajmalkhan, *op.cit.*, vol. I, pp. 129-130.
107. J. Rajamohamed "Worship in Dargahs and Cultural assimilation", paper presented in the Seminar conducted by the Society of Historical Studies, Tiruchirappalli, October 1982.
108. M. Abdul Rahim, *Dargah at Nagore*, *op.cit.*
109. J.R.A.S., (Bengal), Vol. XXII, 1885 p. 239.
110. Rengachari, *Incriptions of Madras Presidency*, Thanjavur District No. 893, A&B; K.S. Subramaniyan, *The Maratha kings of Tanjore* p.49. TNA. Tanjore District Records 3396, 11th, September 1785; *The journal of Saraswathi Mahal library* V.XX 1 No I, p. 28
111. S.M. Kamal, *Sethupathi Mannar Seppedugal*, *op.cit.*, pp. 472-496.
112. Ibn Batuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354* (Tr.) H.A.C., GIBBS, (London 1919), p. 97.
113. Susan Bayly, *op.cit.*, p.93
114. *ibid*, p. 134.
115. *ibid* p. 129.

116. J. Raja Mohamed worship in dargahs, op.cit., and particulars collected in various dargahs during field study.
117. Susan Bayly, op.cit. p. 145.
118. M. Abdul Rahim, Dargah at Nagore, op.cit.
119. Census Report of India 1911, Vol XII pt. II para 40. p. 101; Encyclopaedia and Ethics, Vol. II p. 64.
120. Tringham Spencer, J. *Islam in east Africa* (Oxford, 1963) p. 101; Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. II p.64.
121. For Arab Tamil, please see M.M. Uwaise, *Muslim contribution to Tamil literature*, (Kilakkarai 1990) p. 229-240; M.M. Meeran Pillai. "Arabic Tamilin Thotram" Research Bulletin of the Vth international conference seminar of Islamic Tamil literature, Kilakkarai 1990 pp. 335-347; A.M. Samy, *Islamia Themizh Idhazgal* (Madras, 1994) pp. 58-6.
122. Particulars collected in the field study in the coastal Muslim towns and villages.
123. Particulars collected among the Marakkayars in Coastal Town and Villages; M.S. Dalgoda, *Portuguese vocables in Asiatic Languages* (Rpt); New Delhi 1988); E.C. Knowlton, J.R "Portuguese Tamil Linguistic contacts" Proceedings of the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, Kulalampur 1986, vol. II, pp. 607-617.
124. Mary S. Sarjentson, *A History of Foreign words in English* (Bernard and Noble) (New York, 1961) p. 234.
125. VI. Subramaniyan "Muslim Literatures in Tamil, *Tamil Culture*" vol. IV, January, 1985, p. 75.
126. S.M. Sulaiman and M.M. Ismail, op.cit. p.8; J. Raja Mohamed, "Islamic Architecture in Tamil Nadu", (Chennai 2005)

Chapter VIII

CONCLUSION

The maritime trade of the natives was generally on the decline during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In that the maritime activities of the Muslims of the Coromandel met with drastic changes closely linked with the political conditions of the region. Islam was well established in peninsular India long before to the crystallisation of the medieval Muslim kingdom in north India. The age old trade contacts between the Arabs and Tamils were responsible for such a religious intercourse. Arab traders who frequented south Indian ports from the close of seventh century, came as the followers of the new faith, Islam. They married the women of the coast and settled down the permanently or semi permanently. They spread the message of Prophet Mohamed among the masses. The teaching of Islam caught the attention of the people of the peninsula, who were struggling for basic human rights in the then caste infested Hindu social system. The peaceful preachings of these merchants and the mystics who accompanied them, induced the underprivileged to embrace Islam and thus the process of Islamisation of peninsular India particularly in the Coromandal coast was peaceful and voluntary and Islam was not spread with sword as alleged by some historians. It is a historic fact that the Muslim rulers who were associated with

the politics of the Coromandel for some time had nothing to do with the spread of Islam. Evidences are wanting to prove their proselytizing activities.

The descendants of the Arabs through the native women and the people who embraced Islam who came to be called Marakkayars, Labbais and Rawthars (Sonakar, Thulukkar) continued the Arab maritime tradition and they dominated the maritime trade and allied activities in the Coromandel coast and were living in peace within the larger society as Tamils. The location of the ports and the commodities that were available for export were well suited for their overseas enterprises. Hence the maritime commerce of the Eastern lands and Ceylon was in their hands. They also took up the other maritime activities such as pearl fishing, ship building, manufacture of salt etc., for which the medieval native rulers granted many concessions. They have contributed a honourable share towards the economic development of the Coromandel region by their maritime activities. The coming of the Europeans was a shocking challenge to their economic enterprises.

The maritime trade potential was the chief motive behind the economic invasion of the Europeans on the Coromandel. The local rulers extended a red carpet welcome to all these Europeans and encouraged their trading activities at the cost of the native traditional trading community including the Muslims. The native rulers big and small were fighting among themselves and freely allied with the aliens and they never chose to unite in chasing away the foreign predators. They tolerated their misdeeds political, economic and religious. The European colonial powers utilised the confused political condition of the region and developed

themselves and the local rulers were silent spectators. Thus the interest of their subjects and the economic wellbeing became the first casualty in the efforts of the native rulers to perpetuate themselves in power.

The English who emerged as supreme power in land and sea from the third quarter of the eighteenth century and the native rulers fell a prey to their economic and political ambition. The English who came for trade to our land crowned themselves as custodians of traditional empires. In the confused political condition, maritime trade and other maritime activities slipped from the hands of the natives. The Europeans' economic dominance created a new capitalistic order for which the natives were no match. The white race competed with the native traders including the Muslims in all trade and industry. The European administrators prepared the Parayas and other non trading castes against the Muslims and these people became local competitors to the Muslims. The Muslims also did not rise up and respond suitably to overcome such challenges.

The Coromandel Muslims did not attain any political significance at any point of time and they kept away from the warring groups. They lost their power and position gradually from the beginning of sixteenth century. When the Europeans took over the affairs in the Southeast Asian countries it had serious consequences on the trading activities of the Coromandel Muslims. Arasaratnam has pointed out rightly that from the middle of the eighteenth century the native traders including the Marakkayars and Labbais were very much on their own continuing their operations in an unfriendly environment both at home and abroad with risk and lesser profit.

The economic and ethnic policies of the English were harmful to the trading activities of the Muslims. The Muslims were the most affected under the English administration. They were docile themselves and retreated, like snails into their shells, whenever their freedom and privileges were threatened. They had no State patronage, financial, military or political. With all their effective trade experience they proved to be the survivors till the second half of the nineteenth century but they could not continue their trade operations in the growing modern capitalistic pattern.

Though the Muslims were the largest group of shipowning maritime merchants upto the eighteenth century the superior naval power technology and capital resources of the Europeans made them sink to paupery. Combined with their economic marginalisation the absence of awareness about modern world capitalism, neglect of modern education and technology, disunity among them in economic ventures and their satisfaction with the residual opportunities at their disposal made them an insignificant economic force by 1900. But they did not feel the necessity of waking up from the slumber. The Coromandel Muslims who were ruling the waves of the oceans employing thousands of people had to run desperately in search of alternative jobs and business ventures at home and in abroad.

From the available source materials an overall view of Coromandel trade could easily be drawn. Segregating the Muslim trading community for the study was indeed a difficult job. A sincere attempt has been made here to throw some new light on that commercial and other economic activities their hitherto remained unexplored in the archival volumes.

and historical facts left unnoticed in dark corners. This is the first effort in this direction. Material evidences on the subject are available only minimally even in the archival sources. The study of a few original Dutch records relating to this peirod could have given some more information but it was not possible. The descendants of the traditional maritime Muslim families do not possess much materials on their past nor are they very serious about it. However data collected from all the possible sources have been pooled together to present a micro view on the maritime activities of the Muslims during this period. No doubt their share for the economic development of the region was substantial but from the available data at our disposal it was not possible to quantify their exact share in the Coromandel trade during the period of our study.

Sociological studies have revealed very interesting aspects about the community. To the converts the Dravidian - Tamil culture was close to their hearts. They retained with them their old and traditional customs and it was not a hindrance to the Islamic way of life. They share many of the social customs of the co-religionists. The Hindu social order has been influenced by Islamic culture in many respects. i.e. in food, dress, worship, widow remarriage, property rights to women etc. But Muslim society has been also affected by the influence of the larger society, the one important example being the reprehensible dowry menace. The social customs of the Muslims have been handed down by tradition from the early days of Islam in this land. The study on the social behaviour of the Muslims shows that their social customs and practices are a continuing process from remote antiquity to the present day.

The Tamil Muslim society of the Coromandel present a homogenous character with other Tamil castes and communities. This is the special feature of Tamil Muslim society and such a strong harmony cannot be seen in other parts of the country. To quote an example, the Mappillas of the western coast, whose history is similar to that of the Coromandel Muslims, yet they do not constitute such a homogenous group for certain ethnographical and political reasons. In principle Islamic society is totally egalitarian. But certain social disabilities among the Coromandel Muslim population will prompt one to think that the Coromandel Muslim society has been affected by caste like organisation (Jathi). In support of this view some authors have pointed out the different sect names, sub sect names, caste like appellations (Rawthar, Labbai, Marakkayar etc) matrimonial alliance only with in the sects, and sub sects, separate mosques for different sects, separate residential localities for some sub sects and so on. Further these authors have also argued that the equality in the prayer hall (mosque) is not maintained outside it. But these are mere casual observations. The segregations are more economical than religious. Islamic society is always mobile socially and when one climbs up the ladder the stigma cast on him vanishes and thus the lowest can become equal with the socially and economically well placed. Hence there is no permanent incompatibility for a Muslim as in the case of a Hindu where caste is a stigma. Thus the social mobility is an important aspect in Islamic society. The various customs and practices followed by the Coromandel Muslims in day-to-day life have shown that they go with the larger society in most of the cultural affairs. The contribution of the Muslims to language, literature,

mysticism, medicine, astronomy, astrology and arts and architecture have given them and honoured status in the society. Their religious attitude is always one of tolerance. They are cordial with the people of other religions. Our study of the social structure here is limited. A detailed study on the linguistic and cultural aspects of their life may yield much more material for comparative sociological analyses.

To conclude, with regard to the maritime trade and commerce towards the end of nineteenth century the Muslims of the Coromandel (Tamil Nadu) who were the rulers of waves and merchant princes at home and king makers and economic builders in far off countries met with their Waterloo not to rise again in the maritime world. They themselves have conveniently forgotten their glorious past. Yet their deeds glitter in the pages of history.

Appendix

Text of the Copper Plate said to have been issued to the Marakkayars of Kayalpattanam (see page 49-51)

செங்கோல் செலுத்தும் தெசுஷணா பூமிக்கு தெற்கு, கன்னிக்கு வடக்கு, மன்னார் வடமேல் குதிரை மலைக்கு மேற்கு, கன்னி முதல் - சேலமகரம் ஒழுமலைக்குக் கிழக்கு, பாண்டி மண்டலம் (16) தேசத்திற்குத் தேசாதிபதி அபிராம ராம அதிராஜ ராஜ ஜெயவீர ராஜாக்கர் கர்த்தர்கள் (78) பாளையத்தாருக்கும் ஓர்குடைச் செங்கோல் செலுத்தித் திரையாதிக்கமுடைய மகாமண்டலேஸ்வரன், மூவராய கண்டன், பாண்டிமண்டல பரமேஸ்வரன் சோழமண்டலம் (24) காதுமுடைய மன்னரை அரசு நிறுத்தித் திரைகொள்ளும் மஹாவிஷ்ணு கிரகாயுதர்மன், பொதிய மாமலைப் பாரகமுனி, மதுரை துரைத்தனம் அஷ்ட சம்பந்த ராஜாதிராஜன், திங்கள் சுத்த வம்மிசுப் பிருமம் தெசுஷணா பூமி செங்கோல் செலுத்தும் நாயனி, எழுந்தருளித் திருநகரி கொலுவீற்றிருக்குங் கர்த்தரை, அறபி நாட்டு மிசறு தேசாதிபதியின் கொடுங்ககோலுக்கஞ்சி, மரக்கலை, யாத்திரையாய்க் கர்த்தர்களிற் தேசச் செம்பி நாட்டில் பாசறை வகுத்துக் கர்த்தர்களின் சமூகங் கொடுத்து அந்நாட்டிற் குடியேறியிருக்கத் தாமிரப்பட்டயமுங் கொடுக்கும்படி கேட்டுக் கொண்டவர்களின் வம்மிசமும் எண்ணிக்கையும்.

ஆசீம் வம்சத்தார் (23) நாச்சியார் பெண்டு (6) அடிமை (4) பக்கிரி வம்சத்தார் (36) நாச்சியார் பெண்டு (3) அடிமை (7) பாறுக்கு வம்மிசத்தார் (43) நாச்சியார் பெண்டு (34) அடிமை (12) உமையா வம்மிசத்தார் (14) நாச்சியார் பெண்டு (5) அடிமை (2) ராணுவ யுத்தர் (16) பெண் (6) ஷேவரகன் (3) பெண் 11 இவர்கள் ஒரு மனப்பட்டு, முகம்மதுகில்ஜிக்குத் தாமிரப்பட்டயங் கொடுக்கக் கேட்டுக் கொண்டபடியால் இந்தக் குடியானவர்கள் மிசறு தேசத்து காயிறான் ஊரில் வசித்து வந்தவர்களானபடியால், தாமிரப்பட்டயங் கொடுக்குமுருக்கு காயிறுன்பட்டணம் என்ற நாமமும் மரக்கலை, யாத்திரையாக வந்ததற்காக இவர்களுக்கு மரக்காலராயர், என்று நாமமும், நாம் கூட்டித் தாமிரப்பட்டயங் கொடுக்க உத்தரமருளி அரண்மனையார் கற்பித்தது.

தூதுகுடி மாரியம்மன் கோயிலுக்கு மேற்கு, சிவந்தாகுளம், முத்தையாபுரம், முள்ளக்காடு, கோபுரங்காடு, மஞ்சனக்காயல், கொற்கை, குலைநெல்கரிசை, முக்காணி கொலுவத்துரை, ஆற்றூர், அதைச்சேர்ந்த மங்கலம், சொக்கப்பிள்ளைகரை, பின்னைக்காயல், ஆவரங்காடு, தண்ணீர்பந்தல், கீரனூர், நல்லூர், அம்மன்புரம், பள்ளிபத்து மணற்காடு, ராஜமன்னியபுரம், வீரபாண்டியன், மங்கலபாடி, இவைகளடங்கிய குடிகளுக்கு, முகம்மது கல்ஜி மரைக்கரையன் கற்பனையும் அவனுக்கு இறைவரி செலுத்தக் கடமையும் பளமும், பள்ளிப்பத்து, அம்மன்புரங்கண்டு முதல் லாபத்தில், ஜெய ஆலயங்கள் கட்டப் பாதியும், தண்ணீர் பந்தல் கண்டு

முதலில் மரக்கலராயனுக்கு பாதியும், பளமும், கன்னி முதல் மன்னார் மணல் மேடு, ராமேஸ்வரம் வரை இந்த குடியான ஜனங்கள், சலாப முத்துகுளிக்க அம்பள உம்பளமும், தூதுகுடி, மாரியம்மன் கோவிலுக்கு தோணி 1க்கு (20) முத்துச்சிப்பியும் மரக்கலராயனுக்கு தோணி 1க்கு (30) முத்துச்சிப்பியும், சத்தசன் லாசருக்கு (20) முத்துச்சிப்பியும் அம்பளவும்பள நித்தமும்.

அந்தந்த வருஷமும் மகர மாசத்தையில் அரண்மனைக்கு மரக்கலராயன் (1000) பொன்னும் உப்பு லாபத்தில் (10) பொன்னுக்கு (25) பொன்னும் செலுத்தி விட கடமையும், ஒரு பொன் எடையும் அதற்கு மேற்பட்ட ஆணி முத்தம், வலம்புரிச் சங்கும், அகப்பட்டால் அவைகளை மாக்கலராயன், அரண்மனைக்கு சகல மேள வாத்யங்களுடன், செலுத்திட அரண்மனைக் கற்பனையும்.

அரண்மனையார் உத்தரவிற்கு நாஞ்சி நாட்டுஅதிபன் கொடுத்த வண்ணான் (5) ரெட்டியார் பட்டி பாளைய சிறுஷ்ணன் நாயக்கன் கொடுத்த புதியமுத்தூர் மேள வாத்தியக்காரன் (5)க்கும், குடியானவர்கள் சிலவு கொடுத்துக் கொள்ளவும். பக்கிரி வம்மிசத் தலைவன் முகமது கல்ஜி மரக்கலராயன் தேசாதிபதி பாறுக்கு வம்சத் தலைவன் உமரு மஸ் சூறு நியாயாதிபன், ஆசிம் வம்சத் தலைவன் கமாலதீன் கடலதிபதி உமயா வம்சத் தலையன், சுபைறு அடையல், முடையல், ஊர்மணியன் ராணுவ யுத்தர்கள், ஊர்க்காவல், நாட்டுக்காவல், கன்னி முதல் சேலமகரம் வரையுள்ள அரண்மனை குதிரைப்படிகளில் இந்தக் குடியானவர்கள் குதிரை விற்பனை செய்து கொள்வதை அரண்மனை காவலர், பாளைக் காவலர், தடை செய்யக்கூடாது சந்திராதிக்கம் சந்திர சூரிய பிரவேசமுள்ள வரைக்கும் அம்பள உம்பள கதந்தர ராசு.

முகம்மது கல்ஜி மரக்கலராயன் வசதியான தளங்கண்டு குடியேறி இருக்கும்படி கர்த்தனாகிய ஜெய வீர ராஜ் காரு நாயனி, இந்தத் தாமிரப் பட்டயங் கொடுத்தோம் திருவண்ணாமலை, பழனிக்கார், மீனாசுடி, பத்மநாபர் நெல்லையப்பர், சுப்பிரமணி, மாரியம்மன், மும்மூர்த்தி, அகஸ்தியர், இராமச்சந்திரர் இந்த சுவாமிகளின் பேரில் சத்தியும் தப்பாது.

சகாப்தம் (799) ம் ஆண்டு கீலக வருஷம் மீன மாசம் சுக்கிர வாரம் உத்திர வேளையில் ஏலினவாரு சாமியானவர்கள் கையொப்பமிட்டுக் கண்ட வாசகத்தை, மதுரை ஜகந்நாத பிள்ளை கவிச் சக்கரவர்த்தி, கற்பகமடலில் வரிந்து ஏலினவாரு சாமி ஜக வீர ராஜ் காரு நாயனி அவர்கள் வரந்தரு சித்தத்தின் பஞ்ச பூதமும் ஓம் என்ற ஒரு மொழிகொண்டு இருக்கும் வேளையில் தளவாய் பழனி நாயக்கர் மொழிச்சொல்லுக்கு இந்த தாமிரப் பட்டயம் வெட்டி வரைந்து எழுதினேன். வீரவநல்லூர் கணகமூர்த்தி யாசாரி.

ஒப்பம் : ஜெகந்நாத பிள்ளை கவிச் சக்கரவர்த்தி

ஒப்பம் ; (தெலுங்கில்) தளவாய் பழனி நாயக்கர்

Select Glossary

<i>Allah</i>	God
<i>Alim (p.Ulama)</i>	Expert in Islamic theology
<i>Azan</i>	Summon to the faithful for prayer, proclaimed by the Mouzin from the mosque.
<i>Barakath</i>	Power (boon) conferred on Muslim by the grace of God.
<i>Bismilla</i>	"In the name of God (Allah)", an expression frequently used by Muslims especially when commencing a work.
<i>Burkah</i>	Loose garment worn by Muslim women generally of black colour covering the entire body with vieled opening for the eyes.
<i>Circumcision</i>	Operation of the foreskin of the penis of Muslim boys. It is a sunnat (Tradition) for Muslims.
<i>Dargah</i>	Tomb Shrine of the Muslim saints
<i>Eedgah</i>	Place of festival prayer
<i>Farmen</i>	Written order issued by a ruler
<i>Furz</i>	Injunction
<i>Fatheeha</i>	Invocation The opening chapter of Quran called Sura Fatheeha is usually read as a part of the invocation to God (Allah) or the Prophet or a Saint
<i>Hadheesh</i>	Traditional Record i.e., the recorded saying of the Prophet It is the tradition to follow Mohamed what the Holy Prophet had said and did.
<i>Haj</i>	Pilgrimage to Mecca
<i>Haji</i>	A person who have performed Haj
<i>Hakim</i>	Doctor or specialist in medicine.

<i>Hanbali</i>	A school of Islamic Jurisprudence among the Sunni Muslims. This rejects the concensus of the learned scholars as unlawful and depends upon the actual wordings of the sunna as a source of Islamic law.
<i>Hanafi</i>	A school of Islamic Jurisprudence among the Sunni Muslims which rejects and method of ijma.
<i>Hijira</i>	The Prophet's journey from Medina to Mecca, the Muslim era commences from this year ie., AD 622.
<i>Halal</i>	Permissible in Islam
<i>Ijma</i>	The consensus of the companions of the Prophet Mohamed or the learned Muslim scholars of subsequent periods as a authentic source of Islamic laws on the aspects, which are not clear either from Quran or Hadheesh.
<i>Imam</i>	Religious leader and also to mean the religious specialist who lead the congregational prayer.
<i>Islam</i>	It is derived from Arabic root, "SLM", meaning peace, submission or obedience. In religious sense Islam means submission to the will of god (Allah) and obedience to his laws.
<i>Islamisation</i>	It is a "Cultural process" where by groups and individuals distinguish themselves and behave according to Islamic prescription and Islamic view of life.
<i>Jamath</i>	Committee of the elders of the Muslims of a particular area where a mosque is situated.
<i>Kaba</i>	The sacred house of prayer in Mecca (the first Mosque)
<i>Kafin</i>	White cloth that cover the dead body before placing into the grave.

<i>Khalifa</i>	Sovereign; a successor of the Prophet Mohamed with authority both in religious and civil administration.
<i>Khutba</i>	Sermon delivered on every Friday before the Jumma prayer.
<i>Kalima</i>	Verses of Islamic confession of faith.
<i>Kanthoori</i>	Muslim festival commemorating the death of a saint .
<i>Mahalla</i>	Muslim residential area adjacent to a mosque.
<i>Mahar</i>	Dowry to be given by the groom to his bride at the time of marriage, it is compulsory of the part of the groom.
<i>Maliki</i>	A school of Islamic jurisprudence among the Sunni Muslims founded by Iman Abu Malik.
<i>Masjid</i>	Mosque, place of worship of Muslims.
<i>Masoola</i>	A wide bottomed boat with timber sewn together with coir, plying in the Coromandel coast.
<i>Maulid</i>	Religious discourse by recitation of religious verses, usually held on various socio-religious functions and also on the birth anniversary of the Prophet Mohamed.
<i>Maulavi</i>	Muslim priest and teacher.
<i>Mauzin</i>	The person attached to the mosque to perform the duty of announcemet of the time of prayer by reciting Azan.
<i>Miladun Nabi</i>	Birth Anniversary of the Pophet Mohamed.
<i>Namaz</i>	The Islamic prayer or worship
<i>Nikah</i>	Marriage
<i>pir</i>	Muslim saint
<i>Purdah</i>	Women's veile

<i>Salam</i>	The Islamic way of greeting with the right hand raised to the forehead as a mark of respect.
<i>Shariat</i>	The sacred laws of Islam. The main source of its guidance is the Quran and Hadheesh.
<i>Shafi</i>	A school of Islamic jurisprudence among the Sunni Muslims founded by Imam As Shafi. This School accepts the method of Ijma and consider it valid.
<i>Shiah</i>	A sect of Muslims who believe that Ali, the Son-in-law of the Prophet, to have been the rightful successor of Prophet Mohamed. They reject Abubakkar, Umar and Usman, the first three Khalifas.
<i>Sheerini</i>	Sweet distributed after religious functions.
<i>Sufi</i>	Muslim spiritualist and adept in the disciplines of Muslim devotional mysticism.
<i>Sunna</i>	The percepts and practices of Prophet Mohamed.
<i>Sunnat</i>	Religious obligation (traditional obligation) for sunni Muslim sect.
<i>Sunni</i>	Orthodox Muslim, so called because they believe in sunnath. They rever equally the four successor (Khalifas) of Prophet Mohamed viz. Abubakker, Umar, Usamn and Ali, who are considered as legal successors in the order in which they stand. It is the largest Muslim sect in the world.
<i>Talak</i>	An utterance of declaring divorce by a Muslim
<i>Urus</i>	Celebration in the name of peers and Aulia. (Muslim Saint)

- Wuzu* Ritual purification of the body prior to prayer.
- Zakath* An Islamic approach of tax payment for the relief of poor. Economically solvent Muslims are obliged to pay zakat, which is 2 1/2 % of the total value of the property every year. It is property tax and not Income tax.
- Ziyarath* Homage to the dead.

Bibliography

Interviews

Intensive field studies were undertaken to identify the descendants of the eastwhile leading Muslim maritime families and some of the information are based on the interviews from the members of such families. In the course of the interview, the family records in their possession were also scrutinised. Interviews were taken up on a vast stretch of Coromandel Coastal town such as Pulicat, Madras, Pondichery, Cuddalore, PortoNovo, Nagore, Nagapattanam, Tranquebar, Karaikkal, Thirumalairajapattanam, Thirumullaivasal, Adiram pattinam, Muthupet, Thopputhurai, Kottaipattanam, Kattumavadi, Tondi, Mandapam, Rameswaram, Vedalai, Periapattanam, Kilakkarai, Kayalpattanam, Kulasekara pattanam and Colachel.

Government Records

India Office Library, London

Factory Records

For St. George Records

Cuddalore Records

Strait settlement Records

Tamil Nadu Archives

Dutch Records

Commercial Department 1788-94

Commercial Despatches to England

Cuddalore Consultations

Despatches from England

Despatches to England

Fort St. David consulation

Fort St. George Dairy and Consulation Books 1740-1755.

Fort St. George Public Department Proceedings from 1857

Fort St. George Public Consultation

Judicial Consultation

Madras Board of Revenue Proceedings 1792-1898.

Madras District Records.

Madras Military Consulation 1794-1800

Madras Military Country Correspondence

Madras Public Department Sundries

Madras Revenue Department Sundries

Madurai District Records

Marine consultations

Military Despatches to England

Mayors court Records Minutes 1736-58

Native Newspaper Reports

Political Despatches to England

Ramnad District Records

Secret Consultations

South Arcot District Records

Tanjore District Records

Thirunelveli District Records

Inscriptions and Manuscripts.

Annual Reports of Epigraphy

Elements of South Indian Palaeography, 1878, (Burnel)

Epigraphia Carnatica

Epigraphia Indica

Inscription of Pudukkottai State

Memoris of Archaeological Survey of India

South Indian Incriptions Vol. I-VI

Inscriptions of Madras Presidency, Rangacharya

Thanjavur Saraswathi Mahal Modi scripts (Tr)

Tranvancore Archaeological Series.

Literary works and Devotional Texts

Ahananuru

Ainkurunuru

Amukthamalyatha

Genesis

Holy Quran

Kalaviyarkarikal

Kalingathupparani

Kambaramayanam

Kandar Alankaram

Kappal Sasthram

Koyilolugu

Kuothungacholan Pillai Tamil

Kurunthogai

Kutub Nayagam

Maduraikanchi

Mahavamsa

Madurai Thalavaralaru

Manimekalai

Mihuraj Malai

Mullaippattu

Muthollayiram

Naladiar

Nannool

Narrinai

Nedunalvadai

Old Testament

Pathirruppathu

Pattinappallai

Periapuranam

Perumpanatruppadai

Perungathai

Prabandha Thirattu

Raghunatha Bhyudhayamu

Rajanayakam

Sahithyarathanakara

Saithakkathiru Marakkayar Thirumana Vazhthu

Seerapuraman

Seethakkathi Nondinatakam

Silappadikaram

Sirupanarruppadai

Thayurmanavar Thiruppadal

Thirupperundari Puranam

Thiruvilaiyadal Puranam

Tholkappiam

Thirukkurrala Kuravanji

Thirukkural

Aini - Akbari - 3 vols

Fat - hud - dayyan - (tr)

Tuhfat - ul - Mulahidin, of Zainuddin (tr)

Manuals and Gazetteers

A Gazetteer of Southern India with the Tennaserim provinces and Sigapore (Madras 1855)

Gazetteer of Union Territory of Pondicherry (1982)

Imperial Gazetteer of India (1886)

Madurai, Baliga, B.S., (Madras 1960)

Malabar, Logon, Willaim 2 Vols. (Madras 1951)

Pudukkottai, Gopalakrishna Gandhi (Madras 1983)

South Arct, Francis, W. (Madras 1906)

Ramanathapuram, Ramaswamy, A. (Madras 1872)

Tanjore, Hemigway F.R. Vo. I. (Madras 1906)

Tanjore, Baliga, B.S. (Madras 1957)

Tinnelveli, Pate, H.R. Vol. I (Madras 1917)

Tiruchirappalli, Hemigway, F.R. (Madras 1907)

Garstin J.H. *A Manual of South Arcot District* (Madras 1878)

Rajaram Rao *T. Ramanad District Manual* (Madras 1933)

Venkatarama Iyer, K.R. *A Manual of Pudukkottai State,* 3 Vols. (Pudukkottai 1938-44)

Venkatasamy Rao, T., *Manual of Tanjore District* (Madras 1883)

OFFICIAL RECORDS

Administration Report of Madras Presidency (Prior to 1900)

Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy (ARE)

Annual Volumes of Seaborne Trade (Madras)

Fifth Report of East India Company

Fourth Report of East India Company

Indian Law Reporter, Madras Series Vol. XXII (1899)

Madras Census Report, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911

Official Hand Book of Madras, James. E.R. (Madras, 1935)

Memorandum of Madras Presidency, Vol. I and II

Report of Customs Committee, Madras (1821)

Report of External commerce (1802)

Report of Public Service Commission, 1886-87
(Calcutta, 1888)

Report of Public Instructions, 1901-1902, 1904-1905,
1926-1927.

Published Records, Contemporary Accounts and Monographs

Abdul Azeez, I.L.M. *Ilankai Sonakar Ina Varalaru*
(Colombo 1907)

Abdul Hakkim, N., and Abdul Rajack, N., *Sethunattu Periathambi Vallal Seethakkathi*, (Madras 1991)

Abdul Lthiff, K.S., *Kayalpattanam*, (Kayalpattanam 1993)

Affonso de Albuquerque, *Cartaz Para El. Rei D.*, Manual I, (Lisbon, 1957)

Aitchison, C.U. *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, Sanads, Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries* 5 Vols. (Calcutta, Government Press 1909).

Akmal Ayyubi, N., *Some Aspects of Islamic Turkish Culture* (Aligarh, 1985)

Alfred Chatterson, A., *A Note on Chrome Tanning in Madras Presidency* (1906); *Tanning and working in Leather in Madras Presidency* (1904)

Ameer Ali, N.A., *Vallal Seethakkathiyin Vazhvum Kalamum* (Madras, 1983)

Andaya, B.W., *Perak, The abode of Grace, A study on an Eighteenth Century Malay State* (Kualalampore, 1975)

Andaya, L.Y. *The Kingdom of Johore 1641,-1728, Economic and Political Development* (Kualalampore, 1975)

Appadurai, A., *Economic Condition of South India 1000-1500 A.D.*, 2 Vols. (University of Madras, 1990); *Thenninthiya Varalaru* (Madras, 1971)

Arunachalam, S., *The History of Pearl Fishery of Tamil Coast* (Anamali Nagar 1952) Baldaeus, *Discription About Malabar, Coromandel and Ceylon in the later half of Seventeenth Century* (Tr) church hills Collections.

Barbosa, Duarte (M.L. Dames' (ed). *The Book of Duarte Barbosa - An Account of the Countries Bordering on the Indian Ocean and Their Inhabitants* 2 Vols (London Hakluyt Society, 1918)

Bayly, Susan, *Saints Goddesses and Kings - Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society* (Cambridge, 1989).

Benedetto, L.F., (ed) *The Travels of Marcopolo* (Tr.) Aldo Ricci (London 1931).

Bourey, Thomas., *Geographical Account of Countries Around the Bay of Bengal* (1669-1679) (Cambridge, 1905)

Boxer, C.R., *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415-1825* (London, 1969)

Burhan Ibn. Hasan., *Thuzak i - Walajahi Part I* (Tr.) S.Mohamed Hussain Nainar (Madras 1934) *Thuzak - i - Walajahi part II, From the battle of Ambur 1162 AH to the Capture of Pondichery 1174 HA (1749-1761 AD)* (Tr.) S. Mohamed Hussain Nainar (Madras 1939).

Caldwell, Robert., *A political and General History of the District of Tinnelveli in the Presidency of Madras from the Earliest Period to it's Cession to the English Government in AD 1801* (1881, Rpt. New Delhi, 1989)

Cambridge History of India vol V.

Cartaz De Affonso - De Albuquerque in 7 vols. (Lisban 1884-1935).

Chatterji C. Nikshoy., *A History of Modern Middle East* (New Delhi, 1987)

Chouduri K.N., *The Trading world of Asia and the English East India Company 1660-1760* (Cambridge, 1978)

Costelloe Joseph, M., *Franchis Xavier - His life, His time* Vol. II, India 1541-45 (Rome, Italy 1977)

Cotton C.W.E. *Hand Book of Commercial informations for India* (Trivandrum, 1878)

Dale, Stephen, F., *Islam and Social Conflicts - The Mopillas of Malabar 1498-1922* (Oxford, 1980).

Danvers, Frederick Charles., *The Portuguese in India* 2 vols. (1894; (Rept.) New Delhi, 1988).

Dodwell, Henry., *The Nabobs of Madras* (New Delhi (Rpt), 1986)

- Dodwell H., (ed) *The Private Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai* 12 vols (1928) (Rpt) New Delhi 1985)
- Earl, G.W., *The Eastern Seas*, (London 1971).
- Elliot, H.M. and John Dowson., (ed) *The History of India As Told By Her Own Historians*, 8 volumes (London 1921).
- Elphinstone, *History of India* (London, 1857)
- Ethiraj, N., *Kappalin Vralaru*, (Madras 1990).
- Forster Willium (ed) *English Factories in India (1618-1669)* in 13 vols (Oxford, 1906-27)
- Furber, Holden., *Jane Company At Work - A study of European Expansion in India in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1961)
- Habibullah, A.B.M., *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (Allahabad, 1967)
- Hall, D.G.E., *A History of South East Asia* (London 1955)
- Hall, Kennath. R., *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of Chloas* (New Delhi, 1980)
- Hitti, P.K., *The History of Arabs*
- Hornel, James, *The Chank Shell cult in India* (Bombay 1942); *Sacred Chank of India A monograpy of the Indian conch Turbinella Pyrum*, Madras Fisheries Bulletin Buereau, Bulletin No. 7, (Madras, 1914).
- Ibrahim Kunju, A.P., *Studies in Medieval Kerala* (Kerala Historical Society, Trivandrum, 1975)
- Ibn Batuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa 1325 - 1354* (Tr) HAC. Gibbs (London, 1991)
- Idris Marakkayar, M., *Keerthimigum Keelakkarai*, (Madras, 1990); *Naanilam Potrum Nannagar Kilakkarai* (Madras,1990)

Jacob Sethi, Mesrevob, *Armenians in India (1937)* (Rept. New Delhi, 1992)

Jaffur Shureeff, *Qunoon - I - Islam or the Customs of Mussalmans of India, Comprising of Full and Exact Account of Birth till the Hour of Death (1863; Rpt. New Delhi, 1991)*

Jamila Brijbushan. *Mulsim women In and Out of It* (Vikas publishing House, New Delhi, 1990)

Jayakumar, P., *Tamilaka Thuraimukangal*, (Thanjavur 2001)

Jayaseela, stephen., *Portugeuse in the Tamil Coast (1507-1749)* (Pondicherry 1998); *The Coromandel Coast and its hinterland (1500-1600)* (New Delhi 1997)

John Baker, Christopher., *The Indian Rural Economy 1850-1955, The Tamil Nadu Country Side* (Oxford, 1984).

Jones, J.W., (ed) *The Itenerary of Lodovico Varthama of Blogna from 1502 to 1508* (London, 1928)

Kail, Owen, C. *The Dutch in India* (Macmillan, New Delhi, 1981)

Kamal, S.M., *Muslimgalum Tamilgamum* (Madras, 1990); *Sethupathi Mannar Seppedugal* (Ramanathapuram 1992).

Kanakasabai Pillai, V, *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago* (1904)

Kanniah, K., *Cuddalore on the Coromandel Coast under the English 1690-1939. A study in urbanisation* (IRISH Tellicherry 2002)

Kaye, J.W, *Administration of the East India Company 1773-1834* (Oxford, 1951)

Kernial Singh Sandhur, *Indians in Malaya, immigration and Settlements 1786-1887* (New Delhi, 1969)

- Krishna Iyer, K.V., *A Short History of Kerala* (Ernakulam, 1966)
- Khokan, Mohamed Yusuff., *Arabic and Persian in Carnatic 1710-1960* (Madras, 1974)
- Krishnaswamy Iyengar, S., *South India and it's Mohamadan Invaders* (1921; Rpt. New Delhi, 1991)
- Krishnaswamy, Dr., *The Tamil Country under Vijayanagar* (Annamalai Nagar, 1964)
- Lane Edward William., *Arabian Society in the Middle Ages* (New Jersey, 1987)
- Lockman, John., *Travels of the Jesuits 2 vols* (London , 1943)
- Lothawn, R.E., *Travels of Marcopolo* (Tr) (London, 1958)
- Love, H.D., *Vestiges of Old Madras, 3 vols* (Madras, 1913)
- Macleans C.D., *A Manual of Madras Presidency 2 vol.* (Madras 1885); *Glossary of Madras Presidency*, Madras.
- Magbul Ahamed, S., *Indo Arab Relations* (New Delhi, 1978)
- Majumdar, R.C., *British Paramountacy and Indian Renaissance Pt. I*, (Bombay, 1965)
- Manickam, M., *Trade and commerce in Pondicherry 1701-1793* (IRISH, Tellicherry 2001)
- Mary S. Serjentson, *A History of Foreign words in English* (Bernand and Noble) (New York, 1961)
- Mathew, K.S., *Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth Century* (New Delhi, 1983)
- Mellesan, G.B. *History of French in India* (1893) London)
- Mohamed Hasan Marakkayar, M.E., *Marakkayar Samookam Oor Aaivu* (Madras, 1991)

Mohamed Qutab, *Islam the Misunderstood Religion* (New Delhi, 1989)

Mookerji R.K., *History of Indian shipping, A history of the Sea borne Trade and Maritime activities of Indian from the earliest times* (Calcutta 1957)

Motichandra, *Trade and Trade Rutes in Ancient India* (New Delhi, 1977)

More, J.B.P., *Muslim Identify Print culture and the Dravidan Factor in Tamil Nadu* (New Delhi 2004)

Mooreland, W.H., *Akbar to Aurangazab - A study in Indian Economic History - (London, 1923) ; India at the death of Akbar* (New Delhi 1989)

Mujib, M., *The Indian Muslims* (London, 1967)

Nainar, S.M.H., (Tr) *Arab Geographer's Knowledge of South India, University of Madras (Madras 1946) Tuhfat - al - Mujahidin of Zainudin, (Madras, 1942)*

Nambiar, O.K., *Kunjali Admirals of Calicut* (London, 1963)

Nieuhoff John, *Voyages and Travels in Brazil and the East Indies 1705*, (Tr.) Churchills collections.

Nilakanta Sastri, K.A. *Foreign Notices in South India. (Madras 1939); Pandya Kingdom (London, 1929)*

Nilakanda Sastri, K.A., and Vekataramanayya N., *Further Soruces of vijayanagar History, 3 vols (Madras, 1946)*

Orms, Robert, *History of Military transactions of the British Nations in Indostan 3 vols (1803 (Rpt) Madras, 1861-2).*

Panikkar, K.M. *Malabar and Portuguese 1500 - 1665 (Bombay, 1929)*

- Parry, J.H., *The Discovery of the sea* (London, 1974)
- Pearson, M.N., *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat the Response to the Portuguese in 16th Century* (Berkley, 1976); *Coastal Western India Studies from Portuguese Records* (New Delhi, 1981)
- Peter Floris, *His Voyages to the East Indies in the Globe 1611-1615* (ed) W.H. Mooreland (London, Hawklyut Society, 1934)
- Philip, C.H., *The East India Company and South Indian Economy* (Madras, 1980)
- Pickthal Mohamed Marmaduke., *The Cultural Side of Islam* (Madras, 1937)
- Playne, Somerset., *South Inida its History, People, Commerce and Industrial Resources* (London 1914-1915)
- Poonan, T.I., *The Dutch beginning in India proper* - (1920)
- Periplus of Enrithrean sea and Voyages of Nearchus*, (Tr) William Wincent.
- Quadir Hussain Khan, *South Indian Mussalmans* (Madras, 1910)
- Radhakrishna Iyer S., *A. History of Pudukkottai State* (Pudukkottai, 1916)
- Rajayyan, K., *A. History of British Diplomacy in Thanjavur; A History of Madurai 1736-1801* (Madurai 1974)
- Raghavan, R., *Nam Nattu Kappal Kalai* (Madras, 1968)
- Raju, S. *Thanjai Marattiar Kalvettugal* (Tamil University, Thanjavur, 1987); *Tanjai Marattia Mannar Seppedgal* - 50 (Tamil University, Thanjavur, 1983)

Ramachandaran, C., *East India Company and South Indian Economy* (Madras, 1980)

Ram Gopal, A, *Political History of Indian Muslims* (New Delhi, 1988)

Ramakrishna Mukharjee, *The Rise and Fall of East India Company* (Bombay 1973)

Ramasamy, N.S., *Political History of Carnatic under the Nawabs* (New Delhi, 1984)

Ramasamy, Vijaya., *Textiles and Weavers in Medieval South India* (New Delhi, 1985)

Rapson, E.J., *India Coins* (1897)

Rea, Alexander *Mounmental Remains of the Dutch East India Company in Madras Presidency.* (Madras (1897)

Rifayi, A.K., *Thamilagathil Islamiya Varalaru* (Tenkasi, 1988)

Roy Choudry Tapan., *Jane Company in Coromandel 1605-1690, A Study in the Inter Relation of European Commerce and Traditional Economics* (The Hague, 1963)

Ruthunasamy, M., *Some Influences that made the British Adminstrative System in India*, Sir William Mayor lecture 1936-37 (London, 1936)

Sadasiva Pnadarathar, T.V., *Kalvettal Ariappandum Unmaigal*

Sali, J.M., *Tamilagathu Darghakkal* (Madras, 1981)

Samy, A.M., *Islamia Tazmizh Idhazhgal* (Madras, 1990); *19th Century Tamil Journals* (Madras, 1992)

Sarada Raju, *Economic Condition of Madras Presidency 1800-1850* (University of Madras, 1941)

- Sarjoo Sundarrajan, *Glimpses of Karaikkal* (Madras, 1985)
- Sathianatha Iyer, R., *History of the Nayaks of Madurai* (Madras, 1929)
- Schooff, *Periplis of Erythrean Seas* (New York, 1912)
- Sen, S.P., *French in India - The first establishment and Struggle* (Calcutta, 1947)
- Sewell, Robert., *A forgotten Empire, Vijayangar, A Contribution to the History of India (1900)*, Rpt. New Delhi 1987); *The antiquarian Remains in the Presidency of Madras*
- Shaik Ali, B., *British relation with Hyder Ali* (Mysore 1963)
- Shaik Akbar Hussain, *Marriage Customs among the Muslims of India* (New Delhi, 1976)
- Sherieff, Kavi, Ka.Mu., *Vallal Seethakkathi Varalru* (Madras, 1986)
- Sinnappa Arasarathnam., *Merchants Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast 1650-1740* (New Delhi, 1986) *Maritime India in the Seventeenth Century* (New Delhi, 1994); *Maritime commerce and English power - South eastern India 1750 -1800* (New Delhi, 1996)
- Smith, Robertson, W., *Kinship and marriage in Early Arabia* (1907)
- Sivarathanam, C., *Tamils in Ceylon* (Jaffina, 1959)
- Spencer, Trimghan, J., *Islam and East Africa* (Oxford University Press, 1963)
- Sridara Menon A., *Kerala History and its Makers* (Kottayam, 1987)
- Sridharan, K., (Rear Admiral), *Maritime history of India* (Government of Indai, 1982)

Srinivasa Iyengar, P.T., *The History of Tamils*

Srinivasachari, C.S., *A History of Ginjee and its Rulers*
(Annamalai Nagar, 1943)

Stein, Burtan., *All the king's Manas and Papers on Medieval South India History*, (Madras, 1984)

Sulaiman, S.M. and Ismail, M.M., *Islam and Indian Religion and Tamil Culture* (University of Madras, 1977)

Subramaniyan, K.R., *The Maratha Rajas of Thanjavur*
(Thanjavur, 1928)

Subramaniyan, Sanjay., *The Political Economy of Commerce, South India 1500-1650* (Cambridge University Press, Newyork, 1990)

Tayka Shu Ayb Alim, *Arabic Arvi and Persian in Sarandib and Tamil Nadu* (Madras, 1993)

Thirunavukkarasu, Ka.Tha., *Thenkizhakku Asia Nadukalil Thamizh Panpadu*, (Madras 1987).

Thoburn, J.M., *India its Society Culture and Religion*
(Jaipur, 1989)

Thruston, Edgar, and K. Rangachari., *Castes and Tribes of Southern India, 7 vols.* (Madras, 1907)

Toussient Augeste., *Shifiting power Balance in Indian Ocean, Its Political Economic and Military Importance*
(ed) Alvin J. Herol and R.M. Barrel (New York, 1973)

Travernier, Jean Baptiste., (Tr. from French) (ed) William Crook, Vol. ii (1869; Rpt, New Delhi)

Uwaise. M.M.. Ajmalkhan, P.M., *Islamia Tamil Ilakkiya Varalar 3 volumes* (Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai)

Uwaise, M.M., *Muslims Contribution ot Tamil Literature*
(Kilakkarai, 1990)

Venkata Ramanayya, N., *The Early Muslim Expansion in South India* (Madras, 1942) *studies in the Third Dynasty of Vijayanagar* (Madras 1955)

Venkata Ramayya, K.M., *Thanjavur Marattia Mannar Varalaru*, (Tamil University, Thanjavur, 1987)

Vriddhagirisan, V., *The Nayaks of Thanjavur* (Annamalai Nagar, 1942)

Wilks, Col., *Historical Sketches of South India (1910); The History of Mysure* (Madras, 1869)

Whiteway, R.S., *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India* (London, 1889)

Yule and Cordier, *The Book of Ser Marcopolo, 2 vols.* (Messrs John Murray, London, 1903)

Encyclopaedia, Nigandu etc.,

Abdul Rahim, M.R.M., *Islamia Kalaikalanchiam*, 3 vols. Madras.

Blackis Modern Encyclopaedia vol. VI

Dalgoda, Nonesenhor Sebastia Rodolfo, *Glassario Lussa Asiatica*, 2vols (Coimbro 1919-21)

Divakara Nigandu

English Malayalam Dictionary, Gundert

Encyclopaedia of Islam, 6 Vols. (Leiden, 1979)

Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics

Namadeepa Nigandu, Sivasubramanya Kavirayar, (Rpt) Tamil University, Thanjavur

Pingala Nigandu

Sudamani Nigandu

Tamil Lexicon (University of Madras, 1932)

Thivakara Nigandu

Thomas Patric Hughes, Dictionary of Islam (New Delhi, 1973)

Yazhpana Manippaya Agarthi, chandrasekara Pulavar

Yule, Henry and Burnel, Hobson and Jobson (New Delhi, 1968)

Articles, Thesis etc.

Abudl Rahim, M., "Dargah at Nagore," *Bulletin of the Institute of Traditional culture* University of Madras, Jan - June 1973; "*History of Nagapattanam and surrounding from 16th century*" unpublished M.Lit., Thesis, University of Madras of Madras.

Andaya, B., "Soudagar Raja, in Traditional Malay Courts," *JMBRAS*, Li-1 (a) 1978.

Arulraj, V.S., and Victor Rajamanickam, G., "Traditional Boats in Tamil Literatures" *History of Traditional Navigation*, (ed) G. Victor Rajamanickam and Y. Subbarayalu, (Tamil University, Thanjavur, 1988)

Azeez, A.M., "Some aspects of Muslim Society of Ceylon with Special Reference to Eighteen Eighty", Proceedings of the first International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, Kualalampore, vol. I. April 1966.

Bhil, K.M. "Pilot Ibn Majid - who showed Vasco da Gama the sea route to India in 1498", *History of Traditional Navigation* (ed) G. Victor Rajamanickam and Y. Subbarayalu.

Chitty, Simon, Casie., "Remarks on the Origin of the History of Paravas", *JRAS-4* (1837) pp. 130-34.

Custests, "How Nagapattanam in 1642 became the first Portuguese possession in the Coromandel," *Journal of Bombay Historical Society* V., 1939.

D' Sousa, Viactor, D., "Status Group Among the Mopillas on the South Western Coast of India," *Caste and Social Satisfactions Among the Muslims* (ed) Imtiaz Ahamed (New Delhi, 1978)

Fergusson, Donald., "The Danes at Tranquebar and Sherampore" *JRAS* 1898.

Gosh, A., and Wheeler R.E.M., "Arikkamedu an Indo Roman Trading Centre on the East Coast of India, *Ancient India*, No.2 1956

Hornel, James., "Indian Pearl fishery in the Gulf of Manaar and Palk Bay, "*Madras Fishery Bulletin* No. XVI 1922. "The Chank shell in ancient Indian life and religion" *QJMS* 4 (Bangalore, 1913)

Indra Pala, K., The Role of Peninsular Indian Muslim Communities in Indian Ocean Trade "*Muslims of Srilanka* (ed) M.M. Shukri (Srilanka, 1986).

Jayarajan T., "Social and Economic Customs and Practices of Marakkayars of Tamil Nadu A study of Marakkayar of Adirampattanam", Unpublished M.Phil, Thesis, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli 1990.

Karashima, Noburu, "Indian Commercial activities in Ancient Medieval Southeast Asia" paper presented in the Plenary Session of 8th World Tamil Conference Seminar, Thanjavur 1995.

Knowlton, J.R., "Portuguese Tamil Linguistic contacts "Proceedings of the first international conference seminar of Tamil studies, Kulalampore, 1968.

Kotalawale, D.A., "Muslims under Dutch rule in Srilank, 1638-1769." *Muslims of Srilanka* (ed) M.M. Shukri (Srilanka, 1986).

Krishnamurthy, B. "The French East India Company and the Indigenous Merchant Community in the Coromandel, during seventeenth and eighteenth century," paper presented in the second International symposium of Maritime studies, Pondicherry University, Pondicherry, Dec. 1991.

Lakshmi, S.G., "Tamil Muslims in Srilanka," unpublished M.Phil Thesis, University of Madras, 1984.

Mattison Mines, "Muslim merchants, The economic behaviour of the Indian Muslim Community, "Sri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources (New Delhi, 1972)

Mattison Mines, "Social stratification among the Muslim Tamils in Tamil Nadu, South India, "*Castes and social Statification among the Muslims in India*, (ed) Imtiaz Ahamed. (New Delhi, 1978)

Mathew, K.S., "Trade in Indian Ocean during the 16th century and the Portuguese, "Paper presented in the International symposium on Maritime History, Pondicherry University, Pondicherry 1989.

Meeran Pillari, M.M., "Arabic TAMILIN Totram", Souvenir of the Fifth International Conference seminar of Islamic Tamil Literature, Kilakkarai, 1990.

Mohamed Tippoo, "Observations on the origin and ceremonies of the Muharrum, "*Madras Journal of Literature and Science* 9:2 (1835).

Mosses, S.T., "The Muhammadans of Pulicat, "*Man in India* 3. (1923).

Pearson, M.N., "Pious passengers - Motivation for the Haj from Early Modern India, "paper presented in the International Symposium on Maritime History, Pondicherry University, Feb. 1989.

Raja Mohamed, J., "Cholamandala Kadarkarai Marakkayarkalin Kadal Vaniba varalur", Paper presented in the 5th International Islamic Tamil Literary conference seminar Kilakkarai 1990 and published in the Research Bulltein of the Conference, Keelakarai 1990; "Islamic vetiges and culture in the history of Tiruchirappalli," Paper presented in the seminar organised by the Department of Museums, Tiruchirapalli 1984; "Worship in Darghas and cultural assimilation, Paper presented in the seminar of the society of the Historical Studies, Tiruchirappalli, Ocotber 1982; "Marakkayars the Maritime People of Coromandel Coast Trade and Economy 1750-1900", Paper presented in the 8th International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, Thanjavur, January, 1995;" PorotNovo port in Southeast Asian trade and it's maritime Muslim community, paper presented in the 2nd conference of Tamil Nadu History congress, Annamalai University, August 1995; "*Islamic Architecture in Tamil Nadu*, Government Museum, Chennai 2004.

Sastri, B.S., "Portuguese in South India", *South Indian Studies*.

Sayeed, A.R., "Indian Muslims and some problems of modernisation, "*Dimentions of Socail Changes in India*, (ed) M.N. Srinivas (New Delhi, 1977)

Scammel, G.V., "The pattern of European Trade in India Ocean, C. 1500 - 1700, "paper presented in the first International symposium of Maritime History, Pondicherry University, Pondicherry, Feb. 1989.

Seeralan, N. "A Survey of Ports and Harbours in Madras Presidency 1858 - 1900, "unpublished M.Phil. Thesis Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli - 1987.

Silva, De.C.R., "Muslim Traders in Indian Ocean in the sixteenth century and the Portuguese impact," *Muslims in Srilanka*, (ed) M.M. Shukri.

Sinnappa Arasaratnam, " A note of Periathambi Marakkayar, the 17th Century commercial Magnate, *Tamil culture vol XI No. I. Madras 1963.* "Ceylon in Indian ocean Trade 1500-1800" *India and Indian Ocean 1500 - 1800* (ed) Ashindas Gupta and M.N. Pearson, Culcutta, 1987; "Commercial policies of Sethupathis of Ramanathapuram, 1660-1690, Proceedings of the second International conference seminar of Tamil Studies 1967; Dutch East India Company and the Kingdom of Madurai 1660-1700, "Tamil Culture vol. X, Madras 1963.; "Politics and society in Tamil Nadu 1600-1800, A view in Historical Perspective, "Proceedings of the Third International Conference seminar of Tamil studies Souvenir, Paris,1970; "Slave Trade in the 17th century," Paper presented in the second International Symposium on Maritime Studies, Pondichery University, Pondicherry, Dec. 1991; "Commerce, Merchants and Entrepreneurship in the Tamil Country 18th Century," paper presented in the 8th World Tamil Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, Thanjavur - 1995.

Speeches and Interpolation of Honourable AKG, Ahamed Thambi Markayar, Khan Bhahadur, in Madras Legislative council, Swadesamitran Press, (Madras, 1920)

Stephen, F. Date., "Recent Researches on the Islamic communities of Peninsular India, *Studies in South India Anthology of Recent Research and Scholarship* (ed) Robert Frykenberg and Paulin Kolanda (Madras, 1985)

Subramaniyan, Sanjay, "Stay on, The Poruguese of Southern Coromandal in the late seventeenth century," *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, New Delhi, 1985.

Subramaniyan, Sanjay, and David Shalman, "Prince of poets and ports, Chithakkathi, the Marakkayar of Ramnad, 1690-1710.

Subbarayalu, Y. "Sumathravil Thamizh Kalvettukal", *Aavanam*, (Journal of Tamil Nadu Archaeological Society, Thanjavour) No. IV, 1994.

Suharwardy, H., "The life and works of the Muslim sufis of Tamil Nadu with special reference to Urdu literature," (Unpublished script)

Sulaiman Nadvi, "Commercial Relation of India with Arabia, *Islamic culture*, vol. VII, April 1933, and Vol. VIII 1934.

Syed Abdul Razack, "Social and cultural life of carnatic Nawabs and Nobles as gleaned through Persian Sources 1746-1885", unpublished M.Phil, Thesis, University of Madras, 1988.

Thirumalai, R., "A Ship Song in the Late 18th Century" (in Tamil) Paper presented in the International symposium on maritime History, Pondichery University, 1989.

Vorhoeven, J.R., "Some notes on the Tamil Community in Dutch Malacca 1641-1855, "Proceedings of the first International conference Seminar of Tamil studies vol I, April 1968.

White, R., An account of Harbour in Tuticorin, "*Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, (October 1886).

Wines, George, D., The Shadow Empire of Goa in the Bay of Bengal, "Itenerario vol. 2 1983.

Journals and Souvenirs

Fifth International Islamic Tamil Literacy Conference Souvenir, Kilakkarai 1990

Indian Historical Record Commission Volumes 1938.

Islamia Nesan, December 1909.

Islamic Culture, Hyderabad

Journal of Indian History, Bombay

Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal

Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Malayan Branch

Journal of Saraswathi Mahal Library, Thanjavur

Kayalpattanam Selection grade town Panchayat centenary, Souvenir 1990.

Madras Journal of Literature and Science

Shaiku Nayakanm Souvenir, Kilakkarai, 1967.

Second Islamic Tamil Literary Conference Souvenir, Tiruchirappalli 1973.

Tamilian Antiquary

Madras Tercentenary Commemoration volume (Madras 1939)

Index

A		B	
Abbasids	148	Baboo Marakkayar	193
Abysinians	64	Bagdad	150
Ache	15, 106, 124, 126, 130, 154, 158, 164, 168, 178	Bandar	63
Abdul Kasim Marakkayar	161	Bandar Abbas	131
Adam Labbai	161	Bantam	124, 126
Adam Sahih	178	Barbosa	29
Adirampattanam	3, 8, 41, 158, 168	Batavia	120
Ahamed	Jalaludeen	Brunei	154
Marakkayar	184	Burma	15, 131
Ahamed	Thambi		C
Marakkayar	187	Cadar Bux	169
Alambaram	37, 134	Cape comorin	29, 30
Alandalai	13	Carnatic	51, 128
Albuquerque	109	Cartaz	12, 102
Ali Baig	170	Ceylone	3, 4, 15, 119, 122, 126, 135, 149, 156, 158, 164, 168, 170, 189
Ali Ibrahīm	109	Chanda Sahib	124, 128
Alla Bux	169	Chank fishery	5, 15, 17, 20, 205-211
Ali Sahib Negudha	184	Cherina Marakkayar	104, 111
Anjuvannam	71	Chennapattanam	130
Anwaruddin	51, 128	Chilay Marcar	111
Arahs	6, 11, 12, 15, 59, 64, 151, 257	Circumcision	23, 282, 283
Arabic Tamil	24, 314, 315	Cholamandalam	29-30
Arcot	11, 40, 51, 54, 118, 129	Cholia	88, 89, 156, 157, 162, 166, 173
Armenians	131	Cochin	111
Aurangazab	128	Colombo	110, 119
Ayuthya	124	Coromandel coast	29-43

Coromandel Muslims	47-90	Hadeesh	261
Crusade	111	Hanafi	21,263
Cuddalore	40, 130, 178	Hanbali	21
	D	Horse trade	15, 103, 149, 150
Danes	8, 13, 48, 125-127	Hussain Marakkayar	178
Deccanis	11, 72, 89, 263		I
Devipattanam	149	Ibrahim Nagudha	176
Divorce	290	Ibn Batura	6
Dost Ali	123	Ibn Masjid	64, 106
Dravidian Architecture	160, 321	Indo-Dravidian - Islamic Architecture	321
Dutch	4, 6, 13, 48, 55, 106, 112,123	Islam	14, 63, 258, 259
	E	Birth	279-282
Ekaji	115	Dargah worship	303-313
Elavapillai Marakkayar	187	Death	284-286
English	4,6,8,11,13,14,47,48, 55, 127-136, 169, 170, 178	Festivals	299-303
Enterprises-end	227-238	Food habits	286-288
Esa Levai	178	Kathna	283-283
	F	Manners	266-267
Fakir Mohamed Nagudha	176	Marriage	267-279
Fatimides	148	Puberty	283-284
Fishery Coast	30	Religious life	295-299
Fishing	212	Sects	260-266
Fort St. George	128	Women	290-295
Francis Light	166		J
French	8, 13, 48, 123-125, 128	Jaffna	113, 168
French Privateers	175, 176	Jewellery	23, 288-289
	G	Jihad	111
Golkonda Sultan	128	Johore	15, 130, 154, 104
Gujarathi Muslims	151, 152	Joint stock companies	131
	H		K
Habib Arasar	26, 183, 184	Kadar Mohideen kappalar	176
Habib Mohamed Malumi	178	Kadar Mohamed Ali	178
		Kalifa	260
		Kappalkara veedu	188

- Kandalur Salai 149
 Kandian king 163
 Karaikkal 3, 6, 13, 14, 116,
 124, 168
 Kasim Mohamed
 Marakkayar 183
 Kayal 12, 32, 33, 109, 149, 150
 Kayalpattanam 3, 6, 8, 12, 15,
 32, 65, 104, 109, 120,
 131, 158, 168, 174, 189
 Kedha 125, 130, 166, 178
 Kesticco 106
 Kilafat 261
 Kilakkarai 3, 8, 15, 32, 41,
 104, 109, 120, 149,
 158, 168, 174, 189
 Kinship-terms 317
 Kirudha Naina Marakkayar
 185
 Klings 156
 Kodiampalayam 41
 Korkai 32
 Krishnappa Naik 113
 Kovalam 40, 134
 Kumara kampana 11, 48
 Kulesekarapattanam 8, 15, 158,
 168, 189
- L**
- Labbai 8, 11, 72, 75-77, 147,
 152, 156, 158, 263, 350
 Levai Vappa Malumi 176
 Lins cotton 112
- M**
- Mabar 30
 Madan Sahib Nagudha 176
 Madras 36, 174
 Madurai Sultan 54
 Mahar 272
 Malacca 3, 4, 149, 150, 153
 Maldives 150, 158
 Malay peninsula 15, 106, 163
 Malikul Islam Jamaludeen 150
 Mamallapuram 32, 33
 Mammale Marcar 111
 Mappillas 1, 69
 Mappillai Labbai Alim 184
 Manapad 13
 Mandapam 3, 8, 15
 Mangols 151
 Manila 131
 Marathas 11, 123, 171
 Maratha Shivaji 123
 Marcopolo 6
 Marakkayars 5, 8, 11, 72, 77-88,
 125, 120, 147, 156, 158, 330
 Marakkayar ports 15, 43
 Marava kingdom 105
 Martaban 131
 Maritime trade 164-194
 Mayors court 172
 Mecca 107, 192
 Meera Mohamed Labbe 172
 Meera Marakkayar 178
 Meera Mohideen Bux 192
 Mestico 106
 Masulipattanam 112
 Mian Mohamed 178
 Migration 179-181
 Mocha 13, 15
 Mohamed Ali Wallajah 52, 129
 Mohamed Ali Marakkayar 176
 Mohamed Ackel 176
 Mohamed Bux 169

Mohamed Marakkayar	176		O	
Mohamed	Kadarsha	Ormuz		111
Marakkayar	191		P	
Mohamed Kasim	161	Pamban		109
Mohamed	Rafeek	Pamban canal		116
Marakkayar	176	Paravas	12, 13, 17, 104,	
Mohamed	Syed		109, 120, 159	
Marakkayar	176	Pearl fishery	5, 15, 17, 20,	
Mohideen Bux	9, 26, 177,		117, 119, 205	
	179, 189	Peer Marakkayar		170
Mohideen Abdul kadar		Peer Sahib Nagudha		176
Marakkayar	185	Pegu	15, 130, 164	
Moor ports	15, 43, 130	Penang	16, 176	
Mosque	111	Perak	15, 130, 154, 164	
Mughal empire	47, 51	Periathambi Marakkayar	55,	
Muthu	Ibrahim		117, 118, 121, 159-161, 183, 184	
Marakkayar	185	Periapattanam		150
Muthupettai	18, 15, 158	Persian gulf		145
Mutta Marriage	54	Point calimere		29
Muzafar Jung	124, 128	Pondicherry	13, 123, 135, 174	
	N	PortoNovo	3, 8, 12, 13, 15, 40,	
Nabobs	14, 133		106, 124, 125, 135, 157, 158,	
Nagapattanam	3, 8, 12, 13, 39,		164, 174	
	104, 113, 119, 125, 131,	Ports-major and minor		34
	149, 158, 168, 174, 177	Portuguese	6, 12, 13, 48, 55,	
Nagore	3, 8, 15, 25, 39, 125,		100-112, 153, 154	
	127, 131, 158, 168, 176, 177	Polygars	15, 48, 49, 156, 291	
Naina Labbai	161	Pulicat	8, 13, 15, 29, 113, 127	
Nayaks:		Purdha system		292, 293
Madurai	11, 49		R	
Gingee	11, 49	Rahmania Bux		169
Thanjavur	11, 50, 51	Raghunatha Nayak		125
Nazir Jung	128	Raja Ibrahim		153
Neithal	147	Raja Kasim		153
Nino Marcar	111	Rameswaram		8
		Rawthar	8, 11, 72, 75, 263, 330	
		Romans		60, 61, 62

S		Syed	Magudoom
Sadraspattanam	40	Nagundha	176
Saithakathiru	Marakkayar	T	
Thirumana Vazthu	268, 289	Tamil Bell	7, 9, 26
Salt trade	15, 16, 194-195	Tannery	195, 196
Santhome	36, 103, 104	Tennaserim	124, 130
Sarabendra rajapattanam	171	Textile trade	131, 132, 155, 168, 169
Sayaji	128	Thailand	124
Sea faring tradition	218-227	Thangavappa Marakkayar	188
Sekuna Labbai	171	Thiruppullani	6
Sevatha Marakkayar	178	Thirumullaivasal	41
Sethupathis	11, 50, 105, 116-118, 121, 159, 171	Thulukkar	1, 70-71
Seerapuranam	161, 278	T h i r u m a l a i	
Seethakkathi	159 - 160	rajampattanam	116, 127
Shafi	21, 67, 243	Topputhurai	41
Shaik Abdul kadar	171	Tondi	8, 15, 32, 40, 149, 158, 168
Shaik Ismail Marakkayar	170	Tranquebar	13, 41, 125, 127, 163
Shaik Mian Kader	172	Tuticorin	13, 29, 42, 119, 174, 189
Shias	263	U	
Shariath	261	Ujan salang	124
Ship building	213-218	Umar Naina Aulia Labbai	178
Shipping expertise	196-198	Uraiyur	66
Sherkhan Lodi	123	Y	
Siddhi Mohamed	176	Yavanas	61-63
Slave trade	115, 131	Yusufkhan	126
Sonakar	68-70	Z	
Sonakan sidukku	288	Zulfikarkhan	49, 51, 128
Sulaiman Malumi	176		
Sultan Abdul kadar			
Marakkayar	184		
St. Xavier	109		
Sufis	257		
Syed Abdulkadar			
Marakkayar	185		
Syed Kasim Marakkayar	185		

Author

Born in 1946 at Udayarpalayam, Perambalur District, Tamilnadu. Graduated from Madras University, took P.G. degrees from Karnatak University, Law degree from Madurai Kamaraj University and Ph.D. from Pondicherry University (in Maritime History). Entered in to Tamilnadu Museum Service in 1969 and worked as Curator at Pudukkottai Museum till 2004. At present he is the Assistant Director of Museums Chennai. He has contributed about 100 research papers in leading journals and seminars. He has five publications to his credit. He has discovered about 200 new inscriptions and published them. He is member in professional bodies like South Indian History Congress, Tamilnadu Archaeological Society, Tamilnadu History Congress, Indian Association for study of Conservation of Cultural Property, Association of British Scholars and Research guide in Madurai Kamaraj University. Recipient of U.K. visiting fellowship 1996 from Nehru Trust for Indian Collections at Victoria and Albert Museum London to study on the Coromandel English trade. Visited U.K., France and Germany Continuing research in maritime history and cultural relation between coromandel coast and Srilanka and South East Asian countries.

1/109-D, Jeeva Nagar Ist Street,
Pudukkottai - 622 001.
Tamilnadu, India,

