

THE PORTUGUESE, INDIAN OCEAN AND EUROPEAN BRIDGEHEADS 1500-1800:

Festschrift in Honour of Prof. K.S. Mathew

Edited by:

**Pius Malekandathil
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THE PORTUGUESE AND ASPECTS OF TRADE IN PORTS OF SOUTH KANARA¹

Nagendra Rao

The arrival of Portuguese led to long-lasting impact on the economy of South Kanara. The Portuguese were first European traders to arrive at the ports of South Kanara. On the eve of the arrival of the Portuguese, South Kanara comprised of large number of major and minor ports. There existed trade with Malabar, Maldives and ports of the Red Sea. There also existed the trading communities like the Arabs, Jews, Saraswats, Telugu Komatis, Navayats and others. International trade was not new to the traders of South Kanara. The traders dealt with commodities like rice, pepper, ginger and other spices. The arrival of Portuguese helped in enhancing the volume of trade in the ports of South Kanara. In this paper we analyse the trends in trade in the different ports of South Kanara, which are being studied on the basis of their relative importance. Inscriptions, Portuguese records and foreign accounts constitute the major source for this study.

The arrival of the Portuguese was noticed through inscriptions. In South Kanara only one inscription in Portuguese has been discovered.² The content of the inscription does not help us much in writing about the trade contacts. But the significance of this inscription lies in the fact that this symbolised the settlement of the Portuguese in South Kanara. One hero stone inscription found in Trasi (Kundapur taluk) dated A.D. 1546 describes the combat between a woman leader called

Nayakti and the Portuguese. The woman died in the fight.³ The evolution of Portuguese trade in South Kanara was a gradual process. The early Portuguese records give more reference to the presence of the Portuguese in Malabar. But after 1620 the Portuguese had to depend on the ports of South Kanara for the supply of rice, pepper and other items of trade. This was because the Portuguese relation with kings of Malabar did not remain cordial. There was great demand for the rice and pepper of Kanara in the factories and various settlements of the Portuguese. In spite of the fact that pepper of South Kanara was costlier than the Malabar pepper, the Portuguese, due to certain political developments and compulsions, had to depend on the pepper supply from ports of South Kanara. The demand for pepper was also due to the presence of Arab and Gujarati traders in these ports. The rise of Surat too helped in augmenting this demand.⁴

Mangalore

The port of Mangalore was situated on the confluence of two rivers, Netravati and Gurupur. The structure of the river formed backwater, which increased the navigability of Mangalore port and facilitated the entry of ships in the port. The hinterland of port of Mangalore produced pepper, betelnut, coconut, sandalwood, cardamom and different varieties of rice.⁵ Among them rice was the major item of export from the port of Mangalore.

In 1502 the Portuguese scholar Thome Lopez mentioned Mangalore as the home of some Christians who sent a deputation to Vasco da Gama on his second voyage.⁶ Tome Pires described Mangalore as an attractive port for ships and merchants, who traded with Cambay and with the kingdoms of Goa, Deccan and Ormuz, taking products of the country and bringing others. Further Pires says that there were garrisons in this port under a Captain. The king derived huge revenues from seaports.⁷ Duarte Barbosa described Mangalore as a great town "wherein dwell both Moors and Heathen of the aforesaid kingdom of Narsinga, named Mangalor, where many ships take cargoes of black rice, which is better and more wholesome than the white, to sell in

the land of Malabar, and it can be got good cheap".⁸ During the first decade of 16th century Mangalore was described as a port which participated in coastal trade net work on the western coast. Eventually the Portuguese tried to get into the trade of Mangalore. In 1522 the king of Portugal freed the merchants of Mangalore from the entrance duty of 4.5 per cent which other traders continued to pay at Goa.⁹

The Portuguese pursued a consistent policy of excluding Arabs from the maritime trade.¹⁰ In the treaties that they signed with Vijayanagar rulers and petty chieftains like the Bangas, they insisted on exclusion of Arabs. However this policy of the Portuguese does not seem to have been commercially productive. Their hostility with Arabs led to conflict not only with Arab traders but also with local kings and traders who maintained contact with the Arabs.

The Portuguese maintained friendly relationship with the Vijayanagar kings who had to depend on the former for the purchase of horses. This horse trade obviously fetched handsome profit for the Portuguese traders. Krishnadeva Raya, the most powerful of the Vijayanagar monarchs, gave permission to the Portuguese to build fortress in Mangalore.¹¹ The initial policy of the Portuguese was to use force, which led to few bloody wars and destruction of urban structures in Mangalore. During the period from 1520 to 1590 the Portuguese tried to maintain control over trade by using military power. In Cannanore the Portuguese attempts to dominate by using their military power led to exodus of Muslim chiefs from Cannanore to Mangalore. These Muslim chiefs on their turn began to organise pepper trade and supply rice to Calicut from Mangalore. Though the Portuguese protested against the Islamisation of Mangalore trade, the Vijayanagar governors ignored them. D. Simao de Menezes and Fernao Gomes de Lemos spotted seventy *paraos* off Mangalore.¹² Many a time the local chiefs were castigated for allowing the rivals to trade in the Kanarese ports. In 1513 Afonso de Albuquerque sent some of his Captains to Mangalore to take possession of some of Calicut ships which were on their way to Red Sea strait. The local chiefs knew very well that if

they had not co-operated with the Captains by allowing them to take the ships, the trade of the ports would be hindered. The chiefs did not resist and the Captains took the ships with goods. Later in 1525 the Portuguese destroyed few of the ships which were trading at Mangalore.¹³

The Portuguese in 16th and 17th centuries faced resistance from a local principality called Chautas of Ullal. As early as 1530 the Portuguese under the command of Nuno de Cunha crossed the river of Mangalore, which flowed through the Ullal territory. They devastated the barricade and the fortified positions. The purpose of this offensive was to penalise a rich merchant of Mangalore, who surreptitiously maintained trade contacts with Muslim traders of Calicut.¹⁴ In 1538 Alvaro de Noronha, son of the Viceroy, chased near Mangalore 25 ships belonging to Calicut. He massacred many of the adversaries and burnt their ships.¹⁵ In the year 1556 Dom Alvaro de Silveyra was sent at the head of several vessels against the Queen of Ullal for refusing to pay the ordinary tribute. The city of Mangalore was pillaged and a Hindu temple was destroyed.¹⁶ In 1567 the Portuguese assaulted the city. They set fire on the city. Besides, they cut down the grove of palm trees.¹⁷ These attacks led to a process of de-urbanisation in Mangalore. However in 1568 a fortress named Sao Sebastiao was constructed with a church and other buildings.¹⁸ The construction of these buildings and the settlement of *casados* and other Christian population eventually led to urbanisation of Mangalore on European patterns. The Christians introduced new crops like papaya, pineapple, etc. They participated both in agriculture and trade. In 1656 there existed a settlement of about 35 families of *casados*.¹⁹

The Italian traveller Pietro Della Valle gave a description of Mangalore. According to him, the port was in the mouth of two rivers,

“one more Northern runs from the Lands of Banghel; the other more southern from those of Olala, which stands beyond the river southwards, or rather beyond the bay of saltwater, which is formed round and large, like a great Haven by the two rivers before their

entrance into the Sea, whose flowing fills the same with the salt water. Mangalore stands between Olala and Banghel and in the middle of the bay right against the Mouth of the Harbor, into which the Fort extends itself, being almost encompassed with water on three sides. It is but small, the worst built of any I have seen in India, and, as the Captain told me one day... may rather be termed the House of a Gentleman than a Fort. The City is but little neither, contiguous to the Fort and encompassed with weak walls; within which the houses of inhabitants are enclosed. In Mangalore there are three churches..."²⁰

The above description shows that the port was not well maintained. Thus when the enemies attacked the fort it was an arduous task for the Portuguese to defend it. Pietro Della Valle also mentioned the existence of market place (*bazaar*) in Banghel and Ullal,²¹ where areca, cloth, gold knives and other merchandise were available for sale. In the interior regions the merchants had to pay toll to the officials of Venkatappa Nayaka, the Keladi king.²² Venkatappa Nayaka comprehended the importance of Portuguese for the economy of his kingdom. Pietro Della Valle states that Venkatappa Nayaka did not capture the Portuguese fort of Mangalore to "let those Portugals in that small place, in respect of the Traffick and Wares which they brought to the benefit of their countries".²³

The Portuguese factory at Mangalore was looked after by a factor. The factory was a centre of trade, a military post and a centre of missionary activities. The Portuguese merchants loaded rice, saltpetre, sandalwood, timber, pepper and other articles of trade at Mangalore. Merchants sailing from Goa to China, Macao and Bengal anchored at Mangalore for supplies of merchandise, marines and convoys. The Portuguese supplied ammunitions, salt, mirrors, etc. to the people in the port of Mangalore. A Muslim from Goa Ismail Khan, was in the pay of Portuguese at Mangalore. He had a fleet at his command, fought, and traded on behalf of the Portuguese. The factory was also used to recruit mariners to Bengal and far off ports. *Cartazes* were issued at Mangalore to local merchants.²⁴

According to the English traveller Alexander Hamilton Mangalore was the premium port on the Kanara coast. He says "the Portuguese have a Factory for rice here, and a pretty large church, because great numbers of black Christians, reside there." Hamilton further says that, "the fields here bear two crops of corn yearly in the plains; and the higher grounds produce pepper, bettlenut, sandal wood, iron and steel, which make Mangalore a place of pretty good trade. The town is poorly built along the sides of the rivers, and has no defence against an enemy, but two small forts, one on each side of the river's mouth."²⁵ Here Hamilton repeated the statement of Pietro Della Valle that the town of Mangalore was not well defended. In 1695 the Arabs attacked and plundered Mangalore and carried a large booty.²⁶ In 1720 the Marathas under Kanoji Angria attacked Mangalore.²⁷ In 1749 again the Maratha leader Tulaji Angria attacked Mangalore and plundered the Portuguese factory.²⁸

The various Portuguese settlements depended on the rice exports from Mangalore and other ports of Kanara coast. In 1630 2,77,985 kilograms of high quality rice was exported from Mangalore.²⁹ In the year 1631, about 83,920 kilograms rice was exported from Mangalore to Ceylon.³⁰ Saltpetre was another item exported from Mangalore. In 1632, the agent of the Portuguese sent their men to Mangalore to procure saltpetre from Mangalore.³¹

The trading community of Mangalore consisted of Muslims, Saraswats, Komatis, Virashaiva traders of Karnataka, Christians, Gujaratis, traders from Kerala and foreign traders belonging to Red Sea ports. According to the *Livro do Cartazes*, during the period from 1705 to 1724 about 8600 *khandis* were exported to different markets.³² The destinations of Mangalore trade were Malabar, Goa, Surat, Bengal, Malacca, Maldives, Mecca, Aden, Congo, Hormuz and Ceylon.

Basrur

Basrur was another important port of South Kanara. Tome Pires mentioned Basrur as an important port town on the Kanara coast.³³ In Basrur there existed the production of

myrobalans.³⁴ Duarte Barbosa stated that Basrur belonged to Vijayanagar kingdom.³⁵ Here the Portuguese followed the usual mode of building a fortress some distance below the Hindu town so as to command the river approaches. According Bocarro, government archivist at Goa, Portuguese Basrur was a thriving trade centre exporting rice, textiles, saltpetre and iron from the hinterland and importing corals, exotic piece goods, horses and elephants.³⁶

In 1514 the Vijayanagar emperor sent a legation at the head of which was one Retelim Cherim (Cheti), Governor of Basrur, who offered the Viceroy £20,000 for the exclusive right of buying 1000 horses. Albuquerque courteously declined the offer on the ground that such a privilege would destroy trade.³⁷ In 1546 a treaty was signed between the Portuguese and the king of Vijayanagar. According to this treaty the king of Vijayanagar had to coerce all merchants in his kingdom trading with the coast, to send their goods through Honnavar and Basrur. These goods had to be purchased by the Portuguese factors. This would compel the governors of India to send their merchants to buy those goods. At the same time the king of Vijayanagar had to ban export of iron and saltpetre to the kingdom of Adil Shah (Bijapur) from his port towns and his merchants were compelled to bring this merchandise to the harbours of the kingdom of Vijayanagar, where they would be quickly purchased by the Governors of India, not to cause them any loss.³⁸

By the end of 16th century the Portuguese were able to subjugate the local chiefs and merchants of Basrur. They levied a grain tribute on the merchants of Basrur. They had to pay annually 500 loads of rice.³⁹ In the Portuguese fortress of Basrur, a church, and houses for the Captain, various civil and ecclesiastical functionaries and thirty salaried Portuguese *casados* were located. Another thirty-five *casados* with their families lived in a Portuguese settlement, encircled by mud walls, a musket's shot from the fort.⁴⁰ Most of the *casados* possessed rice fields outside the settlement. They enjoyed the yield without any predicament as long as there was accord with the local merchants and their chief. The *casados* owned 7 or 8 *gallivats* of 300

khandis each. Loaded with merchandise these *gallivats* used to sail amidst the convoy of a Portuguese armed fleet, for security. The *casados* recruited the required number of mariners from among the local people.⁴¹ In Basrur the Portuguese practice was to arrange contracts with individual merchants and Syndicates, whether Portuguese, Eurasian or Indian, or Christian or Hindu. In 1602 Antonio Mendes de Tomar and Antonio Fernandes de Sampaio were contracted to supply the Portuguese with pepper. In 1603 an Indian goldsmith and his nephew agreed to supply 1500 quintals at Honnavar and Basrur.⁴²

Pietro Della Valle gives the following description regarding Basrur:

Thence we came by a short cut to Barselor, called the Higher i.e. within Land, belonging to the Indians and subject to Venkatapa Naieka, to distinguish it from the Lower Barselor on the sea coast belonging to the Portugals. For in almost all Territories of India near the sea coast there happen to be two places of the same name, one called Higher, or In-land, belonging to the natives, the other the Lower, near the sea, to the Portugals, wherever they have footing. Entering the Higher Barselor on this side, I came into a fair, long, broad and straight street, having abundance of Palmetos and Gardens on either hand.

...I took boat and rowed down the more southern stream; for little below the said town is divided into many branches and forms divers little fruitful islands. ...The fort of Portugals is very small, built almost in form of a star, having not bad walls, but wanting ditches, in a plain and much exposed to all sorts of assaults. Such Portugals as are married have Houses without the Fort in the Town, which is pretty large and hath good buildings.⁴³

Della Valle mentions the existence of houses of Portuguese officials in Basrur. He went and stayed with Antonio Borges.⁴⁴ He also went to dine with Ascentio Veira, a Notary of the city. He was given an empty house belonging to Paolo Sodrino, who was married in Mangalore.⁴⁵ The details given above demonstrate that ports in South Kanara consisted of different settlements of Portuguese and the natives.

The Portuguese settlement consisted of houses of both civil and military officials.

Alexander Hamilton noticed the port of Basrur standing on the banks of a broad river, about four miles from the sea. He says that the country abounded in rice, having in many places two crops in a year, by the advantage they had of some lakes at the feet of the Mountains of *Gatti* (ghat). The water from these lakes was let out at convenient times to water the rice fields. Hamilton mentioned that in Basrur the Dutch had a factory to procure rice to garrisons on the Malabar Coast. The Dutch factory stood about a mile from the river's mouth, which possessed a bar of 13 or 14 foot water on it at spring tides. The Dutch factory had a castle on its north side for its guard. Further Hamilton says that the Portuguese also got supplies of rice for Goa and that they had six or eight ships belonging to Basrur. Those ships carried cargoes of rice to Muscat and brought back in return horses, dates, pearl, and other merchandise of Arabia. Hamilton described the road from Basrur to Mangalore. He says that on a plain road that led to Mangalore, were planted four rows of trees. They served as umbrellas to the passengers. On several places huts were built where some old people stayed in the daytime, with jars of fine clear water for the passengers to drink at the charge of the state.⁴⁶

The coercion by Portuguese created problems for indigenous traders. It was common for them to forcibly take articles of trade from the local merchants. Francisco de Mello de Sampaio, who became Captain of Basrur in 1583 damaged the trade of that port so much by forcibly taking goods at a lower price that the local merchants endeavoured to drive the Portuguese away from there. But this attempt made by local merchants failed. There were also instances of Captains who levied and collected illegal imposts from merchants at Basrur. Sometimes the Portuguese confiscated Kanarese ships and sold their goods for sheer profit.⁴⁷

In the seventeenth century Portuguese Basrur was a thriving trading centre exporting rice, textiles, saltpetre as well

as iron and importing corals, exotic piece goods, horses and elephants.⁴⁸ Ships of the merchants were frequently employed in the fetching of rice or for sending the cash for rice. In 1630, an amount of 4,000 Sao Tomes in gold were sent to Basrur in a ship belonging to a Muslim merchant accompanied by another ship owned by Antonio Carreira Salema. In return they were supposed to bring rice from there. In 1629 about 4,99,481 kilograms of *girasol* rice (high quality rice) was sent from Basrur to Goa. In 1630, vessels carrying 2,80,607 kilograms of rice were sent to Goa. During the period between 1629 to 1633, the volume of rice exported to Muscat was 27,39,671 kilograms.⁴⁹

The merchants of the port were referred to by the Portuguese collectively as the '*chatins de Barselor*' (Settis of Basrur). It is said that the settlers of Basrur governed themselves like a Republic, and paid some tribute to the King. The power in the city is described as being in the hands of a collective of '*governadores*' or '*regedores*', who on specific occasions appointed agents from the merchant community to prosecute negotiations. The port was *terra franca* governed like a Republic, without having any other subjection nor recognising any form of overlordship save for a small tribute that is paid to the Vijayanagar kings.⁵⁰ This description leads us to study the internal set up of the port town of Basrur. In Basrur, as in Barkur, there existed *keris* or streets of merchants where there existed the settlement of merchants. They had their own temples in their respective streets. During the medieval period the merchants were given important responsibilities in society. The merchants were appointed as heads of port towns, who were called *pattanasetti* or *pattanaswami*. They were supposed to maintain administration of the towns. Whenever grants were made to certain temples, money was deposited with the merchants and with the interest amount they were supposed to maintain the temples. The merchants had their corporations and they assembled in their meetings. There existed merchant guilds like *halarus*, *settikaras*, *nakharas* and *hanjamanas*. Thus when the Portuguese chroniclers mentioned the existence of a republican

form of administration, they were referring to this kind of a system, operating among the merchant groups.

From the inscriptions it is known that the Vijayanagara governor at Barkur controlled the activities of the traders of Basrur. The Basrur inscription belonging to A.D. 1465 records a grant made by Mahapradhana Ramachandra Dannayaka Odeya through his subordinate Pandarideva Odeya, the Governor of Barkur, to the temple of Paduvakeri at Basrur of some taxes due to the king from the *hanjamana* (trade guild which traded in horses) of the place.⁵¹ Another inscription from Basrur dated A.D. 1465 refers to *senabova* (accountant) attending the ports to collect the taxes from loaded ships leaving the port of Basrur.⁵² This practice of interference in the activities of the traders continued in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At least we know that prior to the arrival of the Portuguese the traders of Basrur did not enjoy position of autonomy. However, during the period of transfer of power from the Vijayanagar to Keladi rulers, it is possible that some element of autonomy was granted to the traders of Basrur. But even then the king of Tolar tried to control Basrur and Gangolli. The king of Tolar even fought a war with the Portuguese to capture Basrur from them.⁵³

It is said that in Basrur there existed four doors to enter the city, two for those coming by road and two for those coming by river or water transport. Mudukeri and Paduvakeri were important streets of Basrur. There also existed various other streets like Mandikeri, Vilasakeri and Ravutakeri. The traders and the merchandise reached through Mandikeri where there was facility to stockpile the goods in huge pots. *Mandi* was the place where there was the wholesale trade of goods. These *keris* had doors that were to be closed in the night and opened in the morning. In the Vilasakeri, the traders used to relax with the dancing girls and inebriating drinks.⁵⁴

In *Livro do Cartazes*⁵⁵ (book of passports) there is large number of reference to passports issued to traders of Basrur. The ships can be divided into those owned by private traders and state owned ones. The ships owned by the private traders

were small compared to the ones owned by the king of Kanara. The largest ship that was owned by the private trader Vishnudas of Gujarat had the capacity to carry 800 *khandis*. The ships of king of Kanara usually carried 600 to 700 and even 1300 *khandis* of cargo. According to *Livro do Cartazes* the total volume of commodities sent from Basrur to different destinations during the period from 1707 to 1724 was 13,441 *khandis*. Considering the fact that all the ships did not take *cartazes*, this number was only a part of total export. The destinations of Basrur trade were Congo, Serdefar, Surat, Barra Araba, Mecca, Ormuz, Bassora, Aden, Sind, and Bengal. The important traders mentioned are Custa Paddiar, Sidy Basavayya, Sedua Naique, Vattadas Guzerate, Babu Hegado, Rama Poy, Ranganna Bagata, Amadax Mouso and Abdul Rahiman. There were Saraswats, Muslims, Gujaratis, Telugu Komatis and Kannada Banajigas.

Barkur

Before the arrival of the Portuguese, Barkur was a flourishing trading centre. Its importance was signified by the presence of the Vijayanagara governor at Barkur. On the eve of the arrival of the Portuguese Barkur consisted of ten *keris* where different traders had their commercial establishments. In the 15th century there existed certain trade guilds like *hanjamana*, *nakhara*, *settikaras* etc. The importance of Barkur as a trade centre is revealed by the fact that there was a road called *Barakanura ghatta* (ghat of Barkur) linked with ghats. Tome Pires has seen in Barkur ships and merchants trading with Cambay and with the kingdoms of Goa, Deccan and Ormuz, taking the products of the country and bringing others in exchange.⁵⁶ Duarte Barbosa says that, "Here is much good rice, which grows in the lands thereby, and many ships from abroad, and many as well of Malabar, take in cargoes thereof, and take it away".⁵⁷ The Portuguese forced the king of Barkur to pay 1000 loads of rice per year as tribute.⁵⁸ By A.D. 1515 the Portuguese had established contacts with merchants of Barkur. In that year the Portuguese commanders Gomes Martines de Lemos and Antonia da Silva attacked Barkur. The reason for this attack was that the traders had sold the goods to traders other than

Portuguese against a previous contract. It is said that the Vijayanagara governor Ratnappa Odeya organised a defence and in the naval warfare the Portuguese were defeated.⁵⁹ In A.D. 1524 the Portuguese sent the forces to defeat the Muslim traders of Calicut, who used to come to Barkur. A fierce battle was fought near Barkur and the Muslims were vanquished. It is said that sometime before this incident Vasco da Gama, who had embarked for Cochin, had ordered his men to take possession of the bars of Barkur and Mangalore rivers where the *paraos* of Calicut were frequenting for rice in exchange for Malabar wares. Vasco da Gama placed here Jeronymo de Souza and Manuel de Machado with vessels for the purpose of clearing these places of pirates. After defeating Zamorin's fleet in Barkur River, the Portuguese could develop their trade with Barkur without any problem. During the reign of Vitharasa Odeya the Portuguese contact with Barkur increased considerably,⁶⁰ where a Portuguese factory was later established, as Domingo Paes testifies.⁶¹

Barkur continued to have commercial relations with the West in the 17th century. From the writings of Jean Baptiste Tavernier we come to know that ships used to bring silk from Persia in return for rice from Barkur. But Tavernier says that ships used to anchor far away from the capital city. He states that the ship in which he was sailing reached Barkur on 18th April 1648. But the Captain of the ship had to take permission to purchase and load rice on ship. Hence he had to sail three leagues on boat in a river to reach Barkur City. Tavernier also describes that the Captain obtained the permission to purchase rice from Barkur and the governor of Barkur treated them well.⁶² But during the later part of 17th century, Barkur lost its political and commercial importance. Basrur superseded Barkur as an important supply centre for rice and pepper.

Gangolli

Gangolli was situated on the mouth of Pancha Gangavali River. It was an agrarian trade centre of rice, sugarcane, coconut, betelnuts, cashewnut and pepper. By the end of 17th century the

kings, Baindur was an important place where custom duty was collected. The Sirur copper plate inscription dated A.D.1610⁷⁰ states that Keladi Venkatappa Nayaka conferred on Keriya Sankanna Senabhova alias Narana the office of *sthalasenabhovike* (office to collect custom duties). The *sthalasenabhova* was entitled to collect custom duties from five places: Ulanadu, Hammaranadu, Bidarnadu, Baiduru (Baindur) and Haligere. This inscription testifies the hectic external contacts that developed as a result of increased demand through Portuguese trade and the constant contacts between port and hinterland.

The port of Mulki or Karnad situated on shores of Shambhavi river. The Portuguese identified a group of islands in 1580, which were fertile and well cultivated. The Keladi rulers used to collect substantial amount of custom duty from here. In 1705 a treaty was signed between the Portuguese and the Keladi ruler Basvappa Nayaka. According to this treaty the Portuguese obtained the right to collect custom duty from here. Mulki was known chiefly for the export of rice.⁷¹

The port of Kumbla exported rice, pepper and coconut to Malabar, Gujarat and Arabia. Duarte Barbosa stated that "Here is garnered great abundance of very bad black rice, which the Malabares come hither to purchase, and to take away in their *zambuquos*, to sell to the lower sort of people, who buy it readily, as it is good cheap, and by it they make more than by the good rice. They also take much thereof to the Maldive islands, which lie over against Malabar, as the inhabitants are poor Moors, who, by reason of its lower price, would rather have black than white rice. They gave it to them in exchange for *cairo* (coir), which is a thread used for making cables and ropes; it is made out of the husks of coconut, and much of it is made here."⁷² The soil of Kumbla was suited for production of black rice. However, we may note that black rice was consumed in Malabar not only by poor class of people but also by the upper class. The king of Kumbla gave 800 loads of rice to the Portuguese per annum as tribute.⁷³

Portuguese used to purchase from here 1500 *khandis* of pepper.⁶³ In the Portuguese records Gangolli is mentioned as Cambolim. In 1569 the Tolar chief and the ruler of Gangolli tried to attack Portuguese but they were unsuccessful in their venture.⁶⁴ It was in Gangolli that the Portuguese built their last fortress in the Kanara coast. The port of Gangolli was located in a peninsula formed by the sea and the river Gangolli and was just opposite to their fortress of Basrur. With the construction of this fortress the Portuguese were able to gain control over the island of Gangolli. The island yielded 30,000 bags of rice with which the fortress could be sustained as also other fortresses of Kanara. The fortress could receive relief by sea as well as by river any time of the year.⁶⁵ The idea of the Portuguese was to develop this port with a view to replacing Basrur.⁶⁶ In Gangolli there was cheap supply of workers to run the Portuguese ships. But due to policy the Nayakas of Ikkeri the Portuguese were not able to achieve success in their mission of converting Gangolli as a major port. However, with the advent of the Portuguese, the hinterland of Gangolli experienced increased production of coconut, pepper, black rice, and also the cultivation of pineapple, tobacco and different varieties of mangoes.⁶⁷ The Kodladi copper plate inscription belonging to A.D.1681 mentions the coconut plants in Gangolli seashore. Increased demand for coconut resulted in increased coconut production. Even the lands like *bele*, which were not useful for raising any other crops, were brought under coconut cultivation. This inscription reveals that the state used to take initiative in planting coconuts because it could bring more income to the state treasury. This is a clear example of impact of foreign trade on the pattern of agricultural production.⁶⁸

Apart from the above ports there existed other ports like Baindur, Mulki, Manjeshwar and Kumbbla. Baindur was adjacent to the port of Bhatkal. Duarte Barbosa referred to this town as Majandur. He says that Baindur supplied rice to Bhatkal. Here different varieties of rice like, *giracal*, *acal*, *quavagas* and *pachary*, were produced. It is said that the Portuguese collected 300 *fardos* of rice from this port.⁶⁹ During the rule of Keladi

The growth of coastal trade and overseas trade led to dilated contact between ports and the hinterland. *Sunkathanes* (custom stations) were established in the trade routes. An inscription belonging to A.D 1606 mentions the collection of custom duties at Sagara, Kumbhasi, Pombucha, Agumbe, Belare, Kalasa and Kiga.⁷⁴ An inscription belonging to A.D.1673 mentions the transport of commodities on pack bullocks. This inscription mentions the items like arecanut, pepper, tassels, silk, coconut kernels, wood, rice, paddy, ragi, oil, ghee, fruits, jaggery and rattan. In the custom stations the colour and age of bullocks were registered.⁷⁵ Another inscription belonging to A.D.1711 mentions the commodities like arecanut, pepper, tassels, silk, wood, rice, paddy, ragi, salt, acid, rattan, grain, oil, ghee, pulse, jaggery, fruit, cutch, coconut kernels, clothes, iron, dates, tobacco, asafoetida, cumin seed, mustard, fenugreek, onion, garlic and turmeric.⁷⁶

The above references connote that arteries of trade were well connected. The traders participated in both coastal trade and overseas trade. The arrival of the Portuguese led to acceleration in volume of export of different commodities, which in turn led to increased agricultural production. The Portuguese operations in South Kanara did not remain constant, monotonous. There were different phases in their interaction with native traders. In the initial phase the Portuguese were able to dictate terms since they were powerful on the sea. There was supply of essential commodities from Malabar. However, with the antagonism with the kings and traders of Kerala, the Portuguese increasingly found it difficult to gain access to Malabar ports. In Kanara also there was a transition in the political power. The Vijayanagara rulers were succeeded by the Keladi rulers, who due to their political power were able to dictate terms to the Portuguese. In the 18th century the Portuguese competed with English and the Dutch. The arrival of these Europeans in the ports of South Kanara led to urbanisation of port complexes. There was settlement of different community of traders in these ports. The traders participated in both coastal trade and overseas trade. The study exhibits that

the pre-colonial economy of South Kanara displayed symptoms of expansion and led to capital accumulation. This study also shows the transition of an agrarian zone into a maritime zone. The contact of the traders of South Kanara with the Portuguese helped them in participating in the international trade.

References:

- 1 South Kanara was a coastal district of Karnataka. At present two separate districts, Udupi and Dakshina Kannada have been created out of this district. For our academic purpose we consider South Kanara as a single historical unit.
- 2 *Annual Report of South Indian Epigraphy*, (henceforth *ARSIE*), 1926-27, No. 367. The translation of this inscription is following: "He who put me in this place put also his own figure. If there be anyone to enter it, his wretchedness will turn out a great boon". Also see, J.J.Cotton, *Inscriptions of Tombs*, p. 168.
- 3 K.G.Vasanthamadhava. 'A Note on Trasi Hero Stone dated Saka 1468 = A.D.1546', *Journal of Institute of Asian Studies*. The inscription mentions *parangadavara kapitaru*, which meant invasion of Portuguese army. This shows that the Portuguese ventured to establish their supremacy not only on sea, but even in the inland territories. In this hero stone, weapons like big sword, shield, dagger and rifle are engraved.
- 4 S. Arasaratnam, *Maritime India in the Seventeenth Century*, Delhi, 1991, p. 93ff.
- 5 K.G. Vasanthamadhava, *Western Karnataka Its Agrarian Relations 1500-1800*, New Delhi, 1991, p. 242.
- 6 Thome Lopez, *Navegação as Índias Orientaes*, Chapter 19, quoted in Manual Longworth Dames(Ed.), *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Vol. I, Reprint, Madras, 1989, p. 196. Vasco da Gama was aware of some ports of South Kanara. This is evident by the attempt made by Vasco da Gama to sell some commodities to native fisher folk of an island of South Kanara identified as St. Maries island near the port of Malpe. Also see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Vasco da Gama*, Cambridge, 1997, p. 145; Sturrock, *Madras District Manuals South Kanara*, Vol. I, Madras, 1894, p. 67.
- 7 Armando Cortesão (Ed.), *The Suma Oriental of Tom Pires*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1990, pp. 60-63
- 8 *Ibid*, p. 195.
- 9 B.S. Shastry, 'Commercial Policy of the Portuguese in Coastal Karnataka', H.V.Shrinivasa Murthy et. al., (Ed.), *Essays in Indian History and Culture*, New Delhi, 1990, p. 116.
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- 12 Genevive Bouchon, '*Regent of the Sea*' Cannnore's Response to Portuguese Expansion, 1507-1528, (Tr. Louise Shackley), Delhi, 1988, p. 168.
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- 14 H. Heras, *The Aravidu Dynasty*, Vol. I, Madras, 1927, p. 188.

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- 15 B.S.Shastry, "The Portuguese in Kanara 1498-1763", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Bombay University, 1969, p. 91.
- 16 H. Heras, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
- 17 *Ibid*, p. 190.
- 18 *Ibid*.
- 19 K.G.Vasanthamadhava, *Trends in Karnataka Historical Research*, Mangalore, 1996, p. 117.
- 20 Edward Gray(Ed.), *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1991, p. 301.
- 21 *Ibid*, pp. 302-303.
- 22 *Ibid*, pp. 304-306.
- 23 *Ibid*, pp. 314-315.
- 24 B.S.Shastry, "The Book of Correspondence concerning Kanara: A Note", *Indica*, Vol. 15, September, 1978, No. 2, pp. 121-126.
- 25 Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies 1688-1723*, Vol. I, London, 1739, Madras, 1995, pp. 282-283.
- 26 *Ibid*, p. 283.
- 27 *Ibid*.
- 28 B.S. Shastry, "Portuguese Relations with Tulaji Angria and Basavappa Nayaka II 1747-1750", in, G.S.Dikshit, *Studies in Keladi History*, Bangalore, 1981, p. 62. The Maratha raids on the ports of South Kanara began with the attack of Basrur by Shivaji.
- 29 Afzal Ahmad, *Indo-Portuguese Trade in Seventeenth Century (1600-1663)*, New Delhi, 1991, p. 119.
- 30 *Ibid*, p. 121.
- 31 *Ibid*, p. 129.
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- 33 Armando Cortesão, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-63.
- 34 Armando Cortesão,(Ed.), *The Suma Oriental of Tom Pires*, Vol. II, p. 514.
- 35 Mansel Longworth Dames (Ed), *op. cit.*, p. 193.
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- 37 H. Heras, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
- 38 *Ibid*, p. 62.
- 39 Sturrock, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
- 40 A.R.Disney, *op. cit.*,p. 5.
- 41 B.S.Shastry, 'A Glimpse of the Socio-Economic conditions of the Port-Towns of Coastal Karnataka in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries as Described in some Condemporary (sic) Portuguese Sources', Dr.K.Veeratappa(Ed)., *Studies in Karnataka History and Culture*, Mysore, 1987, p. 98.
- 42 A.R.Disney, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.
- 43 Edward Gray , *op. cit.*,pp. 296-298.
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- 45 *Ibid*, pp. 301-302.
- 46 Alexander Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 281.
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