

MARITIME TRADE IN CUDDALORE THROUGH THE AGES

ELAKKIYA. L

Ph.D., Research scholar, Department of History, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu.

Dr. HAMEED BASHA. B

Assistant professor, Department of History, Arignar Anna Govt Arts College, (Deputed from Annamalai University), Villupuram.

Abstract

This article has focused on revealing the significance of maritime trade in Cuddalore through the age. Cuddalore is a coastal town that thrived from prehistoric to modern times due to its geographical and physiographic characteristics. Now, the two ports are working, namely Parangipettai and Cuddalore. They are utilized for fishing and other purposes. The ancient period apparatus from Karaikadu has signaled that the Indo-Roman trade flourished in this region. The Roman coins and amphora evidence are depicted from the archaeological excavations and explorations. The other site, Kudikadu, near Karaikadu, also has a similar identity. Both Karaikadu and Kudikadu antiquities are relatively similar and come from its geographical and physiographic characteristics. Now, the two ports are working, namely Parangipettai and Cuddalore. They are utilized for fishing and other purposes. The ancient period apparatus from Karaikadu has signalled that the Indo-Roman trade flourished in this region. The Roman coins and amphora evidence are depicted from the archaeological excavations and explorations. The other site, Kudikadu, near Karaikadu, also has a similar identity. Both Karaikadu and Kudikadu antiquities are relatively similar and come from Arikamedu, an ancient port city near Pondicherry. During the mediaeval ages, the Cuddalore region glorified the Cholas and Pandyas, then the Vijayanagaras. Finally, the maritime trade would reach a high point while the Europeans anchored their ships on this land. Among the Europeans, the British gradually dominated this land, though they erected Fort David for the purpose of protecting trade.

Keywords: Maritime Trade, Archaeological Excavation, Roman Coins, Karaikadu, and Arikamedu

INTRODUCTION

Cuddalore is a coastal town that thrived from prehistoric to modern times due to its geographical and physiographic characteristics. Now, the two ports are working, namely Parangipettai and Cuddalore. They are utilized for fishing and other purposes. The ancient period apparatus from Karaikadu has signaled that the Indo-Roman trade flourished in this region. The Roman coins and amphora evidence are depicted from the archaeological excavations and explorations. The other site, Kudikadu, near Karaikadu, also has a similar identity. Both Karaikadu and Kudikadu antiquities are relatively similar and come from its geographical and physiographic characteristics. Now, the two ports are working, namely Parangipettai and Cuddalore. They are utilized for fishing and other purposes. The ancient period apparatus from Karaikadu has signaled that the Indo-Roman trade flourished in this region. The Roman coins and amphora evidence are depicted from the archaeological excavations and explorations. The other site, Kudikadu, near Karaikadu, also has a similar identity. Both Karaikadu and Kudikadu antiquities are relatively similar and come from Arikamedu, an ancient port city near Pondicherry. During the mediaeval ages, the Cuddalore

region glorified the Cholas and Pandyas, then the Vijayanagaras. Finally, the maritime trade would reach a high point while the Europeans anchored their ships on this land. Among the Europeans, the British gradually dominated this land, though they erected Fort David for the purpose of protecting trade. British made tremendous inland and intra-asian, and Europeans trade from Cuddalore. The government has now proposed that the port be developed through new schemes and programs, with completion expected in 2025 A.D. This article has focused on revealing the significance of maritime trade in Cuddalore through the ages.

Geographical setting

Cuddalore is a maritime district in the East Bay of Bengal, along with West Villupuram and Salem districts, North Vilupuram, South Nagapattinam, and Ariyalur districts. Cuddalore was located in the south-east of the Madras presidency, lying 11' 11" and 12' 35" N and 78' 38" and 80' 0" E, with an area of 5,217 square miles. ¹Naturally, this district consisted of four rivers: the Thenpennai River, Kedialem, Vellar, and Manimuthar, and two ports, namely Porto Nova and Cuddalore. The Pennaiyar or Pennar River (South Pennai) is reckoned to be the most important river in India and is the second largest river in Tamil Nadu after the Kaveri River. The Malattar, as has already been stated, takes off from the right of the Pennaiyar in the Tirukkovilur taluk, dividing itself into two branches just as it is about to leave that taluk. Its southern and major branch flows through the eastern corner of the Cuddalore taluk and joins the Gadilam. ²

The Sangam Age

In Tamil Nadu, the period between the third century B.C. and the third century A.D. has been known as the "Sangam Age." In general, it was renowned as an early historic period. Musiri, Tondi, Alagnakulam, Karaikkal, Arikamedu, Kaveripattinam, Karaikadu, and Vasavasamudram were some of these ports that were glorified on the Coromandel Coast during this time period. ³This was the golden period of the Indo-Roman trade on the eastern coast of Tamil Nadu. There were some artifacts related to the Romans found at the sites during excavation or exploration. Karaikadu (alias Kudikadu), an archaeological site near Cuddalore's coast, contains the remains of an important port for Indo-Roman maritime trade. After Arikamedu, this could be the second-most important site with evidence of Roman trade. Arikamedu is situated near Kariakdu. Roman and Roman imitation ware are found at the site of Karaikadu. Moreover, the evidence for manufacturing glass beads is probably of Roman origin. ⁴Roman gems, lamps, and amphora fragments were discovered at the Arikamedu site, which could have been an ancient emporium. The same questions raised at the Karaikadu site reveal the importance of Karaikadu in the form of Roman trade. ⁵The researchers fixed the date of the site as the first century A.D. ⁶Moreover, the fine gold coins, red conical jars, and shreds of amphorae excavated at this site all the appendages authenticate the Indo-Roman trade, which was frequently done by the people from Karaikadu and Arikamedu during the Sangam Age.

Cuddalore port during the Sangam period

Nature has made extraordinary trouble for the incredible civic establishments of the world. Chinese human advancement was annihilated by the purported Hong Kong River, the supposed

misfortune of China. The initial two affiliations were obliterated by robbery. Toward the end of the Sangam time frame, Kavirippoompattinam was obliterated by a tremendous robbery. During the Sangam time frame, the port of Cuddalore was a characteristic aggravation to the world's extraordinary civic establishments. Chinese human advancement was obliterated by the purported Hong Kong River, the supposed misfortune of China.⁸ The initial two affiliations were obliterated by robbery. Toward the end of the Sangam time frame, Kavirippoompattinam was obliterated by a tremendous robbery. The port at Cuddalore might have been obliterated during a similar period. After the Sangam age, the "Kalabhras" administered the Tamil soil. They were given the expression "Dark Ages" since they left no verifiable proof.⁹

The Satavahanas

The Satavahanas appeared in the northern part of Tamil Nadu during the 2nd century A.D.¹⁰ They were Andhra kings who asserted their freedom after the death of Asoka in 232 B.C. Ujjaini coins, belonging to the Satavahanas, are found on the coast of Coromandel between Cuddalore and Madras. Satavahana coins bear the figures of an elephant, lion, and horse. The other side of the coin shows the Ujjaini symbol, which could be a cross with four circles formed by the two crossing lines.¹¹ G.J. Dubreuil, a French archaeologist, observed that the coins of the Satavahanas, which contained the ship and two masts, revealed that they were involved in the maritime trade in the Coast of Cuddalore region.¹²

The Cholas

The Cholas were the imperial kings of Tamil Nadu who quickly expanded their domain to encompass all of South India. Its contiguous areas covered most of Karnataka, southern Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. Vijayalaya established this dynasty, believing that the Pallavas were the feudatory rulers of Kanchi.¹³ Cholas could rule the land of Cuddalore from Parantaka I to Rajendra III because the epigraphical sources include the temples of Cuddalore. The eastern part of Cuddalore has the Bay of Bengal; once, it was called the Coromandel Coast. The name Coromandel derives from Cholamadam (meaning the country of Cholas). According to another source, the entire Coromandel was known as "Chola Lake" or "Chola Sea."¹⁴ This demonstrates that the maritime trade flourished as much as possible in the region. Moreover, Cholas were raided more than 1025 times in Southeast Asia.¹⁴

The Vijayanagaras

For many years, the Vijayanagaras were the last imperial rulers of South India. They control over 300 ports and generate revenue from them.¹⁵ All the ports served as linchpins for the maritime trade between Asian and European countries. According to epigraphic sources, the Vijayanagar Empire ruled for a few years and their feudatories, the Nayaks, administered this region. Then, Cuddalore came under the Gingee country and was ruled by a petty chieftain, Immadi Narasimha. The Vijayanagara emperor placed Tubai Krishnappa Nayaka in charge of the Gingee country. From 1510 onward, Cuddalore came under the rule of the Nayaks of Gingee. Among the Nayakas, the most outstanding was Krishnappa Nayaka, who held most of the part of Tondaimandalam under his rule. Krishnappa permitted the Dutch to build a fort near

Devanampattinam (A.D. 1608), which he transferred to the Portuguese under the presumed authority of the Vijayanagar emperor.

Europeans

The commercial activities peaked as Europeans arrived on the Coromandel Coast. During the fifteenth century, European coastal countries, particularly those on the Atlantic Coast, were tempted to embark on endless voyages. In the absence of Constantinople, they attempted to find the blue water route. The Portuguese became the voyage's progenitor and eventually arrived in India for the brave journey. Their motive should be commercial, in accord with the kings, and they should export the spices from India. While reaching these lands, they knew about the situation and received permission to rule.

Initially, the merchants of the European companies exported spices like cinnamon, cardamom, pepper, mace, and nutmeg. Then they discovered other commodities to export in large quantities: cotton textiles, silks, coffee, tea, and indigo, followed by saltpeter.¹⁶ Quicksilver, copper, filded mirrors, ivory coral, sword blades, knives, broadcloth, embroidery, kerseys, velvet, satins, taffetas, toys, spectacles, comb cases, and glasses were all brought from England by the British.¹⁷ The long clothes were manufactured in the Cuddalore region, named Calicoes, which is one of the important goods exported from the Coromandel Coast.¹⁸ Between 1640 and 1644, the British reached a scale of trade of around Rs. 4,00,000.¹⁹ This was the biggest achievement by any other company in India.

Post-Independence Era

Cuddalore Port lost its status following the British withdrawal from the region. Now it has been used for the purpose of fishing by the local fishermen, through the boats. There is no evidence of trade at the port in either the ancient or modern periods. The Tamil Nadu Maritime Board has made a project out of Cuddalore to upgrade the coastal region and submitted a proposal for the same. This project is estimated to cost Rs. 135 crore.²⁰ It also aimed to construct cargo handling for items such as cement, coal, and fertilizers. Cuddalore Ports could be an ocean anchorage port at the confluence of two rivers, namely the Paravandar and Uppanar. Also, it focused on developing cargo traffic handling much better. This could be the biggest movement in the maritime activity of the Cuddalore port.

CONCLUSION

Cuddalore, like Arikamedu and Alagankulam, has historical significance in the maritime trade. But it went unnoticed or unsung because attention was focused on the other important site of Arikamedu. Cuddalore has a similar identity to Arikamedu, where merchant trade happened frequently through the ages. Perhaps Cuddalore acted as the linchpin of maritime trade during the colonial period. Clothes were exported from Cuddalore to Asian and European countries in the 17th century. Furthermore, the two rivers, South Pennar and Gadilam, allowed for inland trade back then. From the hinterlands to the coastal towns, the goods were easily accessible. The Government of India and the State Government of Tamil Nadu intend to develop port areas by handling cargo and creating opportunities for ocean commerce development. At present,

ports are used for local fishing. Cuddalore will reclaim its prominent position in the maritime trade once the port development plans are completed. Thus, the Cuddalore has been glorified in the path of maritime trade and held in high esteem.

Notes and Reference

1. W.Francis, Gazetteer of the South Arcot District, Vol.I, Madras, p.98
2. Ibid.,pp.135-136
3. Himanshu Prabha Ray, Jean-François Salles, Tradition and Archaeology, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 1996, p. 63
4. Warwick Ball, Rome in the East, Routledge, London, 2016, p. 145
5. Dilip K. Chakrabari, The Archaeology of Ancient Indian Cities, Oxford University Press, 1995, 296
6. Upinder Singh, A history of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the stone Age to the 12th Century, Pearson, New Delhi, 2009, p.123
7. Dilip K. Chakrabari, Op.cit.,296
8. David Ludden., Peasant History in South India, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1989, p.55
9. Keith E. Yandell, Religion and Public Culture, Rutledge, 2013, p. 235
10. R. Kanan, Manual on the Numismatic Gallery, Government Museum, 2003, Cheennai, p.4
11. Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya, Some Early Dynasties of South India, Motilal Banarsidass, 1974, p. 112.
12. Gurcham Singh Sandhu, A Military History of Ancient India, Vision Books, New Delhi, 2000, p. 467
13. Abraham Eraly, The First Spring, Penguin Books India, 2011, p.69
14. K.Nilakanta Sastri, The Colas, Univeristy of Madras, Madras, 2000, p.606
15. Krishnaswami Aiyangar S, The Madras Tercentenary commemoration volume, Madras, 1994, p.50.
16. Mrs. Frank penny, Fort St George Madras, Sonnenschein & co., London, 1900, p.16.
17. S.Arasaratam, Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast 1569-1740, Oxford University press, New Delhi, 1986, p.103.
18. Chris Nierstrasz, Rivalry for Trade in Tea and Textiles, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2015.p.178
19. G.H.Hodgson, "Three Hundred years of Madras commerce", The Madras Tercentenary commemoration volume, Oxford University press, Madras, 1939,p.235
20. Deccan Chronicle, "Cuddalore port expansion project underway", Dec 23, 2018