

BRITISH TRADE ACTIVITY IN THE COROMANDEL COAST OF TAMIL NADU: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The Coromandel Coast of Tamil Nadu from the ancient times has been an important prominent commercial maritime trading route for the Europeans in the Textile Trade. The British, Portuguese, French, Danish and the Dutch influenced the native rules along the coast to obtain rights and privileges to establish ports, port towns and factories to carry out trade with East Asian countries, Europe and other parts of the world. Pondhicherry, Devanampatnam, Porto Novo, Tranquebar, Karaikal, Nagapatnam and Turicorin were some of the important Sea Ports on the North South direction of the Coromandel Coast. All the initial European Settlers opened trading with Bengal and Coromandel Coast where rich cotton and cotton clothes of all varieties were available. The protection of the Paravas from the atrocities of the Moors by the Portuguese helped them to establish their foot print in Tuticorin from where they had brisk trade with Ceylon. Eventually the rift between the Portuguese and Nayaks of Madurai lead to the domination of the Dutch who thrived in the pearl fishery trade and coarse cloth exports. The number of ship calling the Turicorin Port increased from 16 in 1860-66 to 562 in 1905-06 and the revenue witnessed a gradual growth of 2012 in 1860-66 to 48,226 in 1905-06. In this paper submitted in the International Conference an attempt has been made to trace the Maritime Trade activity of the British in the Coromandel Coast.

Keywords: *Port, Ship, Spice Trade, Cotton, Pearl Fishery.*