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The Maritime Trade In Medieval Tamil Nadu – A Study

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Abstract

The Tamil merchants verbalized a feeling of solidarity through trade guilds. Trade was the main channel of the mobilization of productive wealth from one place to another. Over Sea trade goes back two or three thousand years in which the medieval Tamil Kingdom in the South had a significant impact on sea trade by having fares and imports with urban communities to the extent of Rome and Greece. Horse trade was conveyed by the trader class under the Panday's and this prompted a cycle of change from an agrarian economy to agro mercantile economy in the Tamil country. The Over Sea trade of medieval Tamilagam was energetic and had built up all the auxiliary requirements of harbours, shipping, was the lighthouses, etc. The factor that added to the development of seaside Trade networks development of the hinterland in the Cauvery and thamiraparani river basins which thusly helped the ports on the coast to thrive. The ascent of merchant groups in a few pockets channelized the assets from the coastal trade towards the extension of abroad trade. Kayal' was a significant Port in the district during the 16th century. Pearls and chanks fished in the south beachfront territory were sent out through the port.

Key words; trade,maritime,goods,ancient,medival

Introduction:

The Tamil merchants verbalized a feeling of solidarity through trade guilds. Trade was the main channel of the mobilization of productive wealth from one place to another. Over Sea trade goes back two or three thousand years in which the medieval Tamil Kingdom in the South had a significant impact on sea trade by having fares and imports with urban communities to the extent of Rome and Greece. Horse trade was conveyed by the trader class under the Panday's and this prompted a cycle of change from an agrarian economy to agro mercantile economy in the Tamil countryⁱ. The Over Sea trade of medieval Tamilagam was energetic and had built up all the auxiliary requirements of harbours, shipping, was the lighthouses, etc. The factor that added to the development of seaside Trade networks development of the hinterland in the Cauvery and thamiraparani river basins which thusly helped the ports on the coast to thrive. The ascent of merchant groups in a few pockets channelized the assets from the coastal trade towards the extension of abroad trade. Kayal' was a significant Port in the district during the 16th century. Pearls and chanks fished in the south beachfront territory were sent out through the portⁱⁱ.

Important Ports:

The various rulers of the Tamil Kingdom profited from the trading ventures with Arabs and Chinese. There were a few seaports both on the western and eastern shores of Tamilagam. There is some data about them from the early, Sangam works of art just as the later Tamil works. The harbour was called Pukar in Kaverippoompattinamⁱⁱⁱ. The ports of Nagapattinam, Thirumullaivasal, Karaikkal, Thirumalairayanpattinam, Point Calimere, Tranquebar, Nagore, Adhirampattinam Virapandyapatnam and Kayal in middle age Tamilagam kept on filling in as outlets for homegrown and global Trade the Bay of Bengal. Indigenous trade, markets, merchants, and trading networks in the medieval period besides shipbuilding and navigation on the Tamil coast were created. The trade foundations were gradually transformed into sustained settlements on the Tamil Coast in the 17th century^{iv}. The rise of Portuguese private traders in the Port settlements was huge. The private merchants contributed to the thriving of the Portuguese settlements somewhat. There were ports inside closeness to each other in the Southern Tamil Coast during the bygone eras when contrasted with the antiquated period. These ports of global significance made due close to the new Marakkayar stlements near the Hindu trading ports, for example, Virapandyanpattinam and Kayalpattinam^v.

Trade with the Arabs:

The rise of Islam at the beginning of the 17th Century A.D. What's more, the unification of the Arab clans under a concentrated state gave a gigantic stimulus to the development of extension which had been going on since the pre-Islamic period. During the hour of the, prophet, Islam was restricted to Arabia as it were. However, under Abu Baker, it went into Iraq and Syria. Under Umar the Great, the entire of Syria, Persia, and Egypt went under Muslim control. In this way, inside hardly any years in their trade activities, the Arabs continued Over Sea trade with intensified power^{vi}. The Arab vessels began either from the coast of the Red Sea or from the southern coast and landed either at the mouth of the Indus and in the Gulf of Cambay by cruising along the coast, or on the Malabar coast, in which case helped by the storm they continued to Kollam and different ports straightforwardly^{vii}. The Arab vessels beginning from the Persian Gulf followed similar courses and with the assistance of the rainstorm came to Kollam, the Malay peninsula, the eastern archipelago, and China, It was additionally during the Caliphate of Umar that the land ways to deal with India were investigated and a lot of data was gathered which drove at last to the triumph of Sind at the beginning of 8th century A.D. by Mohamad-bin-Qasim. Meanwhile, commerce by sea continued, and Muslims made their settlements in three towns along the south Indian coast and Ceylon. Rowlandson says that "the Muslim Arabs previously chose the Malabar coast before the 17th century's over. After the foundation of the Abbasid dynasty in 750 A.D. the capital of the Muslim realm was moved from Syria to Iraq^{viii}. Hence forward the seaports in the Persian Gulf began to grow more quickly than those in the Red Sea and the eastern trade got an extraordinary fillip during the Abbasid caliphate. Baghdad, the acclaimed capital of the Abbasids became an emporium of trade and trade as well as turned into a multiracial, multilingual, and social focus of worldwide significance. Their trade and settlements kept on thriving up and down the western and eastern banks of south India^{ix}.

Support of the Tamil Rulers:

The contact of the Tamil Kings with the Arabian and Persian merchants was in every case close and genial. The Hindu rulers of the south required horses for their military and they were to a great extent subject to the Arabs for the flexibility of horses of fine un variety, for which they were paid abundantly. The western bank of South India is closer to Arabia, Persia, and different nations in western Asia^x.

The closeness of these districts normally prompted the quick improvement of energetic Trade between the Arabs and Tamils. The empowering strategy of the Hindu rulers of Tamilagam made numerous Arab Muslims settle down in the rich districts of the nation. The productive Horse trade delivered rich profits to the Arabs who imported more horses from Hurmus, Bahrayn, and Uman. These unfamiliar creatures were legitimately brought to Thiruperunthurai which was before an extraordinary sea port from where the Arabian horses could

without much of a stretch have been shipped to Madurai and the Chola capital^{xi}. The requirement for getting these significant creatures was incredible to such an extent that Manikkavasagar, the best among the Saiva devotees, was sent to the Thiruperunthurai by the Pandyan King, Varaguna to buy horses structure the Arab merchants, who were additionally furnished with dresses of honor by the Pandyan ruler. It is hard to fix the right date, however, without a doubt Manikkavasakar thrived in the last half of the 8th or 9th century A.D. Consequently, obviously the Pandyan King kept up neighborly relations with the abroad nations, empowered unfamiliar Trade, sought after an approach of the resistance and generosity towards the Muslims because of which various Muslim settlements were set up on western and eastern coasts of south India which endured straight up to the 12th century^{xii}. Consequently from the ninth to the twelfth century, the Muslims framed an entrenched network in numerous parts of the Tamil land and they appeared to have procured adequate significance, for they are seen as carrying presents, to the Ceylonese General, Lankapura Dandanatha, who attacked the Pandyan realm in 1170-71 A.D^{xiii}. Amir Khusru and Ibn Batuta bear sufficient declaration to the presence of numerous Muslim settlements in Malabar. They were additionally liable for making a few Muslim people groups in the south like the Moplals, Lebbais, and Nawayats in South India and Tamilagam. The change of the Arabs to Islam brought about the Arab merchants carrying their new religion Islam toward the south when all was said done and Tamilagam specifically. Further, the devotees and buddies of the Prophet followed the merchants toward the south and Tamilagam to accomplish evangelist work and f south and Tamilagam. Subsequently, the evang movement began not spread Islam ins long after the ascent of the band proceeded straight up to the 12th century A.D^{xiv}.

Horse Trade:

Kayalpattinam thrived as the main port of The Pandya Nadu'. Arab horses and important produce arrived at this port from Aden, Hormoz, Greece, an other Arab nations and they were marketed on a large scale. Leading merchants from different parts of India visited 'Palayakayal' and purchased these impone products in bounty. Before the end of the 13th century 'Kayalpattinam' turned into the chief trading focus off the Muslims in South India. One of the Sangam sonnet 'Pattinappalai' goes on about the import of horses firm unfamiliar over the sea^{xv}. Chimes were tied around th necks of the horses which drew the chariots. Marcopol says that quantities of horses were brought to the domains of the Pandyan King and his four siblings whe governed autonomously. He additionally says, "For a Horse will bring among them 500 Saggi of gold, worth more than 100 signs of silver, and tremendous numbers are sold there consistently". Wassap's articulations about this trade are considerably more explicit and outfit intriguing subtleties. "It involved understanding the Malikul-Islam Jamaludin and the merchants ought a leave each year from the island of Kais and land a Mabaar 1,400 horses of his variety and of such liberl root that, in examination with them the most praised horses of days of yore, for example, the Rukhs of Rustam and so forth., ought to be as useless as the horses of the chess-load up". It was additional concurred that he ought to leave the same number of s obtained from all the isles of Persia, for example, Katil Lahsa, Bahrain, Hurmuz, and Kulhatu. Subsequen the gainful Horse Trade delivered rich profits to the Arabs who imported more horses to the Pandia kingdom^{xvi}.

Marakkayars and Their Trade:

The Marakkayars were Muslims and Tamil- talking people on the Coromandel coast of the Thanjavur area of Tamil Nadu. Muslim settlements sprang up in this particular part of Tamil Nadu during the early part of the medieval period. Karaikkal Nagore, Nagapattinam, Thopputhurai, Muthupettai, and Adhirampattinam sea ports were completely constrained by the Muslim people group. Among the Muslim people group, Marakkayars assumed a transcendent part in the advancement of overseas sea activities in the Thanjavur region^{xvii}. These ports were utilized as a section or intersection focusing on Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Penang, Malacca, Malaysia, and other Southeast Asian countries. The Arab shippers got comfortable in these port towns because of their Trade contacts and wedded the local ladies. The offspring of these people proceeded with the marine convention as navigators, ship proprietors, merchants, and Over Sea merchant Princesses. These people were to be called "Marakkayars" and they yielded colossal force in the courts of the nearby Kings of the Marathas. These rulers thusly enthusiastically offered all sorts of infra-auxiliary offices to the people of this trading network their investigation locale. The Marakkayars managed the influxes of the Indian waters particularly on the Coromandel coast from the earliest beginning point of the 13th century to the

furthest limit of 19th century A.D.^{xviii}. They set up a wide organization of stations and branches in the peninsula area of Thanjavur district and far away terrains.

Export:

The Marakkayars sent out the main things like textiles including silk and cotton, rice chank, Pearls, and sea items like both fish and dry fish, Crabs and Prawns, and so forth from the Thanjavur area. Their inland trade activities were associated with imports, for example, flavors, areca nuts, metals, horses, elephants, and an assortment of consumable things or customer products through the port towns. A lot of this fare and import trade was carried on by boats and vessels and the specific figures of this trade were not accessible in Thanjavur, Ramnad, and Tuticorin districts till the finish of the 1820s^{xix}. Concerning sea-borne trade, the majority of the fares and imports went through the port of Nagapattinam, and truth be told, an exceptionally the seaports of Thanjavur district at Thopputhurai, Thirumullaivasal pressed that the trade of Nagapattinam was not solely and Adhirampattinam. It was the trade of the Thanjavur area, yet it was additionally that of other close by areas associated with it by street and inland streams through little vessels or pontoons. The vast majority of the previously mentioned articles or products kept on being sent out from Nagapattinam till the beginning of the Second World War. Marakkayars were extraordinary fortune searchers and earned a ton of riches from the grounds of South and South East Asian nations for Trade and were financially solid and politically incredible in those districts. The Marakkayars confronted endless obstacles and disturbances from the Europeans during their overseas trade activities in the region. 18 The Marakkayars staggered by the heartless assault of the Portuguese in the 16th century A.D. This was the first blow from the foreigners against Marakkayars. Later this financial contention proceeded to the other European trading organizations like the Dutch, the Danes, the English, and finally the French. Be that as it may, to the European undertakings, the Marakkayars were additionally obliged to the changed circumstance for their monetary turn of events. There were numerous references likewise to vessels claimed by "Chettis" just as "Muslims" (Marakkayars) at Nagore and Nagapattinam^{xx}.

Trade with Ceylon:

In the 17th and 18th centuries, a considerable lot of them became specialists, workers, or bondsmen of European organizations. The external trade of Thanjavur was very significant. Thanjavur was an exporter of rice to different parts of India to Ceylon. The long coastline washed by the Bay of Bengal on the East and the part that diverted westwards from Point Calimere and washed by the Palk Straits contained various harbours of trade significance. The most popular of these was Nagapattinam, with authentic associations, where the Portuguese were permitted to construct a settlement by the first Nayak Sevappa. This settlement developed in stretch out, as the Portuguese exploited the inward distractions of the Nayak. By the beginning of the 17th century, it had become a completely Portuguese town where they practiced authoritative and trade rights. The town was caught by the Portuguese in 1658 A.D and claimed by right of victory until the English held onto it in 1781 A.D. The Dutch had broad interests in the Thanjavur trade. Other than the enormous foundation and energetic trade carried on at Nagapattinam, they had manufacturing plants at Adhirampattinam and Thirumullaivasal^{xxi}.

Pearl Fishing:

As early as the Sangam period pearl fishing and its associate trade of chank diving were important South Indian export industries. Pearl was the most lucrative Over Seatrade and pearl fisheries additionally turned into a significant asset for the pre-colonial rulers of the Kayalpattinam area. Pearl fishing itself required an order of much-hidden data concerning the area and tending of the district's pearl shellfish twist. In the pre-colonial periods this mastery was procured by the district's fishing networks, which incorporated the Kayalpattinam Muslims and the non-Muslim, Paravas of the Gulf of Mannar. ^{xxii}The Kayalpattinam port has been differently alluded to as Kahal, Cahill, Chayal, Gael, and Kia-i-le. Commodities such as silk, aromatic roots, and pearls were sent out from Kayal to Syria, Iraq, and Khurasan. This port likewise prospered in the Pearl trade as pearl fishing was created under the standard of Jatavarma Sundara Pandya (1251-1268).

Conclusion

The trade and pearl fishing activities pulled in the Portuguese to set up their settlements in the ports of Kayal and Punnakayal. The King of Portugal indicated extraordinary enthusiasm for the pearls and seed pearls and requested 'Francisco de Almeida' (1505-1508), the emissary in India obtain and send them to Lisbon. The Portuguese merchants built up the pearl fishery during their settlement. The minor ports of Kulasekarapattinam and Kayalpattinam lost their significance essentially due to the upgrades made to the port of Thoothukudi. A few centuries back, there had been global Trade pearls between Egypt, Persia, Arabia, and China. Pliny says that the pearls were imported to Rome from the Indian Ocean.

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