

**Trade and Development of Port Towns in Kerala With Special Reference
to Kodungallur**

Project submitted to the University Of Calicut in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts

In

English and History

by

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Declaration

I, Omar Rihas, hereby declare that this project entitled **Trade and Development of Port Towns in Kerala With Special Reference to Kodungallur** submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in English and History, is a bonafide research work done by me under the supervision and guidance of Dr. George Alex, Coordinator, Department of English and History, Christ College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda.

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Certificate

This is to certify that this project entitled **Trade and Development of Port Towns in Kerala With Special Reference to Kodungallur** is a record of research work carried out by Mr. Omar Rihas under my supervision and guidance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature submitted to the University of Calicut.

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Introduction

In the history of mankind, and the gradual development of his social and cultural aspects, the ports play an important role. They are the palette for mixing the various shades of culture which comes from various parts of the world. In other words the port towns can be considered as melting pot of different cultures, which came for the purpose of trade.

India, a country of sub-continental size, has been a veritable melting pot of races and cultures. Each ethnic strain has contributed in some measure to the Indian ethos. The geographical peculiarity of Kerala has resulted in of the relative political isolation of the state from the other parts of India up to Modern period. It was from the ancient time onwards ports that centered around the sea coast developed in Kerala. These ports were the results of the contacts with foreign traders who came to Kerala, seeking the invaluable spices. Along with that they brought their culture, religion, traditions, etc which enriched the heritage of God's own country. Jews, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Gujaratis, Konkinis, everyone came here, bringing their tradition and custom with them, and made the culture and heritage of Kerala more colorful and bright.

The traces of cultural development of Kerala can be seen in those ports, more distinctively, than any other part of Kerala. This dissertation is an attempt to trace the development of port towns in Kerala, which will also be an account of the cultural

development of Kerala. This study discusses about the development of Trade in Kerala and the discussion of Port-Towns starts from the historic period, such as Muziris, Tyndis and Nelcynda to the modern period port towns, such as Kollam, Cochin and Calicut. This study also aims at bringing out the importance of "Kodungallur" which was an important port town during the ancient times. Throughout the study, the cultural relations of Kerala from Ancient to the Modern eras have been discussed and the rise and fall of these Port towns has been analyzed with the corresponding cultural and social influences, in different periods.

Objectives of the study

To find the Importance of the port-town 'Kodungallur' which was a prominent port-town of the past.

To study the progress of Trade relations of Kerala with different Parts of the world and their cultural and social influences.

To trace the development of Port-Towns in Kerala.

Methodology

A study on the trade relations and the development of ports in Kerala, with focus on the diversities, activities, infrastructure, social and cultural aspects. The study will make

use of the existing primary and secondary sources that will reveal interesting details about development of trade and Port-Towns in Kerala. Using these sources, explained the Importance of Kodungallur in the trade history of Kerala

Chapter Overview

Apart from introduction and conclusion the project is divided into three chapters. The first chapter, **Trade History of Kerala**, make a glance on the past trade practices in Kerala. The next chapter **Development of Port-Towns in Kerala** deals with the development of different Port-Towns in Kerala in different time periods and their social and cultural influences. The third chapter, **Kodungallur and its importance in history** focuses mainly on 'Kodungallur' which was an important ancient Port-town, and its trade relations.

Chapter I

The Trade History of Kerala

The trade of spices between the Kerala coast and the rest of the world has a history of nearly 3000 years. However a clear description was done in 1st century AD in the Roman book "*Periplus of Erythrean Sea*" in which the ancient ports towns such as Muziris and Tyndis in the Kerala coast had been described. Certain references in the Old Testament of Bible contain information about cinnamon, cardamom and spices which were the special products of Kerala.

For a long period, the monopoly of spice trade was in the hands of the Arab traders, from whom the Phoenicians came to know about spices and controlled spice trade between Arabs and the western world. The Arabs monopolized spices until the Greek sailor Hippalus forged the new trade routes with the east. The Kerala coast was referred by all the Arab writers as the country of pepper. As their knowledge of the coastal cities of India increased gradually, they started calling the sea-board country as 'Malibar, the land of Mali', the term they used synonymously with pepper and land because pepper was the chief article of their trade. It is from Idrisi of the 12th century A.D that we hear for Malibar the first time, which also means the land of pepper. Ibn Battuta calls it Mulaybar¹ and states that it is the pepper country. At the same time China, Indonesia, and other South-East Asian countries had a trade relationship with Kerala. Out

¹ Panikkassery, Velayudhan, *Keralam Arannuru Kollam Mumbu Ibnu Battutayude Drishtiyil*. The Mathrubhumi Printing Press, Kochi, 1962.

of these the Chinese were the dominating group. The trade contacts between China have been mentioned in Malayalam literature also. "*Unnunilsandesam*" mentions the Chinese junks which came to the bank of Kollam. '*Unniyachicharitam*', which is assigned to the end of the 14th C Century, mentions the Chinese among several others who were seen in the town of Sriparvata. These trade links prevailed in post - Perumal era (before A.D. 800) and the acceptance of Arab traders among the rulers made conflict with Chinese and Arabs, and slowly the Chinese trade activities were removed from the Kerala coast.

In the age of exploration, the medieval world saw Muslim merchants dominating the spice trade of the East and Middle East. Venetians were the middlemen. They moved spices from the Middle East to the rest of Europe. The Portuguese won the control of the spice trade when Vasco de Gama reached the Indian shores, and later it goes to the hand of the Dutch and the British. Gradually, this colonial invasion ended the Muslim trade in Kerala coast and also in the Indian subcontinent.

It was the Greek traveler Hippalus who claimed to have discovered the course of the monsoon winds. It is presumed that the discovery was made by Hippalus in A.D 45. With the discovery of Hippalus the voyage by foreign travelers and trade through the Arabian Sea became easier and less dangerous. The knowledge about the course of the monsoon winds was very useful to the traders and sailors from the west. The knowledge that if the vessels are moved according to the trends of the winds, made it possible that a traveler from the Gulf of Aden can reach the Western coast of India or Kerala. With this discovery it was possible to reach Kerala from the Gulf of Aden in 40 days. The discovery of the monsoon winds was very useful to the traders from Egypt, Syria, Greece, Rome and Arabia and it greatly facilitated the trade between Kerala and the western

world.

Though the monsoon rain start during the first week of June in Kerala, the winds start blowing before that. The foreign travelers travelled in accordance to the course of the winds. In short the monsoon winds brought not only rains but also foreign travelers safely to Kerala. The foreign traders and sailors who reached Kerala along with the monsoon winds, returned after four months along with the return of monsoon wind.

The Spice Route

The major sea route of commercial importance-like the silk route on the land connecting China with Constantinople - was the Spice route that connected Africa and Rome to the Spice Capital of the world, Kerala coast, and from there to the east to China and Japan. The spice route derivative of hippalus wind enabled the sailors from Rome, Egypt and other western regions to get direct access to the world of spices. The trade in the spice route helped the port towns in the western coast of India to develop and come out of the monopoly of Arabs.

Trade relations

Nomadic Arabs and ancient Phoenicians are said to be the first to come to Kerala for spice trade. The Arabs as the middle men gained control of the trade by 600 B.C. Gradually more civilizations came to had trade with India; especially, with Kerala. These

trade relationships have a great influence on the cultural, and religious aspects of Kerala's social structure, and also on the regional architecture also. The major overseas trade relationships that ancient Kerala had were the Arabs, Greek and Roman, Jewish, Chinese and later the colonial.

Arabs controlled the spice trade in the Arabian Sea for a long time from 600 BC till the Greek voyager Hippalus found the "monsoon wind route" to the Kerala coast. However in the descriptions in Arab manuscripts, the mentions about the Kerala coast starts only from 9th century onwards that is, after the introduction of Islam. One of the major contributions by the Arabs was the religion of Islam. It made a dramatic change in the political history of Kerala. Sulayman - one of the earliest traveler in the post Islamic period - reported in the 9th century that he had never known anyone in Hind (India) who had embraced Islam. Later Idris in the 12th century and Ibn Battuta refer so many mosques along the Malabar Coast. There are frequent references in Cholas inscriptions from Tanjavur, Tiruchirappalli and south Arcott to Kutirachettikal (horse dealers) who seems to have been importing horses from Arabia². Slowly they became a part of Kerala's social structure. They constructed so many mosques along in Kerala, mainly in the port towns. The Muslims were the right hand of Zamorins. Eventually, Calicut became the major Muslim trade centre. Later they had a province under their own rule-the Arakkyal dynasty at Cannanore.

The Greek and Romans are together known as the Yavanas in the old inscriptions. Greek and later the Romans made direct trade relationship after Hippalus opened the

² Kunju, Ibrahim, A.P., *Kerala Charithram*, Vol. II, Kerala History Association, Emakulum, 1973.

route through the Arabian Sea. The magnitude of trade between the Yavanas was huge, and they were interested in the luxury of Indian trade materials. The major port in Kerala- also in India, where Romans came was Muziris. Many Roman potteries and coins have been excavated from Kodungallur and Pattanan (old Muziris). The first written record on the trade along the Kerala coast was given by the Greek, in the *Periplus of Erythrean Sea* in 1st century A.D. Later *Geographia* of Ptolemy (2nd century A.D) and the *Travelogue of Cosmas* (6th century AD) added to this. Moreover, they developed a map showing the western coast of India which gives a more accurate picture of the ancient Kerala coast.

Jews made their way to the Kerala coast soon after the destruction of the Second Temple of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70, they settled at Muziris (Kodungallur). Well received by the enlightened rulers of Kerala, they built synagogues and laid the foundations of a strong community life. Under the Kulasekharas, they enjoyed several rights and privileges and the famous Jewish Copper Plate Grant of AD 1000 by the Chera emperors. Till the 15th century, the Jews enjoyed a high status in society and established a trading monopoly. In 15th century, they shifted from Kodungallur to Cochin due to an attack from the Muslims. With the Cochin Raja's permission, they built a settlement near the Mattancherry Palace - the present Jew town, along with a Synagogue as their place of worship.

In India it was with Kerala that China had many trade links. It is assumed that even during the ancient times Kerala had commercial links with China. Arab sailor Sulaiman reports the Chinese ships came to the Kollam port. The Venetian traveler Marco Polo, who reached Kerala during the last decade of the 13th Century and Ibn-Battuta, had given

vivid description about the Chinese traders along the Malabar Coast. Many sailors from China came to the Kerala coast, Zheng He, the greatest navigator from China was the leader of this trade delegation. But the Chinese travelers didn't refer much on Kerala in their accounts. Many Chinese implements at Panthalayani Kollam, Kurakkeni Kollam (present Kollam), Calicut, Ezhimala have been discovered. The Chinese trade relationship declined gradually with the conflict between Muslim traders, and the abandonment of external trade activities by the Ming emperor of China in 15th century.

The European countries started controlling the trade along the Kerala coast after Vasco de Gama came in A.D 1498. Portuguese were the first to establish a colony in Kerala, and they were succeeded by Dutch, French and finally the British. Portuguese established a fort at Cannanore and Cochin not in Calicut, even though they began from there. They were a strong power to hold the trade over the Arabian Sea, but they prevailed here till Dutch and British came in the late 16th century. They constructed the Mattanchery palace (today known as Dutch Palace after they renewed it).

The Dutch East India Company began to dispatch ships to India from 1595 onwards and after many encounters with the Portuguese and their allies they succeeded in establishing their power in several places in India. They focused on the Cochin port like the Portuguese, which was the emerging modern port in Kerala coast.³

The French East India Company constructed a fort on the site of Mahe in 1724, and thus started a trade relation with Kerala. But they never became a powerful alliance to

³ Panikkasseri, Velayudhan *Portuguese-Dutch Adhipathyam Keralathil*, Current Books

control the trade in Arabian Sea. But even after the British conquered the whole of India, Mahe and Pondichery remained under the French jurisdiction. The British and Dutch came to India in almost the same era, and together they demolished the monopoly of Portuguese in spice trade. Later they succeeded the Dutch also and gradually controlled the trade over the Arabian Sea. British East India Company constructed so many factories in the port towns. They concentrated in trade and administrative over hand in Kerala.

Chapter II

Development of Port Towns in Kerala

The coastal area of Kerala had many small port areas, and because of this they were villages more than a town. After the arrival of Greeks, some of these ports developed and most of them remained as such, even though trade activities were happening there. This series of port areas along the coast of Kerala can be seen in later period descriptions by Ibn Battuta.

The floor of the Arabian Sea along Kerala coast was covered with mud deposits, with that no waves were formed along the coastal sea. The sail-ships of those days could therefore anchor right in the sea, and remain as safely as in a pond. Devoid of waves, the ships were free from the thrust and pull normally experienced in the open sea. This peculiarity in the geographical condition helped the ports along the Kerala coast, to be a favorite destination, even though they didn't have the depth to carry large vessels. Consequently the big vessels remained in the sea and the cargo used to be carried to and from the ships in the canoes and small boats even during monsoon season. When the trade developed, it tended to concentrate on some of those small villages, and eventually they became the business centers. But the same geographical condition resulted in the deterioration of certain port towns in certain periods and the emergence of a new port. This can be represented as a trade shift, from one port to another.

Based on this trade shift and the period of existence of a port, the port towns along the coast of Kerala can be divided into three;

Pre-Perumal Era (B.C.600-A D.800)

Perumal Era (A.D.800-A.D. 1300)

Post-Perumal Era (A.D.1300-A.D.1980)

Unlike the name indicates, the development of port towns and the political changes happened in the history of Kerala doesn't have much relationship. The division is done according to that, in order to relate the development of port towns to some benchmark in the history of Kerala.

Pre-Perumal Era

The first reference made about the port towns along the Kerala coast is done by Greek in *Periplus of Erythrean Sea*. In that the ports are mentioned as Tyndis is of the Kingdom of Cerobothra. It is a village in plain sight by the sea. Muziris, of the same kingdom, abounds in ships sent there with cargoes from Arabia, and by the Greeks; it is located on a river, distant from Tyndis by river and sea by five hundred stadia, and up the river from the shore by twenty stadia. Nelcynda is distant from Muziris by river and sea about five hundred stadia, and is of another Kingdom, the Pandian.⁴ (500 stadia is equal to 90 km approximately).

⁴ H. Schoff, Wilfred. *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea Annotated by Wilfred H. Schoff*, Longmans Green, New York, 1912.

From this and reference made in early Tamil works like *Purananuru* and *Akananuru* and also in the *Pliny-natural history* (1st century AD), later *Geographia* of Ptolemy (2nd century A.D) and the *Travelogue of Cosmas* (6th century A.D), the major port towns before the Perumal era, that is before 9th century AD along the coast of Kerala were:

Muziris (Muchiri - present Pattnar, near Kodungallur)

Thondi or Tyndis (Ponnani- On the mouth of river Bharathapuzha 90 Km north of Muziris)

Nelcynda (Niranam- At the confluence of rivers Pamba and Manimala 90 Km south-east of Muziris)

Muziris

Indo-Roman trade made Muziris a bustling centre during the early historical period, between the first century BC and the fifth century AD. It is presumed that to this international trading centre, Phoenicians and Greeks too came for trading activities. In some of the foreign accounts Muziris is referred to as an important trade centre where pepper and other spices, various kinds of goods and articles were exchanged. Muziris was also known as Vangi, Musirippattinam, Musiripathanam, Mahodayapuram and Mahadevar Pattanam at various points of time.

It was believed that the present Kodungallur was the Great port. But the archaeological evidences shows that the Muziris was the main central port of a series located presently at Pattanam. The location of Muziris port was at the mouths of the five branches of Periyar from west Cheranallur to Kodungallur in ancient times and Cranganore (Kodungallur) was one of the sub port in that series. Pliny - the Roman sailor, distinguished between Cranganore and Muziris in his "*Treatise Natural History*". Other sub ports identified near Muziris are Kumbalam and Eyyal. Existence of inland navigational canals from Muziris to these sub-ports is noteworthy. Merchandise could be carried to Muziris port from these sub-ports, using the natural canals.

There was a southern sub port also at Udayanperur. Some historic record says that it was a province where Christians ruled, (Malabar Manual, William Logan-1886), and the Romans pictured a Temple of Augusti near the port which is still a controversial element. The Jews had a settlement in Kuriapilly-Chennamangalam Island, south of Kodungallur. Their ancient synagogue is still maintained there. The Cheraman Juma Masjid is the first Muslim mosque built in Kerala as well as in India. These shows that Muziris was a major trade centre where so many cultural variations, representing different worlds were present.

From the Roman maps and the descriptions given by various travelers, the Karur was the administrative capital of the Chera kingdom which was much far from Muziris. But in some later descriptions the Cranganore is represented as the capital of Chera kingdom. It is very clear that Muziris, the "great emporium of trade" in the first century, was not confined to a small in Kodungallur or a tiny hamlet like Pattanam. It had harbor zones,

trading zones, which are connected by natural canals, military barracks of both Cheras and Romans, settlements of Jews, Arabs, Christians and many others, fully secured warehouses, etc which are developed through a period⁵. The various settlements and trade influences mentioned in the history of Muziris are specified by the built forms-temples, mosques, churches, synagogue and various trade related buildings. These structures represented the development of port over a period of time.

Thondi/Tyndis

Thondi is same as Tyndis mentioned earlier (*Periplus of Erythrean Sea*). This is a trade centre appearing in Sangam literature. It was a fine port. In the *Periplus*, it is referred as a village on the mouth of a river. The river Ponnani empties into the sea here. This river mouth is about 90 Km (500 Stadia) north of Muziris.

One important thing is to be noticed that even though Tyndis had trade relationships with foreign countries, it is mentioned as a village, rather than a town. It may be the major administrative town lies far from the port. From the Sangam literature, Tyndis was a place where King Narmudi Cheral lived for some time during his reign, which means there was township settlement. It is an important pilgrim place for Muslims which shows an early Muslim settlement in Tyndis, but this settlement started after losing the status of an important trade Centre. It is also called as a "Small Mecca".

⁵ Panikkar K. M, *A history of Kerala*, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, 1960.

Nelcynda

This port was under the control of Pandya Dynasty for a long time. The present Niranam had a trade contact with Madura as well as with Romans. The real name of the port was Porakad, but due to the Neacyndi tribe (which is still a mystery); the name Nelcynda came in Roman records. There are not much descriptions about this port in history. There is a Christian settlement started by the St. Thomas in the 1st century A.D. St. Mary's Church is believed to be built by St Thomas, in A.D 54, and it is one of the seven churches founded by St. Thomas in Kerala. The major inference from the study of pre-Perumal port town is that they were not the capital of the kingdom. For the Chera dynasty it was Karur, and the Pandya Dynasty (the Nelcynda port) it was Madura. But in the following period, which is in Perumal and post - Perumal era, the port towns were the capital of the kingdom.

Related to the structural frame work of the port, each port towns mentioned was a central port with a series of subsidiary port, interconnected by the water canals. Due to the pattern of monsoon, the tradesmen had to stay in Kerala, which demanded a place of worship and later settlements developed around these worshipping places. The same pattern of development is followed in the later periods also.

Perumal Era (A.D 800 - A.D 1300)

In the beginning of Perumal era the port towns that specified earlier gradually shifted

to the north - the Nelcynda became the Kurikkeni Kollam, and Muziris became the Muyirikodu (Present Kodungallur). These shifting happened due to the geographical change, the mud bank deposition and the establishment of a new port in the north in this period - Panthalayani Kollam, taking all the glory of Tyndis.

The major port towns in this era were:

Kurakkenni Kollam (Kollam)

Muyirikodu (Kodungallur) and

Panthalayani Kollam (near Calicut)

By the beginning of Perumal rule, the port towns were the capital of the kingdom and the name Kollam came from the Kovilakam - the Palace. But it should be noted that the development of port towns had not been influenced by these Kovilakams, but the glory of the trade and the port towns attracted the rulers to establish an administration unit in these port towns. By the end of the pre-Perumal era, the Arab traders regained the monopoly of the spice trade, which was lost during the Greek and Roman period. And in beginning of this era the Arab brought the Islam and Malabar Coast was one of the earliest places where Islam settlement started.

Along with Arabs the Chinese also had a great deal in the spice trade, towards the

east. The traces of Chinese trade relationship can be seen in the similarity of roof structure, which became a part of traditional architecture of Kerala. Apart from these establishments there were more port towns to the north of Kerala, under the Mushika dynasty in this period, like Ezhimala and Cannanore. However they were least specified in the counts of the foreign travelers, like Ibn Battuta and Fa Hien.

Kurakkeni Kollam (Kollam)

The present Kollam harbor area was known as the Kurakkenni Kollam, in the Perumal era. The name of the port came from the geographical peculiarity of the place - "Kuraku" meant for the curve and the 'Keni' is reservoir, which represents the shape of Ashtamudi Lake, which had an arch shaped shore.

Kollam along with the Panthalayani Kollam in north, were dominated by the Arab and Chinese traders, in the Perunal Era, and it continued till 15th century A.D. While Muziris (Kodungallur) is rich with historical remnants, the contemporary Malayalam literature abounds in references to the seaborne commercial activities in Kollam. It is substantiated by the accounts of Arab travelers, which also testify to the opulence of its marts. The Arab trade has influenced the society like it done in the northern Kerala. One of the oldest mosques in Kerala is built at Kollam.

Recent archaeological explorations have demonstrated the degree of Chinese trade in this region. The place names also support this Chinese connection. Champranikkodi is a

place name on the eastern bank of the Ashtamudi Lake, which is believed to be derived from the Chinese "Champrani". Another one is the "Chinnakada", which can be evolved out of "China kada". Such evidences show that the influence of trade links on the development of the port.

Panthalayani Kollam

The name holds for the annual mud deposition at the sea mouth, and it is the present Panthalayani, near Kappad, 26km north to the Calicut. The similarity between Kurukkeni kollam and Panthalayani is in the trade relations. As mentioned earlier these two were dominated by the Chinese and the Arab traders. The mosque at Panthalayani stands for the Arab influence. The Chinese & Muslim traders who had arrived at Panthalayani were provided with facilities for religious activities.

For Chinese traders it was Pandarani, and it was an important trade Chinese trade centre till 15th century. The Chinese contact has left behind a few field names around Panthalayani Kollam. Cinakotta, a field name near Calicut refers to the China Kotta (Chinese fort) is an evidence for the Chinese settlement at Panthalayani.

Muyirikodu (Kodungallur)

It is due to the geographical change that the Muziris turned to Muyirikodu in the Perumal era. The shift of the flow of Periyar River to the north which made the Kodungallur azhi in the Vembanadu Lake. During this period the capital of the Chera

kingdom was settled at Kodungallur. An important thing that happened in the development of Kodungallur during this era was the Christian settlement at Valeyadattu near Udayamperur. Udayamperur was one of the sub-port of Kodungallur. It is believed that the Christians ruled the province with their capital as Udayamperur. However the new face of Muziris could not stand with time. The port towns at Kollam and Panthalayani developed far better than Kodungallur. The only glory it had was the capital of the kingdom, and this changed when it dispersed into small kingdoms like Calicut, Cochin and Venad.

The change in the overall structure of the port towns can be traced from the Perumal era. The port towns became the capital of the kingdom. The various settlements routed more deeply into the society and the origins of new structures are evident in this era. One of the major things was the area of each settlement, brought up by the overseas trade has been increased. Unlike the inscriptions from the pre - Perumal era, there is specific mentioning about the streets, bazaars, temples etc which are related to different communities arrived here. Some of the characteristics of the pre - Perumal port towns has been continued, such as the "all weather port and the water canal system of transportation. This enabled the spreading of the town and the various communities, around the town, connected by the water canal system.

Post - Perumal Era (A.D 1300 - A.D 1947)

After the end of Perumal rule in A.D. 1122 The kingdom divided into so many small regions, of which Calicut, Perumpadappu, and Venad were the predominant territory.

They actually divided the major three port towns in the Perumal era, i.e. Kodungallur, Kurakkeni Kollam and Panthalayani Kollam.

Later the Kodungallur changed to Cochin, Panthalayani changed to Calicut, and the Kurakkeni Kollam to Kollam, due to the geographical changes as well as the political disintegration of the kingdom. These were the modern port towns that the coast of Kerala had till the end of colonial period. During this era the colonial invasion happened, which led to a drastic change in the trade and the development of port towns.

The infrastructure of port towns developed much in the British period. The French influence remained only in the Mahe region. During the colonial period the trade confined to the European countries and the trade relationship between the Arabs and other groups diminished in this period. One of the major things that the colonial invasion brought is the new style of architecture, which changed the traditional concepts of building design. The Portuguese, Dutch, French and the British contributed to the development of architecture in Kerala through different decades.

The major port towns in the post - Perumal era, which had the importance in the trade, were:

Kollam

Cochin

Calicut

These ports were under the control of the Venad, Perumpadappu, and the Calicut Province after the disintegration. Apart from these ports, port towns like Cannanore and Ezhimala also prevailed in this period, which were under the rule of Chirakyal dynasty. But the major developments were in and around these three port towns which were also the administrative capital of the respective territory. The development of the port towns that mentioned above can be divided in to two phases, in general - the period before the colonial invasion and under the colonial rule, which almost restructured the port towns.

Kollam

This is the only port that sustained in Perumal era and the Post - Perumal era. The Kurakkeni Kollam expanded over the time and the present Kollam port developed by the end of Perumal era. Kollam was the major port, famous for the Cashew nut exports, had trade relation with the China even after the Perumal rule, and this continued till the end of 14th century, where all other port towns were dominated by the Arabs, in that time. The growth can be divided in to two phases as mentioned earlier -before the colonial invasion and under the rule of European countries.

From the accounts of the travelers such as Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo, the Kollam port was an important trade Centre where Jews, Christians, Chinese and Arabs had their own settlements. The Jewish settlements had been vanished and the influence of Chinese is limited to the Chinese fishing nets and the similarity in the roofing system, which has become a part of traditional architecture of Kerala. However the Christian, and the Arab

influences are more distinct.

One of the important things to be noticed in this era, about the development of Kollam port is the expansion of the city limits to the north-west of the Ashtamudi Lake, with mass Christian settlements at Thangassery. Before that the major trade spine was around the present Paykada Street. It is believed that the settlement started here in A.D 1st century with the arrival of St. Thomas. An ancient church of St. Thomas was supposed to have been built at the edge of the water, (one of the seven churches made by him), but it was devastated. Whatever the story behind the origin, the settlement became more evident in the map of Kollam only after the Perumal era. "*The Tharisapalli sasanam*" (in middle of 9th century A.D) is the oldest record regarding the history of Kerala, and it is about the permission for the construction of a church at Kurakkeni Kollam (Kollam). It shows an early Christian settlement at Kollam. During the period of Colonial invasion, the Christians in Kollam got importance in trade, and Thangassery was the major place of intervention happened.

The colonial invasion started at the end of the 15th century, by the Portuguese, and they were succeeded by the Dutch and the British. Their influences are evident in the architecture Kerala, and their influence is strong in these port towns. The influence of Portuguese invasion evident in the church architecture, the colonial invasion brought the Christian settlement at Thangassery into the front. Till then Thangassery was nowhere in the trade activity, because of the Arab and Chinese over ruling. The other major intervention done by the Portuguese was the Fort Thomas at Thangassery. It made them to control the trade through Kollam, and put Thangassery in the trade map of Kollam. In

this period the monopoly of the Arab tradesmen ended and the Muslim settlements remained in the old town. The Portuguese invasion helped the development of Christians and the new port area was completely under the control of them. The Portuguese surrendered Fort Thomas to the Dutch in 1661, and the trade from the Kollam port went in to the hand of Dutch east India Company. The Dutch built so many houses and auxiliary buildings to support the trade, in and around Kollam and Thangassery. They built the canal which is now known as the Buckingham canal, to access the port and to transfer the goods, easily from the fort. Unlike the Portuguese, the Dutch didn't try to convert indigenous people to the Dutch Reformed Doctrine. As a result there are not many buildings in any of the ports in Kerala, to demarcate the Dutch influences.

Furthermore in Kollam they demolished the churches made by Portuguese except the St. Thomas church⁶. After the Dutch, the British came in to the trade. They totally restructured the port and the activities in the port. The Fort Thomas came in to the hand of British and similar to their predecessors, they controlled the trade from the fort.

One of the major aspects of the British period was that they developed the entire Kollam city, where Portuguese and Dutch tried to stay in the Thangassery and the surrounding areas. After the independence, the inefficiency of Kollam port to receive large vessels took the name of port from it. The rise of Cochin port also accelerated this. The trade from this port has been transferred to Cochin port. By the end of 1970's Kollam lost its name as a port. Recently plans for redeveloping the port at Kollam has been approved by the Government of India and it is under execution

⁶ Alexander, P.C. *The Dutch in Malabar*, Annamalai University Press, Annamalai, 1946

Cochin

Cochin, originally known as Perumpadappu Swaroopam, is rightly known as the Queen of the Arabian Sea, has attracted many voyagers and traders over the centuries. From the beginning there were the Arabs who were followed by the Chinese in search of spices. It was the scene of the first European settlement in India early in A.D 1500 when the Portuguese, the Dutch, and then the English came here and added to the rich history of this land. Ruled by many Maharajas and Divans, this city evolved through the centuries, assimilating the cultures of the many communities from all over the globe who made it their home. Neither in the earlier notices of Malabar nor in the accounts of Pliny (A.D 23-79), Ptolemy, *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, Marco Polo (A.D 1290-93) nor Ibn Battuta do we find any mention of a place named Cochin. The first mention of Cochin is made sixty years after the formation of the harbor (AD 1341) by Ma Huan, a Chinese Mohammedan, and later by the Italian traveler Nicolo Conti (A.D 1440). These writers, as well as those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, variously called the town Cocym, Cochym, Cochin, Cochi etc. When analyzing the time line, the development of trade along the Vembanadu lake region has undergone a continuous drift from Muziris (Pattanam) to Cranganore (Kodungallur). A sudden declination can be seen in the trade from Kodungallur during the 14th century AD. And at the same time the Cochin has developed into a port and the trade activities happened in the Kodungallur port shifted further south, to Cochin. In relation to activities of the region, in A.D 1341 a great flood happened in Periyar and the port of Kodungallur silted up. This geographical phenomenon led to the development of another big sea mouth for the lake region at Cochin. The traders in this region slowly started to move towards south to Cochin and

Alleppey in the hope of establishing trade towns. In 18th Century AD, Raja Kesavadas built a new port town of Alleppey in consultation with the Dutch. Up to 1980, Alleppey was a major port with heavy international activities. After this, the mud bank phenomenon was slowly moving towards north on the shore, which has taken away Alleppey's status of being an all-weather Port. The advent of Cochin as a major port has seen the decline of Alleppey.

The trade shift resulted in the migration of different settlements from Kodungallur, who were depended on the trade activities. They settled in Mattancherry and the city started growing from there. Before this migration happens, it is believed that the Cochin was a fishing harbor, or small village on the Coast of Vembanattu Lake. There has been no clear archaeological evidence to prove this. Furthermore none of the literary works mention about Cochin. Cochin is not even mentioned in any of the earlier foreign notices of Malabar. The rulers of the Cochin territory (Perumpadappu Swaroopam) were settled near at Chitrakudam in Perumpadappu village till the end of the 13th century A.D. This shows that the Cochin gained the glory, and began to grow as a city after the 13th century A.D. The early settlements of Cochin were at Mattancherry, and they were the people shifted from the Kodungallur port. Since the major reason for this shift is the trade, the first people settled here were the Arabs and the Chinese, and later the Jews migrated, in the Portuguese period. Apart from the Kodungallur, migration from different part of Indian subcontinent, such as the Gowda Saraswatha Brahmins, the Gujarathi settlements, Tamil Brahmin's settlement, etc.

The Portuguese era started by the arrival of the Portuguese Admiral, Pedro Alvera Cabral, who landed at Cochin on 24 December 1500 at the beginning of 16th century. Cochin was the seat of the Portuguese in India. The transfer of the capital of Portuguese India to Goa finally took place in 1530. The arrival of Dutch in India, and the conflict between the natives and started the ending of Portuguese rule over the spice trade. The Dutch conquered the Portuguese fort in 1663 and thus a new era of development started in the history of Cochin port.

The Dutch East India Company began to dispatch ships to India from 1595 onwards and after many encounters with the Portuguese and their allies they succeeded in establishing their power in several places in India. The Cochin Kingdom made so many treaty with the Dutch east India Company and the alliance remained stable till 1771. The Dutch gained the position to be the prime minister of Cochin raja. After that the Mysorian attack happened and the British came in to the scene, replacing the Dutch. During the period of Dutch the Cochin town has expanded further to the nearby islands, such as Bolgatty, and Gundu. Supporting this expansion, the water transportation flourished. The inland water canal system, which was a typical character of port towns in Kerala, was also utilized well, during this period. But still the main land areas were not treated for the trade activities. The defeat with the Zamorian of Calicut and Hyder Ali of Mysore, the Dutch East India Company lost its supremacy over the Malabar area and by the end of 1760's the fall of Dutch started and the British came in to the Malabar and the spice trade.

The modern period of Cochin starts from the accession of throne in 1790, of Rama

Verma, the Sakthan thampuran. He made treaties with the British East India Company. Even though the Treaty signed was on the basis of friendly relations, but the British made advantage of that, and the Mysorian attack and the Tippu's defeat in the Sreerangapattanam battle gave the British an over hand on the administration of the Cochin territory. The Paliath Achan, the hereditary Chief Minister of Cochin, organised a revolt against the British immediately after the death of Sakthan Thampuran in 1805, Velu Thampi Dalava of Travancore was also with him. But this attempt to remove the British from the Cochin territory didn't came to effect, and the country fell in to a financial crisis. With the help of British Resident Macaulay, the king Kerala Verma managed to come up from that. And after the revolt, in 1814, the British bought the islands of Cochin including the Fort Cochin and the peninsular Cochin area, from the Dutch for the island of Banca (an Indonesian island). After these incidences the British gained a complete control on Cochin territory, and soon it became a part of the Madras Government. The port city of Cochin had become highly developed during the time of the British rule in India. The opening of Suez Canal in AD 1869 emphasized the importance of Cochin Port as coaling station. The trade flourished after that and the Cochin port became the major port along the Kerala cost, suppressing the other major ports like Kollam and Calicut. This development led to the formation of Cochin P.W.D. After the formation of P.W.D, a plan for dredging the sea and directing the ships to the inner lake shore was suggested. But due to the lack of technology it failed. Then the main land and the islands in the Vembanattu Lake were connected with the water transportation system, in accordance with the shifting of capital and the growth of port after the Suez Canal built.

After the Willington Island built, the port developed drastically, and by the end of the British period it became one of the major ports in Indian subcontinent. After Independence

it became the only port along the Kerala coast, and Kollam and Calicut lost their importance after two or three decades.

Calicut

Calicut is the most important coastal city of Malabar, the northern region of the state of Kerala. It was a leading trading centre for spices on the West Coast of India during the medieval period Ruled by the Zamorin dynasty; Calicut found a place in history with the discovery of sea route to India in 1498 by the Portuguese navigator Vasco De Gama. He landed at Kappad, a coastal fishing village and history was changed, the political scenario of India, which ultimately ended with its colonization by the British. It remained under the Madras Presidency till the formation of Kerala in 1956 after independence. The early history has it that during the sangam age, Calicut known Kallikkottai in Tamil formed a part of the Chera Empire. It played a leading part in foreign trade relations between Kerala and the outside world.

Calicut became a mighty seaport, where the Arabs and the Chinese met to exchange the products of west with the east and vice versa. Religious tolerance, good administration, which gave security and impartiality to all and the friendly attitude of

Zamorin to all traders, made Calicut the chief centre of trade in Malabar region. Zamorin gave special concessions to Arabs (the Moors) to carry out trade. The Arab traders

dominated during this period, as there was no other force to question their monopoly on the western overseas trade. Religious conversions to Islam was common in that period with the concern of the king. It was mainly to get more warriors to the army led by Muslim chieftains. It is to be remembered that the Calicut port reached its zenith during the Zamorins rule, not under the colonial rule. Calicut was one of the most favorable port towns for Chinese merchants. But the conflict with the Muslim merchants was usual. Other than the roof system, which has been adopted from them centuries back, their contribution to the development to the architecture, or the city was less. The European invasion in India started from Calicut, when Vasco De Gama arrived in A.D.1498 and obtained permission to carry out trade from Calicut. But the period of European colonization didn't favor the development of Calicut. The Arabs sensing the threat posed by Portuguese to their commercial supremacy opposed the Europeans. Bitter fights started between Portuguese and Arabs. The Portuguese went to Cochin for trade and the Raja of Cochin had an alliance with the Portuguese with aim of attaining sovereignty from Zamorin. This conflict led to the great fire in 1510 at Thekkumppuram-Kuttichira area, where Muslim traders settled. The Mosques at Kuttichira still have the edifices of that fire. The hostilities between the Zamorin and the Portuguese continued for many decades and the role played by the Kunjali Marakkar in these battles cannot be forgotten. Kunjali Marakkar were the hereditary admirals of the zamorin and organized a powerful navy to fight the Portuguese. Kunjali II, the greatest of Zamorin's Admirals, fought bravely and captured the Portuguese ships and massacred the crew members. Kunjali III built a fort at Kottakkal and enjoyed all the privileges enjoyed by the Nair chiefs. The caused heavy

damages to the Portuguese shipping and trade but with the defeats in 1528 and 1538 they lost their glory. The battles continued unabated till 1588 when the Portuguese were allowed to settle down at Calicut. However Kunjali opposed the move. Moreover the Kunjali IV declared himself as the King of the Moors and disobeyed the Zamorin. Zamorin could not digest this and sided with Portuguese to destroy the powerful Kunjali and in A.D 1600, Kunjali surrendered and subsequently executed. It was really ironical that Zamorins had to ally with Portuguese and to fight the Kunjali, who saved the Calicut Kingdom for decades in its fight against Portuguese.

During the Dutch period the growth of the city was more affected by the political change rather than the trade relation. The Zamorins used the friendship with the Dutch to attack Cochin and the Portuguese. This affected the economy of the country and also trade through Calicut port. The constant war with the Valluvanadu and Cochin made the Zamorins situation much weaker. The Travancore, under the king Marthanda Varma defeated the Dutch and by the end of 1740's the Dutch were removed from the Calicut by Zamorins. During the British period the Calicut has undergone so many changes. The port had been developed. The city expanded its limits. The implementation of railway helped the city to develop further. Calicut became the administrative centre of Malabar province, under the Madras Government. The British government brought many changes to the structure of the Calicut city. The present form of the city was developed by the British. The railway started at Calicut in the year 1888 was a giant leap in the development (Before that, in 1861 railway line connecting Beypore and Salem was established, but later it converted to Calicut). The area adjacent to the station, the big bazaar, and the Palayam market underwent rapid growth. British government tried to develop a port at

Beyport, anticipating the drawbacks of Calicut as a port. For that the railway line was built to transfer the goods. But the attempt failed because of the geographical problems and unexpected decline in trade. But Beyport developed as a ship building centre. After independence the city lost its fame as a port. The sea bridge built by the British was taken up by the sea and the city lost its identity as port after that. When compared to other port towns in India, the back bone of the port towns along the Kerala coast is the spice trade. From the historic period to the present modern context, the existence of these towns as a port lies on this spice trade. This overseas spice trade brought so many diversities to Kerala's heritage and made it rich and colorful.

Chapter III

Kodungallur and its Importance in History

Kodungallur is situated on the banks of river Periyar on the Malabar Coast in Thrissur district of Kerala, India. It was a gateway to ancient India, because of its status as a centre for trade. It was also the starting point to two major religions in India - Christianity and Islam. It was called Muziris by the Greek and is the place where St. Thomas first preached Christianity in India. Kodungallur, being a port city at the northern end of the Kerala lagoons, was a strategic entry point for the naval fleets to the extensive Kerala backwaters. The harbor was visited by navigators from all over the world, especially from the Mediterranean world. The Roman Empire had a continuous trading connection with the West Coast of India. Along with spices (pepper), commodities such as pearls, muslin, ivory, diamonds, silk and perfumes were acquired by the sailors from central Kerala.

Muziris was a port city, among the earliest of its kind in the world. Spice City to the ancient reporters, Muziris was also known as Murachipattanam. In Ramayana, Murachipattanam is the place where Sugreeva's (one of the Monkey King) sleuths scurried through while looking for the abducted Sita. In the work, *Periplus of the Erythraen Sea* by an unknown Greek Traveler, there are mentions about Muziris and some other ports of India. Tracing back to the history of Muziris is not an easy task. Ancient literature provides some vital clues in this regard. Early Tamil literature known as Sangam Literature and the Greco-Roman accounts are clear in linking this port town

with the early Cheras. Present Chendamangalam, in the Muziris heritage region, and the original name of which was Jayanthamangalam, named after the Pandyan King Jayanthan, supports the view that Pandyan sway extended up to Periyar in the 7th century AD. The fact that 10 out of 13 important Vaishnavite temples of Malanadu were situated south of river Periyar in the 9th century indicates the Pandyan influence in the region during the time of Jatila Parantaka (765-815) who claimed to be a Parama Vaishnava. Part of Malabar, south of Kerala, was under the sway of the Pandyans of Madura. In the first century AD, Pliny has recorded that Neacinda in the Pamba valley was in the domain of the Pandyans.

Muziris was a key to the interactions between South India and Persia, the Middle East, North Africa, and the (Greek and Roman) Mediterranean region. The important known commodities exported from Muziris were spices (such as black pepper and malabathron), semi-precious stones (such as beryl), pearls, diamonds, sapphires, ivory, Chinese silk, Gangetic spikenard and tortoise shells. The Roman navigators brought gold coins, peridots, thin clothing, figured linens, multi-colored textiles, sulfide of antimony, copper, tin, lead, coral, raw glass, wine, realgar and orpiment. The locations of unearthed coin-hoards suggest an inland trade link from Muziris via the Palghat Gap and along the Kaveri Valley to the east coast of India. Though the Roman trade declined from the 5th century AD, the former Muziris attracted the attention of other nationalities, particularly the Persians, the Chinese and the Arabs, presumably until the devastating floods of Periyar in the 14th century. Muziris disappeared from every known map of antiquity, and without a trace, presumably because of a cataclysmic event in 1341, a "cyclone and floods" in the Periyar that altered the geography of the region.

A series of excavations conducted at Kodungallur starting from 1945, yielded nothing that went back to before the 13th century. Another excavation was carried out in 1969 by the Archaeological Survey of India at Cheraman Parambu, 2 km north of Kodungallur. Only antiquities of the 13th and 16th century were recovered. In 1983, a large hoard of Roman coins was found at a site around six miles from Pattanam. A series of pioneering excavations carried out by Kerala Council for Historical Research (KCHR, an autonomous institution) at Pattanam from 2007 uncovered a large number of artifacts. So far, seven seasons of excavations (2007–14) are completed by KCHR at Pattanam. Archaeological research has shown that Pattanam was a port frequented by Romans and it has a long history of habitation dating back to 10th century BC. Its trade links with Rome peaked between 1st century BC and 4th century AD. A large quantity of artifacts represents the maritime contacts of the site with Mediterranean, Red Sea and Indian Ocean rims. The major finds include ceramics, lapidary-related objects, metal objects, coins, architectural ruins, geological, zoological and botanical remains. Muziris has the distinction of having yielded a complete human skeleton for the first time in India, from the Kottappuram fort area. Some of the items excavated here include Chinese coins, Chinese inscriptions, and pieces of decorated porcelain, West Arabian pottery pieces, iron nails, bullets, stone beads, 17th century Dutch coins and tiles.

Conclusion

When compared to other part in India, the back bone of the port towns along the Kerala coasts is the spice trade. From the historic period to the present modern context, the existence of these towns as a port lies on this spice trade. This overseas spice trade brought so many diversities to Kerala's heritage and made it rich and colorful.

Port towns along Kerala emerged after the Greek sailor Hippalus discovered the sea route to Kerala coast, in A.D 45. Before that there were no specific port towns along the coast of Kerala, and the real port towns emerged with Muziris - which was one of the most popular trade centre in the world, along with Tyndis and Nelcynda. But from the historical accounts, trade centres were not more than a village, and there were more trade villages along the coastal region. Gradually the trade developed and some of these villages like Muziris developed into towns, supported by many trade villages or sub ports. It is seen that the Muziris - even though it was one of the busiest towns in the world, was not the capital of the Chera Kingdom till the beginning of the Perumal era. This shows that the trade and the development of these towns didn't have much influence in the administration of the kingdom. In the Perumal era, Muzirikodu - new name of Muziris, became the capital. Similarly the other port towns also became the centres for administration and this accelerated the growth of these towns. When it comes to the Post - Perumal era most of the port towns were at their summit of the glory, and were rich with cultural diversities. Jews, Muslim Konkinis, Parsis and so many others migrated

communities made the port towns the melting pot of cultures. This glory of port towns and the Kerala coast as the spice trade centre brought the Europeans here, and a new era in the development of port towns started. The port towns in this era have undergone rapid changes under the Colonial rule. The structure of these towns has been changed. Towns like Calicut, Kollam and Cochin emerged as cities. But later in the post-independence period these ports could not adapt with the changes happening around the world, and with the same pace that they had changed under the European rule, lost their glory as port towns. Only the port of Cochin could survive.

There were no port towns in Kerala which can bring large vessels in to the shore. The mud and sand banks in the sea helped the ships to anchor in the deep sea, which will be calm even during heavy monsoon. The cargos were transported to the ship through small boats. Small ships could anchor near the shore. The inland water canal system had much importance in the transportation of goods. These water canals were an essential part of the port towns till the beginning of the Colonial invasion.

The cultural diversity of Kerala developed through a long span of time, and the overseas spice trade has a major contribution in that. So many communities such as Muslim, Jews, Christians, Konkini Brahmins, Gujaratis, Parsis, Anglo Indians, etc can be seen in Kerala, especially in port Towns which are related to the trade activity. These communities not only flourished our culture and heritage, the architecture of Kerala also became distinct and rich with these relationships.

Appendix



i) Cheraman Juma Masjid

Source: <https://www.muzirisheritage.org/>



ii) Thiruvanchikulam Mahadeva Temple

Source: <https://www.muzirisheritage.org/>



iii) Kottapuram Fort

Source: <http://www.archaeology.kerala.gov.in/>



iv) Jewish Synagogue, North Paravur

Source: <http://www.archaeology.kerala.gov.in/>



v) Kottapuram Market

Source: <https://www.muziristourism.org/>



vi) Mala Synagogue

Source: <https://www.keralatourism.org/>

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