

13. EUROPEAN PENETRATION INTO INDIA

The arrival of Portuguese in India

The arrival of Vasco da Gama, a nobleman from the household of the King of Portugal, at the port of Calicut in south-west India on 27 May 1498 inaugurated a new chapter in Indian history. For some time, the Portuguese, among other Europeans, had been looking for a sea route to India, but they had been unable to break free of the stranglehold exercised by Egyptian rulers over the trade between Europe and Asia. The Red Sea trade route was a state monopoly from which Islamic rulers earned tremendous revenues.

In the fifteenth century, the mantle of Christendom's resistance to Islam had fallen upon Portugal; moreover, the Portuguese had inherited the Genoese tradition of exploration. It is reported that the idea of finding an ocean route to Ocean had become an obsession for Henry the Navigator (1394- 1460), and he was also keen to find a way to circumvent the Muslim domination of the eastern Mediterranean and all the routes that connected India to Europe. In 1454, Henry received a bull (Papal charter) from Pope Nicholas V, which conferred on him the right to navigate the "sea to the distant shores of the Orient", more specifically "as far as India", whose inhabitants were to be brought to help Christians "against the enemies of the faith".

By the terms of the Treaty of Trodesilhas (1494), all new territories were divided between Spain and Portugal. The stage was thus set for the Portuguese incursions into the waters surrounding India. In 1487, the Portuguese navigator, Bartholomew Dias, rounded the "Cape of Good Hope", and so opened the sea route to India. An expedition of four ships headed out to India in 1497, and arrived in India in slightly less than eleven months' time. The coming of the Portuguese introduced several new factors into Indian history. As almost every historian has observed, it not only initiated what might be called the European era, it marked the emergence of naval power. Doubtless, the Cholas, among others, had been a naval power, but for the first time a foreign power had come to India by way of the sea; moreover,

Portuguese dominance would only extend to the coasts, since they were ever able to make any significant inroads into the Indian interior. The Portuguese ships carried cannon, but the significance of this is not commonly realized, especially by those who are merely inclined to view the Portuguese as one of a series of invaders of India, or even as specimens of 'enterprising' Europeans.

For centuries, the numerous participants in the Indian Ocean trading system- Indians, Arabs, Africans from the east coast, Chinese, Javanese, Sumatrans, among others - had ploughed the sea routes and eroded various tacit rules of conduct. Though all were in the trade for profit, as might be expected, it was sought to have overwhelming dominance: certainly no one had sought to enforce their power through arms. Trade flourished, and all the parties played their role in putting down piracy: this was a free trade zone. Into this arena stepped forth the Portuguese, who at once declared their intention to abide by no rules except their own, and who sought immediate and decisive advantage over the Indians and over the Indian Ocean trading system.

The conduct of the Portuguese in India was 'barbaric'. Vasco da Gama's initial conduct set the tone. On his way to India, he encountered an unarmed vessel returning from Mecca; as a contemporary Portuguese source states, da Gama ordered the ship emptied of its goods, and then fired it set on fire, prohibiting "any Moor" being taken from it alive. He then spent four months in India. Having waited out the monsoons, he set out to return to Portugal with a cargo worth sixty times what he had brought with him, and raised to pay the customary port duties to the Zamorin, the ruler of Calicut. To ensure that his way would not be obstructed, he took a few hostages with him. When he returned to Portugal in 1499, the pepper he brought with him was sold at an enormous profit; and nothing underscores the importance of direct access to the pepper trade as much as the fact that elsewhere the Europeans, who relied on Muslim middlemen, would have to spend ten times as much for the same

amount of pepper. Emboldened by this success, King Dom Manuel sent another expedition of six ships headed by Pedro Cabral. With their usual ignorance of, and disdain for, local customs, Cabral and the Portuguese sent a low-caste Hindu as a messenger to the Zamorin upon their arrival at port. Meanwhile, the Portuguese were claiming the sole right to the sea. Cabral attacked all Arab vessels within his reach, which provoked a riot at the port that led to the destruction of the Portuguese factory. Cabral retaliated in the only way known to a Portuguese marauder and bandit of his times: he massacred the crews of the boats, and burnt all the ships that were not his own. The intent, which would be repeatedly witnessed in the history of Portuguese interactions with the Indians (and with others), was to brutalize and terrorize the native population, and with evident justice, that Cabral's behavior persuaded the Indians that "the intruders were uncivilised barbarians, treacherous and untrustworthy".

Portuguese Governors in India

In March 1505, Francisco de Almeida was appointed Viceroy of India, on the condition that he would set up four forts on the southwestern Indian coast: at Anjediva Island, Cannanore, Cochin and Quilon. Francisco de Almeida left Portugal with a fleet of 22 vessels with 1,500 men. In September, Francisco de Almeida reached Anjadip Island, where he immediately started the construction of Fort Anjediva. In October, with the permission of the friendly ruler of Cannanore, he started building St. Angelo Fort at Cannanore, leaving Lourenço de Brito in charge with 150 men and two ships. Francisco de Almeida then reached Cochin in October 1505 with only 8 vessels left. There he learned that the Portuguese traders at Quilon had been killed. He decided to send his son Lourenço de Almeida with 6 ships, who destroyed 27 Calicut vessels in the harbor of Quilon. Almeida took up residence in Cochin. He strengthened the Portuguese fortifications of Fort Manuel on Cochin.

The Zamorin prepared a large fleet of 200 ships to oppose the Portuguese, but in March 1506 Lourenço de Almeida (son of Francisco de Almeida) was victorious in a sea battle at the entrance to the harbor

of Cannanore, the Battle of Cannanore (1506), an important setback for the fleet of the Zamorin. Thereupon Lourenço de Almeida explored the coastal waters southwards to Colombo, in what is now Sri Lanka. In Cannanore, however, a new ruler, hostile to the Portuguese and friendly with the Zamorin, attacked the Portuguese garrison, leading to the Siege of Cannanore (1507).

In 1507 Almeida's mission was strengthened by the arrival of Tristão da Cunha's squadron. Afonso de Albuquerque's squadron had, however, split from that of Cunha off East Africa and was independently conquering territories in the Persian Gulf to the west. In March 1508 a Portuguese squadron under command of Lourenço de Almeida was attacked by a combined Mamluk Egyptian and Gujarat Sultanate fleet at Chaul and Dabul respectively, led by admirals Mirocem and Meliqueaz in the Battle of Chaul (1508). Lourenço de Almeida lost his life after a fierce fight in this battle. Mamluk-Indian resistance was, however, to be decisively defeated at the Battle of Diu (1509).

Alfonso de Albuquerque (1509-15) was the second Portuguese governor. He was the real founder of Portuguese empire in India. He encouraged his countrymen to marry Indian women to increase the number of his supporters. The products of these marriages were known as Feringhees. Albuquerque made provisions for the education of the natives and retained Indian system of government (Village Panchayats) in the villages. He took steps to prohibit the practice of Sati.

A new fleet under Marshal Ferno Coutinho arrived with specific instructions to destroy the power of Zamorin's Calicut. The Zamorin's palace was captured and destroyed and the city was set on fire. But the king's forces rallied fast to kill Marshal Coutinho and wounded Albuquerque. Albuquerque nevertheless was clever enough to patch up his quarrel and entered into a treaty with the Zamorin in 1513 to protect Portuguese interests in Malabar. Hostilities were renewed when the Portuguese attempted to assassinate the Zamorin sometime between 1515 and 1518. In 1510, Afonso de Albuquerque defeated the Bijapur sultans with the help of Timayya, on behalf of the Hindu

Vijayanagara Empire, leading to the establishment of a permanent settlement in Velh'a Goa (or Old Goa). The Southern Produce, also known simply as Goa, was the headquarters of Portuguese India, and seat of the Portuguese viceroy who governed the Portuguese possessions in Asia.-There were Portuguese-settlements in and around Mylapore. The Luz Church in Mylapore, Madras (Chennai) was the first church that the Portuguese built in Madras in 1516. Later in 1522, the Sao Tome church was built on the grave of Saint Thomas. The Portuguese acquired several territories from the Sultans of Gujarat: Daman (occupied 1531, formally ceded 1539); Salsette, Bombay, and Bacaim (occupied 1534); and Diu (ceded 1535).

These possessions became the Northern Province of Portuguese India, which extended almost 100 km along the coast from Daman to Chaul, and in places 30-50 km inland. The province was ruled from the fortress-town of Bagaim.

From the 16th century, the Portuguese meddled in the church affairs of the Syrian Christians of Malabar. The Udayamperoor Synod (1599) was a major attempt by the Portuguese Archbishop Menezes to Latinize the Syrian rite. Later in 1653, Coonan Cross Oath led to the division of the local church into Syrian Catholics and Syrian Christians (Jacobites). Bombay (present day Mumbai) was given to Britain in 1661 as part of the Portuguese Princess Catherine of Braganza's dowry to Charles II of England. Most of the Northern Province was lost to the Marathas in 1739, and Portugal acquired Dadra and Nagar Haveli in 1779. In 1843 the capital was shifted to Panjim, then renamed "Nova Goa", when it officially became the administrative seat of Portuguese India, replacing the city of Velha Goa (now Old Goa), although the Viceroys lived there already since December 1759. Before moving to the city, the viceroy remodeled the fortress of Adil Khan, transforming it into a palace.

The Portuguese also shipped over many Orfas del Rei to Portuguese colonies in India, Goa in particular. Orfas del Rei literally translates to "Orphans of the King", and they were Portuguese girl orphans sent to overseas colonies to marry either Portuguese settlers

or natives with high status. Thus there are Portuguese footprints all over the western and eastern coasts of India, though Goa became the capital of Portuguese Goa from 1530 onwards until the annexation of Goa proper and the entire Estado da India Portuguesa, and its merger with the Indian Union in 1961.

The arrival-of Dutch in India

In 1593 AD under William Barents the Dutch made their first determined effort to reach Asia. Huyghen / Van Linschoten was the first Dutch national to reach India: He reached Goa in 1583 AD and stayed there till 1589 AD. Cornelius Houtman, a Dutch citizen reached India in 1596 AD and returned with large cargo in 1597 AD. Between 1595 AD and 1601 AD fifteen voyages had been by the Dutch to East Indies. The Dutch East India Company was formed in 1602 AD by an order of the government of Holland. This company's name was Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie (VOC).

The Dutch got favourable response from the rulers of Golkunda. They got the right to mint coin in the Pulicat mint in 1657 from Golkunda king. By the fannan of 1676 the Golkunda ruler granted the Dutch complete freedom from tariffs in Golkunda. The Dutch succeeded in getting farman from the Mughal Emperor Jahangir for trading along the west coast. They were exempted from tolls from Burhanpur to Cambay and Ahmadabad. Shah Jahan granted total exemption to the company from - paying transit throughout the Mughal Empire. Aurangzeb confirmed all the privileges granted by Shahjahan to the Dutch in Bengal in 1662. Jahandar Shah confirmed all the privileges granted by Aurangzeb in Coromandal in 1712.

Initially the headquarters of Dutch was at Pulicat after obtaining permission from king of Chandragir Venkat I and in 1690 Negapatnam became their headquarters. The Dutch minted a gold coin named Pagoda. The Dutch established their first factory at Masulipattnam in 1605 AD. Their first factory in Bengal was established at Pipli. After some time Balasore replaced Pipli. The Dutch used to exchange spices of Malaya Archipelago for cotton goods from Gujrat and the Coromandal coast. The Dutch used to export Cotton cloths, silk, saltpetre and opium from

Bengal. They shattered the Portuguese commercial monopoly in India. The Dutch dominated the trade between India and Java during 17th century. They popularized spice and textile trade, besides they exported indigo, saltpetre and Raw Silk. The Dutch commercial activities began to decline by the beginning of 18th century?

The Dutch were defeated by the English in the Battle of Bedera in 1759 and with this defeat the Dutch influence in India almost came to an end. The English decided to drive the Dutch away from their Indian possessions. The English joined hands with the Portuguese in India to drive the Dutch out. By 1795, the English succeeded in expelling the Dutch completely.

English East India Company

The “English Trading Company” was formed by a group of merchants known as the ‘Merchant Adventurers’ in 1599 AD. This company was granted a charter by Queen Elizabeth I on 31st Dec. 1600 AD. ‘The Governor and the Company of Merchants of London trading into East Indies’ was the name of English company. This company was given monopoly rights over eastern trade for fifteen years.

In 1608 AD Captain William Hawkins reached the court of Jahangir. Hawkins was the ambassador of King James I. He lived at the court for three years. He was given the title of English Khan and Mansab of 400 Jats by Jahangir. But because of Portuguese influence at the court, Hawkins failed to get permission to erect a factory at Surat.

In 1611 Capt. Middleton landed at Swally near Surat in spite of Portuguese opposition and got permission to trade from the Mughal governor. In 1612 AD Capt. Best defeated the Portuguese at Swally near Surat and this defeat broke their naval supremacy. Captain Best succeeded in getting a royal Farman to open factories in the East Coast, Surat, Cambay, Ahmadabad and Goa in 1613 AD. Sir Thomas Roe (1615-18) came to the court of Jahangir as the Royal ambassador of King James I and received permission to trade and establish factories in different parts of the empire.

The first English factory in south was established at Masulipattanam in 1611 AD. Another factory was established at Armagon (near Pulicat) in 1626 AD. In 1632 AD the Sultan of Golkunda issued the company the Golden Farmān. This farman allowed them to trade within the ports of the kingdom freely on lump sum payment of 500 pagodas a year. In 1639 AD Francis Day obtained the site of Madras from the Raja of Chandragiri with permission to build a fortified factory. This factory was named Fort St. George. In Sep. 1641 AD Madras replaced Masulipattanam as the headquarters of the English on the Coromandel coast. All the English settlements in Eastern India (Bengal, Bihar and Orissa) and the Coromandel were placed under the control of the President and Council of Fort St. George. The Portuguese gave the island of Bombay to King Charles II of England in dowry in 1661 AD. Bombay was given to company in 1668 AD on annual rent of £ 10. Thereafter Bombay replaced Surat as the headquarters on the west coast. Bombay was fortified in 1720 by Charles Boon.

Expansion of the factories of English East India Company

The English established their first factory in Orissa at Hariharpur (near the mouth of river Mahanadi), Balasore and Pipli in 1633 AD. In 1651 Shah Shuja, the governor of Bengal, granted the English Trading Company a Nishan through which they received trading privileges in return for a fixed annual payment of Rs. 3000. By another Nishan the English Company was exempted from Custom duties in 1656. First English factory in Bengal was established at Hughli in 1651 AD. In 1667 AD Aurangzeb confirmed the privileges enjoyed by the company. In 1672 AD Shayista Khan, the Mughal governor of Bengal confirmed the privileges enjoyed by the company.

In 1686 two pirate ships (Ships of English free traders) captured several Mughal ships in Red Sea. Upon this the Mughal governor of Surat attacked the English. Hostilities broke out in Bengal also. Hughli was sacked by the Mughals. The English were forced to leave Hughli. Aurangzeb granted them permission to trade, on payment of Rs. 1,50,000 as compensation. In 1691 AD Job Charnock established a factory at

Sutanati. In 1691 AD Aurangzeb granted a farman-by which they were exempted from the of custom duties in Bengal in return for an annual payment of Rs 3000. The rebellion of Shoba Singh, a Zamindar of Burdwan provided opportunity to the English to fortify the settlement at Sutanati.

Sir William Norris was sent as a special envoy by the English king to Aurangzeb's court to secure the formal grant of the trading concessions and the right to exercise full English jurisdiction over the English settlements in 1698 AD. In the same year British acquired the Zamindari of the villages of Sutanati, Kalikata and Govindpur from Mughal governor Azimush Shah on payment of Rs 1200 to the original proprietors. These three villages crested the nucleus of modern Calcutta. The rebellion of Afghan Rahini Khan provided the English opportunity to fortify Calcutta. It was named Fort William (1700 AD). Sir Charles Eyre was the first president of Fort William. All settlements in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were placed under Fort William (1700 AD)

Emperor Farruksiyar's Farman

In 1717 AD the Presidencies of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta sent a combined mission to the court of Emperor Farruksiyar. The mission was led by John Sunnan. Dr. William Hamilton was a member of the Surman commission. He cured Farruksiyar of a painful disease. The relieved Farruksiyar @ ias academy granted the company three Farmans in 1717 AD for duty free trade. These Farmans of Farruksiyar (1717) are called the Magna Carta of the Company.

By this farman the Company was granted right to duty free trade in Bengal in lieu of an annual payment of Rs. 3000. The Company was also allowed to wherever they pleased and rent addition, i territory around Calcutta. In case of province of Hyderabad, the English Company was allowed freedom from all dues except rent paid for Madras. The Company was granted right to duty free trade at Surat in lieu of an annual payment of Rs. 10000. The currency coined by company was made current throughout the Mughal Empire.

Development of the East India Company

The internal management of the English company was administered by a court of committees whose nomenclature later was changed to court of directors. It consisted of a governor, a deputy governor, and 24 members to be elected annually by a general body of the merchants forming the company. Besides, there was a secretary and a treasurer. The company's superior body court of directors was based in London while its subordinate body was in Asia. The Directors to be annually elected by the shareholders of the company. Each shareholder, irrespective of the value of the share had only one vote. The membership of the company was not confined to shareholders only but it could be secured through inheritance or presentation by paying an entrance fee through apprenticeship, services etc. Company enjoyed extensive powers to issue orders and to make laws in accordance with the laws and customs of the realm. The company also possessed judicial powers to punish its servants for their offences by imprisonment or fine.

In India, each factory was administered by a Governor-in-council. The governor was the President of the council with no extra privileges. Everything was decided in the council by majority vote. The members of the council consisted of senior merchants of the company. The Court of Directors was the supreme authority in framing policies for the company.

Queen Elizabeth was one of the shareholders of the company. After Queen Elizabeth's death, James I renewed the charter though it could be revoked at any time at three year notice. The company got the power to enforce law to maintain discipline on long voyages. The Charter Act of 1683 AD gave the company full power to declare war and make peace with any power. In spite of all opposition English independent merchants, known as Interlopers continued to defy the monopoly of the company by indulging in the East Indian trade of their own. These Free Merchants tried to press their demands in public as well as in Parliament. In 1694 AD the Parliament passed the resolution that all the citizens of England had equal right to trade in the East. In 1698 AD British Govt, sold the monopoly rights of East Indies trade to a new company named General Society. The London Company was given a

notice of three to wind up the business. The Old Company refused to surrender their privileges. After long drawn conflict both the companies agreed to join hands in 1702 AD. In 1708 AD a new Company named 'The united Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies' was formed by amalgamating both the companies.

French East India Company

The French were the last European traders to arrive in India. French East India Company founded under state patronage by Colbert in 1664 AD. The French company was named the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales*. In Dec 1667 AD the first French factors was set up at Surat by In 1669 AD Marcaré set up a factory at Masulipatnam by securing a patent from the Sultan of Golkunda. They also succeeded in getting a farman from Aurangzeb in 1669 AD to open their factory at Surat. In 1673 AD the French (François Martin & Bellanger De Lespinais) acquired from the Muslim governor of Valikondapuram Sher Khan Lodi a small village. This village developed into Pondichery and its first governor was François Martin. Fort Louis was established here. They acquired site of Chandemagore in Bengal from the Mughal governor Shayista Khan in 1674 AD. French factory was established here in 1690 AD. Pondichery (Fort Louis) was made the headquarters of all the French settlements in India and François Martin became the governor general of French affairs in India.

French commander Martin readily acknowledged the authority of Shivaji and agreed to pay him an *an-fj*-¹ amount in lieu of license to trade in his dominions: The French got permission to fortify Pondichery in 1689 from Sambhaji. Duplex was the most important French Governor in India.

The supreme body of the French Company was known as superior council of the Indies and headed by

a Director-General. The Supreme Council composed of five members was presided over by the governor. French East India Company was a state controlled organization and thus differed from the Chartered Companies of England and the Netherlands. It was highly dependent on the French government for its grants, subsidies, loans etc.

The French maintained close ties with Dost-ali the Nawab of Carnatic. On the basis of a strong recommendation by Dost-Ali the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah issued a farman granting permission to the French to mint and issue gold and silver currency bearing the stamp of the Mughal emperor and the name of the place of minting.

The Dutch blocked the French commercial activities at Hugli. They seized San Thome near Madras in 1672 but were soon defeated by combined forces of Sultan of Golkunda and the Dutch. Later, Dutch established their control over San Thome. In the Dutch-French rivalry the Dutch were always inferior, supported by the English. The Dutch captured Pondichery in 1692 AD from the French but later gave back in 1697 by the **Treaty of Ryswick**.

After 1742, the political motives began to overshadow commercial gains. The French governor *La Bourdonnais* began the policy of extending territorial empire in India. This led to a series of conflict with the English. The French fought three Carnatic wars with the English. During the third Carnatic War the French lost badly in the battle of Wandiwash in 1760 AD. With this defeat the French lost almost all their possessions in India. The battle ended by the Treaty of Paris in 1763 AD. Pondichery and some other French settlements were returned to the French but they were not allowed to fortify their settlements. The French continued to exist in India but they were no more a challenge to English hegemony.