From Camp to Port: Mughal Warfare and the economy of Coromandel, 1682-1707

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Chapter 5: Pulicat and Nagapatnam: The Mughal wars and their impact

Introduction

Once Bijapur and Golconda had been conquered, Aurangzeb concentrated his energies on crushing the Marathas. Sambhaji, their king, was captured and executed in 1689, but the Maratha resistance did not die. Bhimsen, the author of *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*, writes:

> Rama [Rajaram], the second son of Shiva[ji], after the capture of Sambha, raised his head in pride, but fled with some trusty officers and went towards the kingdom of Srirangapatan. Rama, going towards Gingee, betook himself that fort by any means he could. When the emperor learnt that Rama [Rajaram] had entered the fort of Gingee, he sent Zulfiqar Khan with a huge army to crush him.[1]

That was the beginning of the siege of Gingee, a fort which would not be captured for almost a decade. During the siege of Gingee, the Mughals also raided the Kaveri delta to secure food supplies.

Chapters 2 and 3 examined Dutch control of the prominent ports of Pulicat and Nagapatnam in central and southern Coromandel, respectively, and the roles of these ports as outlets for local manufactures. In 1690, Nagapatnam replaced Pulicat as headquarters of the Dutch *gouvernement* of Coromandel. This chapter will take these ports as its vantage points to study the impact of Mughal campaigns in central and southern Coromandel. There were several other ports between Pulicat and Nagapatnam, Madras, San Thomé, Sadraspatnam, Pondicherry, Tegenapatnam (Devanampatnam) and Porto Novo being the major ones. As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, along this stretch of coastline, and especially in central Coromandel, the textile weaving villages were located close to the ports. One port in central Coromandel will be mentioned in this chapter for the first time: Sadraspatnam. Specific information relating to Pulicat is rather thin on the ground for the period under consideration in this chapter, and the VOC's evaluation of the conditions around the neighbouring port of Sadraspatnam will help us explore the economic impact of Mughal wars in central Coromandel in the late seventeenth century.

Like the previous chapter, Chapter 5 is organized into four sections: the first provides an overview of the Mughal siege of Gingee; the second discusses the economic impact of the campaigns in central and southern Coromandel, particularly with respect to textile production; the third explores the relationship between climate and agriculture in this region during the years of the wars; and the fourth, the conclusion, states the results and summarizes the findings of this chapter.

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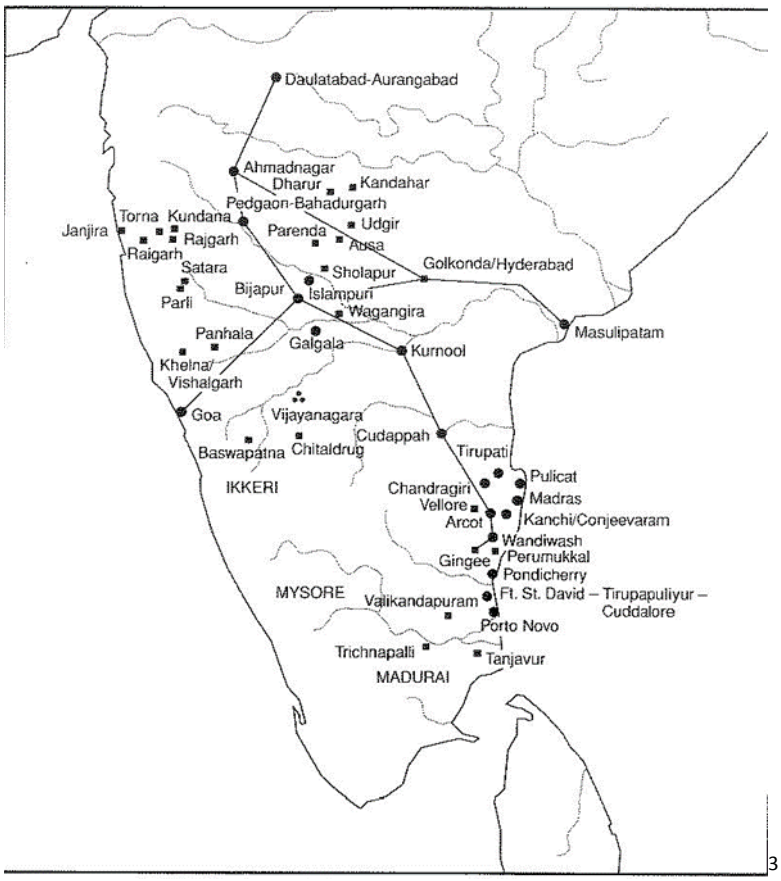
[1] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 169–171.

5.1 Along the campaign trail[2]

Map 5.1 Southern expansion of the Mughal Empire in the late seventeenth century. In the far south we can see the expansion towards Gingee and Vellore and the location of ports such as Pulicat, Madras and Pondicherry in central Coromandel



[3]

The map indicates the major direction of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns: from Daulatabad–Aurangabad to Bijapur and Golconda, and then on to Gingee. The siege of Gingee (1689–1698) was the main site of Mughal–Maratha wars in the last decade of the seventeenth century. Along the coast in central Coromandel are the settlements of the various European

[2] The central narrative in this section is derived from Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*: 187–199.

[3] The map shows the direction of the southern expansion of the Mughal Empire, from Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*: 187.

companies, such as Pulicat, Madras and Pondicherry. The most south–eastern settlement shown on this map is Tanjore (here spelt Tanjavur), directly to the west of Nagapatnam (not shown).

The siege of Gingee, 1689–1698

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Rajaram, who became the leader of Maratha resistance against the Mughals after their king Sambhaji was executed in 1689, had fled from Raigarh in the west of the Deccan to Gingee in central Coromandel. Zulfiqar Khan, who had been sent by Aurangzeb to defeat and capture Rajaram, pursued the Marathas and marched through the region of Raichur and arrived in Gingee in 1690 to besiege the fort.

The hill fort of Gingee was at a strong strategic location and it became the focal point of the Mughal–Maratha wars of the 1690s. The fort was surrounded by mountains on all sides. The *nayakas*, its early occupants, improved and enlarged the existing fortifications in the late–fifteenth and early–sixteenth centuries. During the occupations of first the Bijapuris (1649–1677) and then the Marathas (1677–1698) the fortifications were strengthened even further. With its well–covered granaries and two perennial springs of water at the summit of the citadel, the fort was well–equipped to withstand sieges. The Iranian commander of the Mughal army, Zulfiqar Khan, began the siege a year after Rajaram had arrived. His father Asad Khan, the *wazir* or prime minister of the empire, secured the supply lines to the north by controlling the towns of Kurnool and Cudappah. Nonetheless, the Mughals still had quite a tough time managing their supplies, as we will see. The siege of Gingee extended the Mughals' logistical line far into the south. Confronted with recurring attacks by Maratha and Bidari plunderers, the Banjara grain–carriers found it quite difficult to keep the Mughal army well–supplied.[4]

At the time of Zulfiqar Khan's arrival in Gingee (1690), the Mughal army comprised a force of 26,000 men: 10,000 Mughal horsemen, 8,000 Bundela musketeers and 8,000 soldiers from the Carnatic. To carry the tents and heavy luggage of the army and of the troops and merchants who followed the army, there were 100 elephants, 2,000 to 4,000 dromedaries and countless porters, along with more than 200,000 cattle. Initially, this ensured food remained relatively cheap, but as the siege progressed, the logistical problems worsened, and by 1690 many of the Deccani *mansabdars* who accompanied Zulfiqar Khan to Gingee had deserted to the Marathas, partly as a result of the scarcity of grains.[5]

By 1691, the Mughals were facing serious shortages of supplies. The wazir Asad Khan, supported by the prince Kam Bakhsh, was sent to Gingee to relieve the Mughal army, while Zulfiqar Khan raided Tiruchchirapalli and Tanjore for provisions. Although the *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha* is not explicit on why shortages had become so severe at the Mughal camp, we may make a guess based on the observations made by its author Bhimsen. By 1691, the region

[4] Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*: 189–192.
[5] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 173.

around Gingee in central Coromandel had been devastated by the movements of Mughal and Maratha troops – Bhimsen notes that especially the region between Kanchipuram (to the south of Pulicat) and the coast appeared desolate. This would have made it difficult for the Mughals to procure supplies from the countryside around Gingee. Bhimsen writes how reinforcements from the north lifted the mood in the Mughal camp in Gingee: 'Scarcity was raging here; it now turned into an abundance of grain, and brought new life into the bodies of men.'[6]

Though the hyperbolic tone may be intrinsic to the language used in chronicles written from the Mughal standpoint, it makes the point rather well. There was a pattern of Mughal plundering raids in the Kaveri delta during the remaining years of the siege: similar raids were conducted in 1694 and 1697 – in January and February of those years, immediately after the winter harvest.

During the 1690s, the siege of Gingee turned into a battle of attrition. Not only did the Mughals repeatedly face shortages of supplies, but they also encountered the Maratha troops led by Santa Ghorpade and Dhanaji Jadhav which arrived from the north to reinforce the besieged Maratha garrison in Gingee. When this happened in 1692, the Mughals were outnumbered and forced to withdraw their outposts around the fort. The arrival of Maratha reinforcement troops further worsened the situation for the Mughal army in Gingee. Although the Mughals were victorious in skirmishes with Marathas near the fort, procuring supplies became very difficult. Horses, camels and other draught animals died from lack of food, and in January 1693 the Mughals were forced to retreat from Gingee to Wandiwash in the north. Once in Wandiwash, Zulfiqar Khan first devoted his energies to recapturing forts which had been taken by the Marathas, for example Perumakkal and others in central Coromandel. In February 1694, Zulfiqar Khan attacked Tanjore from Wandiwash and collected tribute from the *zamindars* of Tanjore. While returning to Gingee, Zulfiqar Khan captured the fort of Palamkota. During 1695 and 1696, the main Mughal–Maratha encounters took place around Vellore and Arcot to the north of Gingee. Zulfiqar Khan besieged the Marathas in Vellore, the garrison was reduced to much distress and yet again Maratha generals arrived from the west of the Deccan to relieve the besieged troops. Zulfiqar Khan raised the siege of Vellore and pursued the Marathas to Gingee; on two occasions – in December 1695 and April 1696 – the Mughals under Zulfiqar Khan defeated the Marathas. In early 1697, Zulfiqar Khan raided Tanjore to procure supplies and collect tribute from the zamindars. In November 1697 he marched from Wandiwash to Gingee and besieged the fort once again. The Mughals soon captured one of the outer gates of the fort and dug trenches there. Alarmed at this development and the lack of provisions inside the fort, Rajaram, the Maratha king, managed to make his escape. In January 1698, the Mughals found a road that led to the fort. After a number of unsuccessful assaults, the soldiers of Daud Khan Panni and Rao Dalpat Bundela

[6] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 181.

(employer of Bhimsen, the author of *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*) scaled the walls of the fort and captured it.[7] With this, Gingee came under Mughal occupation.

During the siege of Gingee, both the Mughals and Marathas repeatedly plundered the countryside, resulting in devastation of the regional economies that had begun to expand in the wake of a new phase of *nayaka* state formation in Chandragiri, Gingee and Tanjore. But the siege of Gingee was prolonged less by logistical problems or military failures than by the apparent unwillingness of Zulfiqar Khan, the Mughal commander, to capture the fort. Some believed he had a secret understanding with Rajaram that they would divide the territories in the Deccan between themselves after the impending death of Aurangzeb. Bhimsen, a diligent chronicler of the Mughal wars in South India, points out that the prolonging of sieges was a common practice among Mughal generals; they tended to delay the successful completion of sieges to avoid being transferred elsewhere for further military duties. Moreover, the rich rice fields of southern India (and the commercially vibrant Coromandel Coast) would have made an attractive proposition for the Mughal commanders. Eventually, however, as described above, Gingee fell to Zulfiqar Khan in early 1698.[8]

The Mughal administration in Hyderabad Karnatik

After its conquest in 1698, the fort of Gingee was placed under a Bundela noble in Mughal service.[9] With the siege of Gingee over, the main Mughal–Maratha front shifted once again, to the west of the Deccan, for the remaining years of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns, until his death in 1707.

Earlier, in 1688, Aurangzeb had begun the administrative reorganization of the southern part of the erstwhile Golconda sultanate: twelve districts south of the rivers Gundlekamma and Krishna were detached from Hyderabad to form a separate Mughal administrative unit called the Hyderabad Karnatik. Its administrator, a Mughal *faujdar* stationed in Kanchipuram to the south of Pulicat, reported directly to Aurangzeb's imperial camp in the west of the Deccan and all administrative documents went to Aurangabad, the headquarters of the Deccan provinces of the Mughal Empire. The *faujdar* of Kanchipuram was required to send taxes and tribute collections directly to Aurangzeb, and to mobilize funds and supplies for the Mughal troops fighting at Gingee. The *faujdar* was assisted by the diwan, or fiscal officer, and other officials. The post of *faujdar* of Kanchipuram was first held by Ali Askar Khan, a former Golconda noble who had been inducted into Mughal service, from 1688 to 1690. He was followed by Ali Mardan Khan (mentioned in Chapter 4, one of the several Golconda nobles retained by Aurangzeb who controlled the coastal districts of northern Coromandel), from 1690 to 1692. Although the administration of the Mughal *faujdar* in Kanchipuram was intended to be different from the military headquarters of the Mughal army

[7] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 184, 187–189, 193–195, 197, 200–201, 206–209.
[8] Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*: 194.
[9] Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012): 350.

at Gingee, after Ali Mardan Khan was captured by the Marathas in 1692 and held to ransom for two years, Aurangzeb placed the Hyderabad Karnatik under the command of the military administration in Gingee and gave full administrative powers to the Mughal commander Zulfiqar Khan. After the conquest of Gingee in 1698, Daud Khan Panni, a commander under Zulfiqar Khan, was made deputy *faujdar* of Hyderabad Karnatik and of the region that had been recently conquered. Between 1700 and 1704, Daud Khan Panni campaigned against the Telugu *zamindars* (landlords) of the region to force them to accept Aurangzeb's authority and pay tribute to the Mughal emperor.[10]

One important development that followed the establishment of Mughal administration in Hyderabad Karnatik was the incorporation of Telugu *zamindars* into the political system of the Mughal Empire and the revolt of these *zamindars* against the empire. In the erstwhile Golconda sultanate some *zamindars* (mainly Telugu *nayakas* and a few Afghan chiefs) with local power also acted as commanders of locally recruited cavalrymen. These cavalry forces were raised by the zamindars temporarily from season to season; they were used by the Golconda sultanate for collecting taxes and at times as an auxiliary force against tributary chieftains. Aurangzeb wanted the *zamindars* to become a part of the Mughal Empire and intended this practice to continue in the Hyderabad Karnatik. In keeping with this strategy, Ali Askar Khan, the first Mughal *faujdar* of Kanchipuram, did not disturb the *jagirs* (see glossary) of *zamindars* such as Ismail Khan Makha and Yacham Nair (also known as Achappa Naik), both of whom allied themselves with the Mughals. In February 1688, they and two other *zamindars* fought against the Marathas in Kanchipuram. But these zamindars were only casual servants of the empire, and in 1689 the alternative of serving with the Marathas became more attractive for them after Rajaram, the Maratha king, took refuge in Gingee. There were few material incentives for the *zamindars* of Hyderabad Karnatik to desert Mughal service and join the Marathas, and it seems to have been Aurangzeb's religious zeal that induced the zamindars to do so. In late 1689, Aurangzeb issued orders to pull down the temples in Hyderabad Karnatik, but the efforts of Mughal officials to execute Aurangzeb's orders were thwarted by the *zamindars* of Hyderabad Karnatik. The Mughals had to retreat. Yacham Nair quit Mughal service and went over to the Marathas in Gingee. After discussions with Rajaram, in February 1690, Yacham Nair led a joint force of Maratha and Telugu troops against the Mughals. Local *zamindars* joined his ranks and so did Ismail Khan Makha – although he was possibly motivated less by religious zeal than by a desire for political autonomy. The Mughal troops in Hyderabad Karnatik were outnumbered by this force, so there was no option but to retreat, and the Mughal *faujdar* of Kanchipuram took refuge in Madras. The success of the anti–Mughal rebellion was only temporary, however. The arrival in Hyderabad Karnatik of the Mughal commander Zulfiqar Khan with a large force soon snuffed out the revolt: Yacham Nair suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the Mughals and was pushed back to Gingee. By October 1690, the Mughals were in full control of Hyderabad

[10] John F. Richards, 'The Hyderabad Karnatik, 1687-1707' *Modern Asian Studies* 9, 2 (1975): 241–243, 251.

Karnatik. Ismail Khan Makha submitted to the Mughal Empire once more and later even fought against the Marathas at the siege of Gingee. The Mughals were, however, unable to suppress Yacham Nair's raids in the Mughal districts of Hyderabad Karnatik. Eventually, Yacham Nair was lured back into Mughal service by Zulfiqar Khan with the promise of a high mansab (see glossary). In 1694, not long after Yacham Nair had joined the Mughals, Zulfiqar Khan, acting on Aurangzeb's orders, executed him and announced publicly that the Telugu *zamindar* had been punished for treason.[11] As we will see later in this chapter, the English East India Company in Madras assisted the Mughals in suppressing the revolt of the Telugu *zamindars* and this helped them in having their trading privileges in Coromandel reinstated by the emperor Aurangzeb.

After the conquest of Gingee, the Mughal administration chose to develop a new political centre in central Coromandel: Arcot. This process was initially led by Daud Khan Panni, possibly with the ultimate aim of carving out an independent state. After 1705, the once small town of Arcot (and the site of a Mughal camp during the siege of Gingee) became the seat of Daud Khan Panni. He continued to operate from the Gingee–Arcot region until 1713, when he was transferred to Gujarat. The next major figure responsible for the development of Arcot was Muhammed Said, who had been posted as *diwan*, or Mughal fiscal officer, to the same region about after the siege of Gingee. In 1710 or thereabouts, Muhammed Said came to be referred to more as Saadatullah Khan (a title he had originally received from Aurangzeb) and in the 1720s, he increasingly consolidated the position of Arcot as an autonomous state.[12] The emergence of Arcot was part of the larger process of impressive regional state–formation in eighteenth–century India: Mughal successor states such as Bengal, Awadh and Hyderabad developed themselves as independent kingdoms while maintaining a nominal subordination to the weakened Mughal Empire.

Major climatic and political events

This table listing the major political and climatic developments in central and southern Coromandel between 1689 and 1710 offers important information and context for the following analysis of the economic impact of the Mughal wars.

Table 5.1 Major climatic and political events in central and southern Coromandel, 1689–1710

Year	**Event**
1689–1698	Siege of Gingee
1691, 1694, 1697	Mughal raids in Kaveri delta for supplies
1695	Good harvest, but rice prices high because of famine in lands to the north of the Kaveri delta
1698	Poor monsoon, cotton prices high
1705	Poor monsoon

[11] Richards, 'The Hyderabad Karnatik': 243–248.

[12] Alam and Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World*: 349–351, 365; for the career of Saadatullah Khan see 363–391.

1707	Flood in Kaveri delta
1708	Poor monsoon
1710	Rebellion in Tanjore, cultivation affected

5.2 The economy

Pulicat and Nagapatnam during the 1690s

By 1690 the conquest of Golconda had already affected the area up to Pulicat and Madras to varying extents. In 1688, the governor of Pulicat, Laurens Pit, wrote to his superiors in Batavia to inform them that famines, Maratha invasions and plundering of 'major places' (urban centres, quasi–urban centres and markets) had caused substantial damage in the lands up to Madras.[13] Officials of the English (later British) East India Company (EIC) in Madras made observations of a similar nature: for instance, that the EIC could not invest money in the textile trade due to the wars. The scarcity of textiles meant one of their ships bound for Aceh could not be loaded with its intended cargo, so it took on cotton instead.[14] The Dutch write, with some scepticism, of the excuse that Sadraspatnam merchants gave for failing to supply their quota of textiles: the merchants claimed that weaving villages bordering the former Golconda sultanate and Gingee had been robbed by troops on the march. This lack of trust may well have been undeserved, especially given that the same letter points out how the Mughal–Maratha wars had made it unsafe to travel north of Pulicat. These conditions had made the transport of cotton and weaving of textiles increasingly difficult. Meanwhile, the VOC were still enjoying toll–free trade from Pulicat and Sadraspatnam to markets inland, thanks to the permits granted by the Mughal official in Kanchipuram. Johannes Bacherus was yet to receive a firman from Aurangzeb.[15] The disturbances caused by the campaigns and the onset of the Mughal–Maratha struggle for Gingee in 1689 induced the French in Pondicherry to increase the prices of cloth that their merchants had been contracted to supply.[16] Throughout the remaining years of the Mughal wars, the European trading companies, including the VOC, were compelled to buy textiles at high prices, as we will see in more detail later in this chapter.

The implications for Pulicat of the Bacherus embassy

In his instructions to Johannes Bacherus for negotiating with the Mughals, Hendrik Adriaan van Reede was clear about the special status of Pulicat. Van Reede wrote in 1688 that the port of Pulicat had been conferred upon the VOC by the Aravidu dynasty (last line of the Vijayanagara rulers, who ruled from several capitals in central Coromandel after 1565, see

[13] NA VOC 1454, Letter dated 15.05.1688 from Laurens Pit in Pulicat to the governor–general in Batavia: f. 821v.–f. 822r.

[14] *Diary and Consultation Book of 1689, Records of Fort St George, vol. 15* (Madras: Superintendent Government Press: 1916): 1–2.

[15] NA VOC 1463, Letter dated 20.09.1689 from Laurens Pit in Pulicat to Joannes Camphuijs, governor–general in Batavia: f. 384v.–f.385v.

[16] Lotika Varadarajan transl., *India in the 17th Century: Social, Economic and Political (Memoirs of Francois Martin) Volume II, Part II* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1985): 1223.

Chapter 2) and the Dutch had won it from the Portuguese (this is a reference to the Portuguese attack on Pulicat in 1613 that the VOC had repulsed). Van Reede argued that, as a consequence, the VOC's privileges in Pulicat were dependent neither on the Golconda sultanate which had conquered the region around Pulicat in the 1640s nor, by extension, the Mughal Empire which had now conquered Golconda in 1687. Nonetheless, since the Mughals had conquered the region around Pulicat, the VOC (and Van Reede) thought it prudent to request Aurangzeb to reconfirm to the VOC the privileges they enjoyed in Pulicat.[17]

Similar to what we had noted in Chapter 4 in the context of Masulipatnam, three villages around Pulicat– Eergam, Masliewarom and Auweriwaka– had been owned by the VOC since 1646–1647: the list of privileges prepared by Johannes Bacherus gives their status as '*in't vrije bezit en eigendom geschonken*', or 'gifted in free ownership'.[18] These villages around Pulicat were restored to the Dutch by Aurangzeb after Johannes Bacherus' embassy. The Dutch and the Mughals also shared tolls that accrued from commodities (mainly textiles) traded in the port. For example, on packs of textiles that were valued at four pagodas, the Dutch share would be one–and–a–quarter pagodas. For packs of textiles worth less than four pagodas, the tolls would be shared equally by the Mughals and the VOC. From tolls on those packs of textiles that were valued at more than four pagodas, the Mughals would have three quarters and the Dutch one. Of tolls on goods brought by ships to Pulicat and then reshipped, one half would be for the Mughals and the other half for the VOC. Tolls on goods bought and transported by merchants as well as those sold by them at other market places (around Pulicat) would be equally shared by the Dutch and the Mughals.[19]

The firman represented the Mughal project of integrating the booming coasts with the heartland of the empire in three ways: firstly, it confirmed Dutch control over textile production around Pulicat by restoring villages to them; secondly, the sharing of tolls on merchandise was part of the Mughal strategy to provide stability to the region around Pulicat and tap its income to invest in the wider projects of the empire – including the wars in the Deccan, in this case Gingee (similar to the strategy in Masulipatnam); and thirdly, in retrospect, the decision later supported Mughal strategy in central Coromandel. The Mughal armies had to march from Aurangzeb's camp to central Coromandel (see Fig. 5.1 in this chapter) along the following route: first east from Galgala and Islampuri to Kurnool, then south to Cudappah, Tirupati, Vellore and finally Gingee. Being the major ports along this stretch, the Mughals needed to have Pulicat (VOC) and Madras (EIC) within their sphere of

[17] NA VOC 1450, Instructions dated 22.09.1688 from Hendrik Adriaan van Reede to Johannes Bacherus delegated to visit the factories of northern Coromandel and to greet the great Mughal (Aurangzeb) on behalf of the company: f. 966v.–f. 967r.

[18] NA VOC 1510, List of privileges and rights enjoyed by the VOC in Coromandel to be shown to the Mughal emperor Auragzeb: f. 369v.

[19] NA VOC 1510, Firman dated 24.10.1689 from the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb to Johannes Bacherus: f. 375r.–f. 376v.

control as these ports could provide the Mughal army with military supplies. In his *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*, Bhimsen wrote that ports in central Coromandel would supply the Mughal army with food when it was based in Gingee, 'Articles like wheat, lentil, mash [dal, lentil] both green and black and other grains come in ships and these things are sold in abundance to the imperial army.'[20] Contemporary evidence from the VOC archive substantiates this argument: a 1694 letter, for example, mentions that the Dutch had, on multiple occasions, supplied gunpowder to the Mughal wazir Asad Khan and his son Zulfiqar Khan, the Mughal general, during their conflict with the Marathas in the Carnatic; the siege of Gingee.[21]

The English East India Company was less successful than the VOC in their dealings with the Mughals following their conquest of Golconda. In fact, they were almost expelled from the Coromandel Coast. The English had earlier clashed with the Mughals in Bengal and Gujarat over disputes related to customs duties, and this had made it difficult for them to secure concessions for their settlements controlled from Madras. Immediately after Golconda was conquered, the EIC withdrew their personnel from all factories on the Coromandel Coast except Vishakhapatnam, and simultaneously strengthened their defences at Madras and Fort St. David near Cuddalore. Talks had begun between representatives of the EIC and the Mughals at the imperial camp in Galgala and Surat to secure trading concessions, with very limited results. An English armada captured 80 Indian ships off the western coast in 1688 and Aurangzeb quickly retaliated. Orders were issued to arrest all English merchants, occupy their trading centres and prohibit business with the EIC throughout the Mughal Empire. The English factories in Masulipatnam, Madapollam and Vishakhapatnam were seized by the Mughals. Down south in Madras, the EIC was saved by the outbreak of revolts among Telugu zamindars which diverted Mughal energies. Meanwhile the EIC's Surat council sought to ensure peace by paying a war indemnity of 150,000 rupees to the Mughals, but the real breakthrough for the EIC came when they supported Mughal war efforts in the Carnatic against the Marathas and Telugu *zamindars* by supplying munitions, grains, gunners and surgeons. As the siege of Gingee continued, it became even more important for the Mughals to accommodate the EIC, who controlled Madras, one of the major sources of military supplies. Negotiations with Asad Khan, the Mughal wazir who had arrived in the Carnatic to redouble the war efforts, ensured concessions for the English. The EIC kept on trading and maintained their autonomous control over Madras.[22]

As the 1692 *Diary and Consultation Book of Fort St. George* shows, the Mughal prince Kam Baksh thanks the English for having helped the Mughals to subdue the rebellions of Telugu *zamindars* and supplied Zulfiqar Khan with ammunitions. He permitted them to mint

[20] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 194.
[21] NA VOC 1546, Letter dated 20.10.1694 from Bruijnig Wildelant in Masulipatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 415r.
[22] Richards, 'European City–States on the Coromandel Coast': 510–511.

coins with stamps of the Mughal emperor. Asad Khan, the wazir, goes on to instruct the EIC not to let Rajaram escape on any ship from Madras, and let it be known that if an offer were to be made by the Marathas, the English should intercept Rajaram and turn him over to the Mughals.[23] The first evidence of this approach to the Dutch and the English (discussed elsewhere in this chapter and in the previous chapter) was during the Mughal campaigns against Shivaji led by Jai Singh, who dispatched agents to the European settlements in the 1660s and clearly instructed them not to help the Maratha fleet. This supports an element of the hypothesis presented in Part I in the context of the early years of the wars: the Deccan and South India could not be won by the Mughals without the cooperation of the European enclaves.

The impact of the siege of Gingee

The turmoil created by the war played a part in shaping VOC policy in Coromandel. One of the early effects of the Mughal wars was the transfer of the Dutch headquarters of Coromandel from Pulicat to Nagapatnam. But this move, as was pointed out in the historiography section of the introductory chapter, was an overly hasty response to the siege of Gingee bringing the wars close to Nagapatnam.[24] The effects of the siege of Gingee were felt in the hinterland of ports in central Coromandel. In *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*, Bhimsen describes the condition in around 1692 of the region between Kanchipuram, a temple town near Pulicat, and Coromandel Coast. In the following extract, Bhimsen first discusses Kanchipuram and then the surrounding region:

> Brahmins reading the Vedas, grocers, traders of this country live here. Of the people of Hindustan [Mughals], only a strong fort, with towers and bastions, are fixed as the abode of faujdar. Owing to the coming and going of the imperial army, which has brought hardship to the inhabitants, desolation has affected the place; it did not look flourishing [*abad*]. The city of Vishnu Kanchi [temple] is larger than that of Shiv Kanchi [another temple] and its revenue has been assigned as the faujdar's salary; therefore, its neighbourhood is prosperous [*abad*] and also worship is done and much revenue is collected. From the neighbourhood of Adoni and Karnul to Kanchi and the kingdom of Gingee and the ocean, there is not a village in which there is no temple, large or small. Every place [temple] is named after Rama, Lakshman or Mahalakshmi. In spite of the desolation a place of beauty was seen.[25]

We can only conclude that the region around Gingee and Kanchipuram had been badly affected by the wars as early as 1692.

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[23] *Diary and Consultation Book of 1692, Records of Fort St. George, vol. 18* (Madras: Superintendent Government Press, 1917): 8–9.
[24] Winius and Vink, *The Merchant–Warrior Pacified*: 51.
[25] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 180.

In 1692, the Dutch feared devastation around Tanjore because of the slow progress the Mughals had made in Gingee and expected that local potentates would seek to take advantage of the turmoil. This is a typical instance of Dutch discourse that painted a picture of greedy indigenous political figures. Though the VOC had been supplied cotton from Tuticorin, textile merchants could not be engaged to produce textiles due to the ongoing troubles in the region. Around this time, the VOC was responding to demand from the Netherlands, Colombo, Jaffna, Trincomalee, Malabar, Cape Town and Persia, as well as South–East Asia. Sales of their imports had also been hit by the wars in southern Coromandel.[26]

However, the VOC's sales of some commodities were hit not by disturbances resulting from wars, but by other factors. For example, in the case of the areca nut trade from Malabar, VOC operations were hindered by the private merchants who were supplying large volumes of this item to the Kaveri delta. By extension, VOC records bemoaning this fact imply that Mughal campaigns had not closed off all channels of commerce in the Kaveri delta. Historically, commercial routes had run from Malabar across the Western Ghats to the delta (see Chapter 3). These routes not been affected as much as the areas close to the coast and within the sphere of Mughal military operations, if we are to believe the Dutch. By 1693, Pulicat's role had declined for the VOC, although the port of Sadraspatnam had done reasonably well despite the disturbances that the siege of Gingee had created in the neighbourhood of the port; it was mainly the VOC factories in Tegenapatnam and Porto Novo that compensated for the poor trade in other factories of central Coromandel.[27]

The Dutch sources reveal that by 1695 rice had become quite expensive around Tanjore, and private traders in Nagapatnam were finding it difficult to ship rice to Ceylon profitably. Despite a reasonably good local rice harvest, prices were high because of a scarcity in the lands to north of Tanjore and many merchants had poured in to buy grains (the cause was poor rainfall in northern Coromandel in 1693 and 1695, as noted in Chapter 4). Textile prices were also high thanks to the wars and the Dutch were not expecting them to drop anytime soon.[28] To maintain supplies and not to lose out on them during the times of war, the VOC had decided to increase the prices,[29] but textile merchants were refusing to settle for the prices offered by the Dutch. In roughly the same period the Dutch sought to tap the resource

[26] NA VOC 1508, Letter dated 10.10.1692 from Laurens Pit, governor in Pulicat to Willem van Oudhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 172r.–f. 172v., f. 180v., f. 201v.–f. 204v., f. 217r.–f. 217v.
[27] NA VOC 1526, Letter dated 23.05.1693 from Laurens Pit, governor in Pulicat to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 286r.–f. 286v., f. 326v.
[28] NA VOC 1570, Letter dated 24.03.1695 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 187, f. 194.
[29] NA VOC 1570, Letter dated 08.06.1695 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 284.

of the weaving villages in the hinterland of Nagapatnam. A VOC official named Theodore Telghuijs travelled around the Kaveri delta several times and prepared reports on the villages.

Usually another VOC servant and indigenous textile merchants, many of them Chettis, accompanied Telghuijs on his journeys. Telghuijs wrote that these trips were motivated by a desire to find out what kind of textiles were produced in the villages, to what extent these textiles were being woven for the EIC and private merchants, and what interest the VOC might have.[30] In short, the VOC was exploring more avenues of production. The following table lists the names of the villages with remarks on their special features: the textiles they produced and the markets they supplied.

Table 5.2 Inventory of weaving villages around Tanjore in the Kaveri delta, 1695[31]

Village	**Remarks**
Chinagemangalam	26 households owned by the VOC producing types of moeris (rated as 'thin') called *madripack* and *moeatte catchies*. The latter variety was exported to Malacca and Aceh.
Aliyur/Ariyur	Mainly producing moeatte catchies for Malacca and Aceh. Orders for these textiles came from English (private and/or EIC) and other merchants.
Jepoer (possibly Chepur)	30 households, mainly producing cloth for Aceh, *madripacks*, *ramboutins* and *moeatte catchies*. These were taken to Tranquebar and from there to Porto Novo, Fort St. David, San Thomé and Madras.
Thewoer	*Madripacks* and *salempores*, for Malacca and Aceh
Nertemangalam	Guinea cloth, *salempores*, *chelas* and sailcloth
Puravachery	30 households owned by the VOC producing *madripacks*, *gingams*, *bethilles*
Zikel	*Madripack* and various varieties of guinea cloth
Mangecolle	Cloth from this village were shown to Telghuijs at Anthonijpette (note the suffix denoting a small town; see Chapter 3 for details). Producing cambay cloth, *gingams* and *bethilles*
Tirumalapatnam	Producing *gingams*, *bethilles* and *tapesarasses*
Tilliaer	Varieties of cloth were displayed at a weekly Sunday market that also sold cotton that had been cleaned after harvest
Viradur; here Telghuijs was also shown cloth produced in nearby villages such as Chettaiyur, Erroewaddy Polagam, Apparampette, Uddatangudy, Thiesemudy, Parrangudi, Ambel and Mudiakondan	Produced *salempores*, guinea cloth, *madripack*, *bethilles* and *moeatte catchies*
Tirimeerde, together with Tondapaloer, Tiagrapette and Pontagram	Around 200 households producing *bethilles*, *gingams* and various varieties of *gingam*

[30] NA VOC 1581, Report dated 05.04.1695 by Theodore Telghuijs to Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam: f. 89.
[31] NA VOC 1581, Report dated 05.04.1695, 12.04.1695 by Theordore Telghuijs to Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam: f. 89–f. 166.

Aperampette	Producing mainly *madripacks*
Poetegaram	30 weavers producing cambay cloth and *gingams*
Pollegom	Mainly *madripacks*, *ramboutins*, *moeatte caetjes*
Trimalem (the textiles from Ponotte Coetenoer, Aljempette, Caddagampudi, Nellechierij, Bitnawarom, Cornade, Tanneoer and Trivendoer were brought here for Telghuijs)	*Madripacks* and *salempores* of various kinds
Thuthukudi	Telghuijs mentions that the cloth woven here was similar to what was produced in other such settlements
Mapellecoupang	About 500 weavers in 7 streets or neighbourhoods producing *ramboutins*, guinea cloth, *salempores* and *bethilles*, as well as varieties of *madripack* whose quality was poor compared to other places, says Telghuijs
Tiruvallur	*Bethilles*
Wisjewaron	About 60 weavers from Malabar producing *bethilles*
Carrapaddang	*Dupattas*, *chelas* (sold for indigenous use), guinea cloth and salempores
Poijpanem	*Dupattas* and *chelas*. Other varieties had previously been woven here but many weavers had left due to poor conditions presumably caused by wars
Caljemere	About 5 or 6 weaver households producing clothes for indigenous consumption due to the lack of investment in other varieties of textiles
Tatpetoere	*Chions*, *dupattas*, *chelas*; sent to Ceylon
Nijwelleke	*Dupattas* and *chelas*; Lack of investment had caused weavers to stop producing salempores, guinea cloth, parcalles and other types of textile
Corwapalem	*Dupattas* and *chelas*
Carrepatnam	*Dupattas* and *chelas*
Tellekade	*Dupattas* and *chelas*
Pamenij	Production for inland markets
Korke	*Chions* and *chelas*
Mangudi	Salempores, guinea cloth, *chelas* and *chions*; weavers complained of poor conditions and high prices of *nely* rice
Killioer	3 or 4 unemployed weaving households
Schieolsjaweron	Guinea cloth, *ramboutins*, *dupattas*, *chelas*, *chions*

Telghuijs prepared his report after several journeys to the villages to the west of Nagapatnam in the Kaveri delta. The list he prepared is significant because it helps us explore the condition of the textile industry of the Kaveri delta during the siege of Gingee. Let us now analyse the results coming from this survey.

We should bear in mind that the benchmark for Telghuijs's evaluation of textiles and weaving settlements was their usefulness in the Dutch trade to South–East Asia and the Netherlands; he found the *moeris* at Chiangemangalam too thin for European tastes, for example. At Tilliaer, Telghuijs visited the weekly Sunday market to examine various types of cloth (cotton which had been cleaned after harvest was also sold here). This settlement was one of the many links in a long–distance economy, places to which raw materials were brought to be turned into manufactured goods for export. But Telghuijs did not rate Tilliaer

as useful for the VOC. What he meant was it did not produce or sell the varieties that the Dutch sought for trade in South–East Asia.

At each village that Telghuijs surveyed, local textile merchants and weavers presented to him the varieties of textiles woven there and in the surrounding villages. At Viradur, for example, merchants and weavers showed to Telghuijs several varieties of salempores and guinea cloth. Telghuijs considered one of the salempore varieties to be useful for the VOC but noted that the price quoted by the merchants (15 fanums) as higher than the previous years. Nonetheless, he collected samples of it for the governor in Nagapatnam. This is another indication of an effect of the Mughal wars that was common across Coromandel in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century: high prices of textiles. Although the main action during the siege of Gingee had been taking place in central Coromandel, we must not forget that during the 1690s the Mughal commander Zulfiqar Khan raided the Kaveri delta on three occasions to procure supplies: in 1691, 1694 and 1697. The presence of this threat would have contributed to the high prices of textiles.

The survey also revealed other effects of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns on the textile industry of the Kaveri delta. One of these was migration from the north. Theodorus Telghuijs spoke of weavers who had migrated from the north of Coromandel to escape the lack of food and to look for better living conditions; they had been assimilated in the villages of the Kaveri delta, for example among the weaving populations of Tirimeerde and Tellekade. Teluijs wrote that he had encountered such migrants from the north in other parts of the Kaveri delta too, although he did not provide any further details.[32] In VOC parlance 'north Coromandel' refers to regions incorporated in the erstwhile sultanate of Golconda, but we may safely assume that some weavers migrated here from central Coromandel due to the disturbances created there by the siege of Gingee: weavers fleeing the campaigns found refuge in the Kaveri delta, which did not experience frequent crop failures even during the years of war, as we will see later in this chapter.

Another effect of the Mughal campaigns in the Kaveri delta was a change in the economic character of some textile weaving villages that had earlier catered to the needs of the export market, but now produced for the indigenous population: Carrapaddang, Poijpanem, Caljemere and Nijwelleke. These villages had experienced a downturn during the Mughal wars, with weavers migrating due to the rising costs of grains and lack of investments from European companies – Danish and English cash advances had stopped flowing into Carrapaddang, and as a result of this, weavers had deserted the village. In Poijpanem, Telghuijs found that most of the weavers had left the village due to high costs of living and that those who had remained were now working as labourers to sustain themselves.

[32] NA VOC 1581, Report dated 05.04.1695, 12.04.1695 by Theodore Telghuijs to Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam: f. 130, f. 159–f.160.

Investments for producing textiles for exports had dried up in Caljemere and the village began to produce cloth mainly for domestic consumption, i.e., inland trade or use of textiles within the village itself (details unavailable), the situation in Nijwelleke was similar to that in Caljmere.[33] It is possible that the Mughal wars forced the Danes and the English to prioritize some villages over others, and consequently, their investments in textile production had dried up in some villages, as reported by the Dutch. As we have seen, this prompted the weavers to migrate and the remaining weavers to produce for domestic consumption. Another village visited by Telghuijs, Tatpetoere, was producing cloth for Ceylon. Clearly, then, though the Mughal wars had caused an increase in prices of textiles and affected production in the countryside, the textile industry of the Kaveri delta sustained production and offered employment to weavers who had migrated from the north.

As discussed in Part I, rulers in Coromandel would invite the European companies to settle in and trade from regions ruled by them. This dynamic was also in evidence during Telghuijs's journey to the villages of the Kaveri delta. At Viradur, an agent working for Rama Nayaka of Tranquebar met Telghuijs and asked him to visit the villages that fell under Rama Nayaka's jurisdiction and inspect the textiles produced there. The Dutch, however, turned down this request for the time being.[34] This case could be just another example of encouragement offered by local rulers to European companies, but it could have also represented an attempt to counter another European presence in Tranquebar: that of the Danish East India Company. Such supposition is based on similar developments that took place earlier in the seventeenth century. As we have seen in Chapter 3, the *nayaka* of Tanjore had invited the VOC in the 1650s to oust the Portuguese from Nagapatnam and once the VOC had done that, they settled in the port.

There is additional evidence that economic activity in the Tamil country continued during the wars. The Dutch were not having much success in trading areca nuts from Malabar. The routes from Malabar were open to competition and private merchants were continuing to flood the markets with their consignments of areca nuts. Apart from this, wars also have an economy of their own. The Mughal camp attracted many merchants: for example, in his description of the siege of Bijapur (1685–1686) in *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*, Bhimsen speaks of a Mughal nobleman named Khwaja Shamsuddin, whose army was always adequately supplied with rations for the soldiers and fodder; Khwaja Shamsuddin would encourage merchants to come to him. Bhimsen also writes that his employer, Rao Dalpat Bundela, guarded the property of traders as the Mughal army marched towards Wakinkheda, en route to Gingee.[35]

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[33] NA VOC 1581, Report dated 05.04.1695, 12.04.1695 by Theodore Telghuijs to Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam: f. 149, f. 153–f.154, f. 157–f. 158.
[34] NA VOC 1581, Report dated 05.04.1695, 12.04.1695 by Theodore Telghuijs to Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam: f. 123.
[35] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 146, 178–179.

An Armenian merchant accompanied the convoy that supplied the Mughals in Gingee with food, munitions, money and troops in the 1692–1693 period.[36] Some goods, such as the silk brought by the Dutch from Bengal, sold better during the wars, because it was bought by merchants in Nagapatnam and then sold to the Mughal army,[37] clearly a case of demand stimulated by the essence of the Mughal army. Another example of such demand is the case of broadcloth, a woollen textile that was imported in Coromandel by the EIC. By the 1680s, the EIC in Madras had been making its suppliers of textiles accept broadcloth partly as a payment for the cloth that textile merchants supplied to Madras. Slowly this practice was extended further south towards Cuddalore and Porto Novo. However, the EIC's suppliers were initially reluctant to accept this mode of payment because there was not much demand for broadcloth among the peasant socieities of southern India and they found it difficult to sell the product. It was used for making carpets, covers for tents, saddles, caps and coats, and sold best to marching armies and cavalry. So, not surprisingly, sales of broadcloth improved after 1685 as the Mughal wars continued, and by 1690 the merchants of Madras were willingly accepting broadcloth from the English in lieu of cash investment. Captains of ships and sailors also used to bring broadcloth in permitted quantities and sell it in the Coromandel ports.[38]

The sales of Bengal silk and broadcloth to the marching armies illustrate the fact that although troops on the move could devastate the existing economy in the regions they passed through, the armies themselves generated demand. Primarily such demand was for food, fodder and military supplies. As we have noted in this chapter, during the siege of Gingee coastal vessels plying to the ports of central Coromandel brought food products that were sold to the Mughal army, while both the VOC and the EIC supported the Mughals during the siege of Gingee by supplying them with gunpowder, munitions, gunners and surgeons. The cases of sales of Bengal silk and broadcloth point to the armies generating demand for specific varieties of cloth which had been imported into Coromandel; indirectly these developments reflect on import trade of the European companies in Coromandel and reveal the connections that indigenous merchants of the EIC and VOC could forge with the Mughal camp. Later in this chapter we will find an example of how the presence of Mughal army could also create demand for occupations allied with the textile industry of central Coromandel.

In 1698, the siege of Gingee came to an end and the Mughal–Maratha front moved to the west of the Deccan, where Aurangzeb spent the last years of his reign and life (1699–1707) personally leading attempts to capture Maratha forts. In a letter to Batavia in 1698, the Dutch governor in Nagapatnam wrote that the region around the ports of Pondicherry and Tegenapatnam had been laid to waste by years of warfare and famine. They did not sound

[36] Varadarajan transl., *India in the 17th Century*, *Volume II, Part II*: 1435.
[37] NA VOC 1596, Letter dated 19.07.1697 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 10–f. 11.
[38] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 156–157.

optimistic and bemoaned the low production levels due to the high prices and scarcity of cotton. Tegenapatnam was only able to supply a cargo of 265 packs of textiles, far less than the promised figure of 482. In the same letter, the Dutch governor contrasts the condition of textile trade in southern Coromandel with its counterpart in northern Coromandel where production had not been hit by wars. However, this reference to southern Coromandel was made while discussing the textile trade in Pondicherry and Tegeneptnam, and not ports such as Porto Novo or Nagapatnam that lay further south. The VOC in Nagapatnam instructed its subordinate factories to procure as much cloth as they could, and they expected the price of cotton to remain high as rainfall had been poor. In addition, the production of indigo had been affected by the bad monsoon making indigo scarce and expensive around Pondicherry and Porto Novo, due to the resulting drought.[39]

The VOC in Pulicat were unable to supply the textiles that Nagapatnam requested, and Porto Novo was unable to make up Pulicat's shortfall. The governor in Nagapatnam had no choice but to drop the matter. In the same period, according to Dutch sources, the EIC was attempting to make inroads at the weaving villages around Sadraspatnam. They sent an emissary to the ruler of Zeijoer (possibly Cheyoor/Cheyur), a principality that stretched from the river Markara in the north to Sadraspatnam, in order to secure rights over Alemperwe (Alamparam), which was located along this river. The EIC contracted merchants for the supply of guinea cloth, salempores and *percalles*, and the Dutch found this an ominous development because the hinterland of Sadraspatnam was important for the VOC's trade. The villages near the port of Sadraspatnam specialized in the varieties of cloth that the VOC sought for South–East Asia; cotton was brought to the villages near Sadraspatnam in considerable quantities from the regions to its west and south–west (Mysore plateau). Other non–Dutch actors involved in the textile trade in southern Coromandel at this juncture included Persian merchants. The Dutch write that a ship laden with various types of textile and owned by the Persian merchant Aliaboka had sailed from Porto Novo to Kedah along the Malacca strait. The ship, however, landed in Galle, possibly thrown off course by strong winds.[40]

There are additional examples of non–European merchants trading from Porto Novo, as we will see later in this chapter. In the context of Alamparam, the VOC's competition with the English shows that European companies were aware of the need to control or retain those weaving zones which had survived the negative impact of the Mughal wars.

Pulicat and Nagapatnam: 1699–1711

The performance of the VOC in Pulicat did not improve immediately after the siege of Gingee ended. Despite having issued an order promising all help and assistance for Dutch trade, the Mughal governor Muhammed Zafar prohibited the textile dyers employed by the VOC from

[39] NA VOC 1610, Letter dated 18.05.1698 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 14–f. 16, f. 36–f. 37.

[40] NA VOC 1610, Letter dated 11.10.1698 from Laurens Pit and Dirck Comans, governors in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 301–f. 302, f. 304.

working in Ponneri, a village close to Pulicat. The dyers had to leave the village, and efforts to resettle them were unsuccessful. Further down the coast, the VOC factory in Sadraspatnam had been doing well both in terms of sales of merchandise and procurement of textiles. It had prepared a sizeable quantity of cloth in 1699. In Porto Novo, the Dutch expected a decent sale of imported commodities and production of textiles, as long as the Muslim officials did not turn hostile towards them. The Dutch measures to ensure a safe trade included the usual – having a garrison, in this case eleven topaz soldiers and a European corporal to guard the factory, and gifts for the *havaldar*.[41]

The VOC reveal their insecurities when, after the arrival of the English ambassador William Norris around Pulicat with gifts for Aurangzeb, they write that they could only foresee difficulties ahead for Dutch trade in textiles. We should be sceptical of such hyperbolic statements, because they are typical examples of the Dutch tendency to blowing minor matters out of all proportion. In general, the VOC tended to equate political stability with congenial conditions for trade in South Asia. In 1699, the VOC wrote that the Mughal general Zulfiqar Khan (in Gingee) had departed north to Aurangzeb's camp in the west of the Deccan, and conditions were generally peaceful and therefore conducive to the sale of imported goods and the production of textiles.[42] The following year the VOC in Nagapatnam reported to Batavia that the procurement of textiles and the sale of commodities had resumed to an extent in Sadraspatnam and Porto Novo. In and around Nagapatnam, merchants had been contracted to supply 789 packs of textiles. They even agreed to make up for the deficit in Masulipatnam, where factors had been unable to supply the share assigned to them by Nagapatnam.[43] Although the volume of textiles supplied and shipped from Nagapatnam were far from staggering, it was sufficient to substantiate the argument made in the previous chapter with respect to Masulipatnam: the textile industry had survived the wars.

As noted earlier, one effect of the Mughal wars common across Coromandel was higher costs of production leading to increases in textile prices. This phenomenon persisted even after the siege of Gingee had ended. In 1703 in Porto Novo, for example, weavers refused to work for merchants at wages lower than what was usually paid. The VOC had another factory close to Pondicherry in Conjemere (possibly Kunimedu) that was doing well in terms of sale of imports and procuring of textiles, but there were fears of an attack by the French.[44] The VOC governor in Nagapatnam wrote to Batavia that merchants who supplied

[41] NA VOC 1617, Letter dated 29.04.1699 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 42r.–f. 42v., f. 44v.–f. 45r.
[42] NA VOC 1617, Letter dated 10.10.1699 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 89r.
[43] NA VOC 1638, Letter dated 25.01.1700 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 7–f. 8.
[44] NA VOC 8820, Letter dated 27.04.1703 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 478–f. 479, f. 482.

textiles in Pulicat were refusing to lower their prices.[45] It is quite possible that merchants could not contract weavers at low wages because of the high cotton prices, higher costs of living and general insecurity. Not only the Dutch, but also other European companies were having to deal with the high prices of textiles. For example, EIC merchants operating in the hinterland of Madras complained of the rising costs of food grains, cotton and wages for weavers.[46]

In 1704 the Dutch in Pulicat supplied the usual stock of ginghams and other textiles. But trade was very low in Sadraspatnam. The VOC again blamed the decline on problems caused by local Mughal officials. Around this time, Nagapatnam instructed its subordinate factories to procure good quality textiles at a low price, but only Conjemere was able to do so. The VOC governor in Nagapatnam wrote that while earlier textiles of poorer varieties had been accepted by their officials due to the disturbed conditions in Coromandel, the company would no longer do so. Porto Novo provided a decent output of guinea cloth, salempores, *parcalles*, *baftas*, *boelangs* and *bethilles*. Some of these were meant for the Netherlands and Japan. The VOC wrote that the textile merchants supplying the Dutch factory in Porto Novo still tended to quote higher prices for textiles whenever possible due to expensive cotton and yarn. But the Dutch company increasingly cast doubt on these claims and the governor in Nagapatnam asserted that there was no basis for the high prices that merchants were charging. The same Dutch letter reveals continuing uncertainties about doing business here when it relates rumours of Maratha armies approaching the ports of Coromandel and Aurangzeb's death.[47]

Although the complaints about having to pay the high prices quoted by textile merchants persists in the VOC's letters from Nagapatnam in the early eighteenth century, on one occasion at least, merchants in Pulicat agreed to settle at the price insisted on by the VOC for packs of *bethilles* after Dutch threatened to return and cancel the entire consignment. The Dutch had sent an emissary to Daud Khan Panni, the Mughal general, to resolve the troubles in Sadraspatnam. He granted the port and its tolls to the Dutch for an annual payment of 8,750 Dutch guilders. Yet again, this underscores the willingness of Mughal officials posted in Coromandel to link the regions under their control with the wider maritime network; a steady source of revenue was more than welcome (this should also be seen in the context of the discussion of Mughal administration in central and southern Coromandel after the siege of Gingee: Daud Khan Panni possibly planned to develop Arcot as an autonomous state). At the Conjemere factory, the number of packs of textiles supplied had been steadily decreasing in number every year except a major fluctuation 1702–1703, e.g.,

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[45] NA VOC 8821, Letter dated 10.10.1703 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 865.
[46] Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce*: 189.
[47] NA VOC 8822, Letter dated 19.10.1704 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 211–f. 214, f. 217, f. 219–f. 221, f. 223.

1701–1702: 600

1702–1703: 2156

1703–1704: 300

1704: 148

1705: 11

Separate figures for textiles supplied from Conjemere in earlier years are unavailable. The above figures seem to have been mostly the number of packs of textiles that were supplied annually. As we had noted in Chapter 4, fluctuations in the number of packs of textiles supplied by different VOC factories of Coromandel had become normal during the 1690s and 1700s and the high number of packs supplied in 1702–1703 by Conjemere should be viewed as a part of this general trend. In 1705, the Dutch in Conjemere claimed they were not short of capital. But, as a factory, Conjemere was hardly profitable. Although the Dutch do not state it clearly, we have some indication of the cause that might have contributed to decreasing numbers from Conjemere: poor trade in raw materials required for the textile industry near Conjemere because the VOC sought to address that very problem in their efforts to improve the conditions of this factory. To step up the trade in cotton and yarn, the Dutch factor in Conjemere organized a market place at Arramante, north of Conjemere. The idea, write the Dutch, was to attract suppliers, merchants and other people to a new and active market place. However, the early days of this new market place were unsuccessful because the toll–collectors of Bonnepalayam and Chingerecoil prevented the merchants from going there. Yet again, local officials in Coromandel obstructed trade. It is possible in this case that the VOC had not paid money to the local toll collectors. Despite the failure of their venture in Arramante and although it might not have been a novel venture, the Dutch strategy of organizing a new and active marketplace is telling, because it points to the fact that a slow transformation was taking place in central and southern Coromandel, one that might have been going on since the beginning of the Mughal wars: when old market centres died, new ones sprang up to take their place. This dynamic of transformation would seem to have parallels with the developments in weaving villages around Tanjore and Nagapatnam, where migrants from the north were assimilated into weaving villages, and some villages catering to production for domestic consumption due to the absence of investments from European traders such as the Danes and the English.[48]

In 1705, the production of textiles around Porto Novo and sale of imports were reasonably good. Abdul Nabi, the Mughal faujdar of Chidambaram, a town to the south–east of Porto Novo, had recently been promoted and now had 500 cavalrymen under his

[48] NA VOC 8823, Letter dated 07.10.1705 from Joannes Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 208–f. 210, f. 240, f. 248–f. 249, f. 251–f. 252.

command. He asked the VOC in Porto Novo to allow him to send 10 or 12 packs of cloth to Jaffna. His intention was to have profits from this transaction credited to him in the form of Ceylonese elephants. The Dutch turned this offer down but promised any help he needed if he paid in cash to import the elephants. Eventually the faujdar paid 1,250 pagodas to the Dutch and the money was transferred from Nagapatnam to Jaffna for buying elephants. This exchange offers a rare snapshot of how local Mughal officials were trying to engage in trade. The clothes spoken of here must have included the varieties that were shipped from southern Coromandel, mainly Nagapatnam, to Ceylon. Possibly the faujdar had bought them at an inland market or from merchants who had visited him. This complements our earlier observations regarding trade with the Mughal camp. Might it also be an instance of a local Mughal official involved in the logistics of warfare, who needed elephants? Perhaps, the elephants were required for transporting the army supplies. For the next year, 1706, the textile trade around Nagapatnam was good; the Dutch wrote that Nagapatnam had delegated the demand for clothes destined for South–East Asia and the Netherlands to its subordinate factories.[49]

In 1706, the Dutch factors in Tegenapatnam reported that Aurangzeb had ordered the general Daud Khan Panni to seize all Europeans on the Coromandel Coast along with their goods. This had been done to retaliate against the loss of ships of Surat merchants in the Arabian Sea, which the European companies were supposed to guard. The English deployed more topaz (Eurasians, especially one ancestor was of Portuguese origin) soldiers and repaired their fortifications in Fort St. David. The Dutch put their factories in Coromandel on alert. However, the textile trade around Nagapatnam does not seem to have been adversely affected by Aurangzeb's orders. As they had done in Pulicat, textile merchants here asked the VOC to pay more for the cloth they supplied; raw materials (cotton and yarn), had become more expensive since the contracts were signed. The merchants themselves had had to buy the raw cotton at a high price, because untimely showers had destroyed the standing cotton crop in the fields. In this case, the Dutch were willing to accept the prices quoted by the merchants because they feared that if they did not the entire consignment might not be delivered.[50]

The VOC also encountered high prices of cotton and yarn in Sadraspatnam, where they had no choice but to pay the textile merchants more than the price which had been contracted for guinea cloth, salempores and baftas. The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb died in 1707 and the long southern campaigns came to an end. However, the war of succession that broke out among Aurangzeb's sons made highways across northern and southern

[49] NA VOC 8823, Letter dated 07.10.1705 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 252–f.254, f. 256, f. 259–f. 261, f. 275–f. 276.
[50] NA VOC 8824, Letter dated 25.05.1706 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 385–f. 386, f. 450–f. 451, f. 455–f. 456.

Coromandel unsafe. This affected the sale of imported goods while textile production had been reasonably healthy despite the unstable political climate, wrote the Dutch in 1707.[51]

The VOC's letters from 1707 and 1708 provide us with a rare glimpse into how indigenous textile merchants operated in central Coromandel. In 1707, due to a dispute between two caste groups of weavers in Madras, one group of weavers retreated to San Thomé and hindered the transport of provisions to Madras. As a result, the EIC faced a serious shortage of grains. Taking advantage of this situation, a textile merchant named Sunkumuda Rama Chetti colluded with a presumed grain–hoarder in Madras, had him supply grains to the distressed weavers and persuaded them to deliver their textiles to the VOC in Sadraspatnam, instead of the English in Madras. The English, however, found this out and arrested the merchant.[52] Further evidence of Sunkumuda Rama Chetti's association with the VOC comes from a letter written in 1708. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, in the early eighteenth century the VOC tried to expand their business in central Coromandel. For example, they attempted to set up an inland market place in Arramante to facilitate the sale of cotton and yarn. A similar attempt to expand business was made in Alemperwe (Alamparam), a small port near Sadraspatnam that had been leased by the Mughals to the VOC in 1703. But over the course of time, Alamparam did not turn out to be profitable for the Dutch. So, in 1708 they decided to quit and defer the village to the merchants of Sunkumuda Rama Chetti's company in Sadraspatnam for procuring textiles on behalf of the VOC.[53]

More than anything else, the unstable political climate was the cause of the troubles that the Dutch encountered. Reports from Pulicat in 1708 pointed out that Islam Shaikh, the Mughal faujdar of the region, had occupied the island Erikan ('Eergam' in the VOC records) and the adjacent villages which belonged to the VOC in Pulicat. The Dutch factors in Pulicat lodged a complaint with Daud Khan Panni and strengthened the garrison. Although the actions of the Mughal *faujdar* caused some trouble (as we will see), the VOC's textile trade in Pulicat continued. The VOC assigned their dyers around Pulicat to supply 5 packs of *tape grinsing* (a sarong or skirt–like cloth, see glossary), 9 packs of *tape Malaya*, 20 packs of *chintz* of the Persian variety (traded in the Persian Gulf) and 25 packs of *gobar* textiles of different varieties. In order to quickly finish this task, the dyers proposed to do the job in Ponneri and Triwelecanij. However, the Dutch did not approve their proposal because they were worried that Ponneri and Triwelecanij would be unsafe given the unstable political climate of the

[51] NA VOC 8686, Letter dated 09.09.1707 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 462–f. 463, f. 494–f.495.
[52] NA VOC 8825, Letter dated 11.10.1707 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 92–f. 93, f. 95–f. 97.
[53] NA VOC 8826, Letter dated 15.09.1708 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 355–f.356.

region (presumably due to the actions of the Mughal faujdar). The *gobars* and *tape* varieties of textiles from Pulicat were required for the Sultan of Bantam in South–East Asia.[54]

In 1709 the conflict between the Dutch and the Mughal faujdar Islam Shaikh came to a head. He obstructed the transport of grains from Mangiewake to Pulicat, killed a pion employed by the VOC and arrested several others who did not manage to escape. Eventually, however, Daud Khan's intervention led to the restoration of VOC control over the villages around Pulicat. About the same time a Persian merchant by the name of Mahmudu Mohim came to Pulicat to have several big and small tents painted for the Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah, whose army was in Golconda. The merchant offered to negotiate in favour of the VOC at the Mughal court concerning their control over Pulicat. The Dutch, however, politely turned down his offer.[55] The Dutch interaction with this Persian merchant reveals two points: Firstly, it offers us yet another example of the kind of demand that an army could make on the regions through which it marched and we had alluded to this example while discussing the cases of sales of Bengal silk and English broadcloth to the Mughal army. Secondly, the VOC's refusal to entertain this Persian merchant reveals their issue of dealing with Mughal officials: they preferred to negotiate with the Mughals through Daud Khan, someone they knew well and had dealt with earlier.

The VOC's letters from Nagapatnam to Batavia in 1709 and 1710 refer to the activities of indigenous traders in southern Coromandel, and their connections with Malabar, Ceylon and South–East Asia. A ship belonging to two Muslim merchants named Syed Jaffer and Jainulabedin had sailed from Porto Novo to Aceh via Nagore (north of Nagapatnam). En route the ship was put off course by a storm and ended up in Galle in Ceylon. Stranded there, these merchants made Abdulla Khan Sherwani, the Mughal faujdar of Porto Novo, request the Dutch to have their cargo transported back to Porto Novo. To keep the faujdar and his counterpart in Chidambaram, Abdul Nabi, some of whose goods were on this ship, on good terms, the VOC accepted their request and let these merchants depart for Colombo.[56] A Muslim merchant of Porto Novo named Aga Mudu (possibly Muthu) Nayana, who was supported by Daud Khan Panni, had requested the VOC to help him in transporting timber from Malabar that had been bought there by his agents. The merchants who plied their trade between the Kaveri delta and Ceylon undermined the pass system of the VOC in southern Coromandel: they did not show passes to the VOC while sailing either to or from Ceylon – on the voyage back from Ceylon, indigenous merchants would pass Nagapatnam at night and anchor in Nagore. The VOC officials in Nagapatnam asked their colleagues in Colombo to

[54] NA VOC 8826, Letter dated 15.09.1708 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 349–f. 352, f. 355–f. 356, f. 371.
[55] NA VOC 8373, Letter dated 07.05.1709 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 62–f. 65.
[56] NA VOC 8373, Letter dated 07.05.1709 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 62–f. 65, f. 69–f. 70.

make merchants show their passes while leaving for the Coromandel and resolved to do the same themselves in Nagapatnam when the merchants sailed to Ceylon.[57]

The period analysed in this dissertation to assess the impact of Mughal wars on the textile industry of southern Coromandel ends around 1712. VOC letters indicate that the costs of production remained high due to high prices of grains, and this, in turn, led to increased wages for weavers and prices of textiles. The VOC governor in Nagapatnam wrote to Batavia in 1710 that the trading company had no choice but to increase the prices of textiles that were painted and dyed in the city because of the high prices of grains. Otherwise it would have been difficult for the painters and dyers to sustain themselves. Merchants supplying indigo to the VOC were affected by the same problems. To worsen matters, in 1710 the indigo crop was ruined by a spell of rain. The VOC governor increased the prices of ginghams by two pagodas per pack to secure their supply as the merchants had been complaining about the high prices of cotton and indigo. The ginghams were an essential commodity in the VOC trade from Coromandel to Java. Nagapatnam assigned to each subordinate factory its share of textiles to meet the orders for South–East Asia for the year 1711.[58]

In 1712, the VOC in Nagapatnam were yet again compelled to pay their textile suppliers' even higher prices. This rise in costs, the Dutch wrote, was caused by two reasons. Firstly, some of the cotton crop could not be harvested in time and was wasted due to lack of labour, stemming from widespread depopulation in the lands around Mysore and to the north. Secondly, while the price of cotton was indeed high, the Dutch suspected that whatever had been harvested was being hoarded by the merchants to create an artificially increased scarcity and push the prices even higher. For the textile orders of 1712, in Sadraspatnam and Porto Novo too the Dutch had to pay more for textiles. The scarcity of cotton is listed as the reason behind delays in the supply of textiles. Political instability was another factor that affected production of textiles, and VOC letters point out that southern Coromandel had not been as badly hit by political instability as northern Coromandel.[59]

Thus far, we have discussed the major effects of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns on the economy of southern Coromandel, especially its textile industry. Textile trade persisted despite an increase in costs of production which was caused mainly by high prices of grains and occasionally poor cotton harvests. Despite their complaints, the VOC had no choice but to accede to the demands of textile merchants and buy textiles at high prices. As we have noted, weavers migrated from northern Coromandel to the Kaveri delta, which offered greater food security. The same factor would have also attracted merchants to the ports of

[57] NA VOC 8827, Letter dated 22.08.1710 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Abraham van Riebeeck, governor–general in Batavia: f. 213–f. 214.
[58] NA VOC 8827, Letter dated 22.08.1710 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Abraham van Riebeeck, governor–general in Batavia: f. 93, f. 99–f. 100, f. 107, f. 109–f. 110, f. 213–f. 214.
[59] NA VOC 8828, Volume One, Letter dated 10.07.1711 from Daniel Bernard, governor in Nagapatnam to Abraham van Riebeeck, governor–general in Batavia: f. 20–f. 21, f. 32–f. 33, f. 39–f. 41, f. 55.

southern Coromandel, such as Porto Novo. Let us now look at what impact the Mughal wars had on agriculture in southern Coromandel. This will also offer us insights into food security around the Kaveri delta.

5.3 Climate and agriculture

As in the case of northern Coromandel, any analysis of the agricultural conditions in central and southern Coromandel during Aurangzeb's southern campaigns must mainly be based on circumstantial evidence.

The southern part of Coromandel experienced fewer crop failures than other parts of Coromandel during the Mughal wars. During the siege of Golconda and immediately after its annexation by the Mughals in 1687, people migrated from northern Coromandel to the Kaveri delta where crops had not failed. Similarly, as noted earlier in this chapter, during the siege of Gingee, Zulfiqar Khan raided Tanjore and the Kaveri delta for provisions, in 1691, 1694 and 1697.

After the siege of Gingee began, the movement of troops often denuded vegetation or rice fields; the Mughal reinforcement troops deployed from the north to Gingee in 1690 and 1691 found that armies on the march had made a track in what was otherwise a dense forest cover between Cuddapah and Kanchipuram in central Coromandel. Similarly, when Zulfiqar Khan tried to bring grains from Wandiwash in January 1693, the Mughal draught animals such as oxen and camels got stuck in the mud in a rice field, while horses passed only with great difficulty. As the siege of Gingee continued and the conditions worsened, the Mughals were forced to retreat to Wandiwash where grains were available.[60]

The war soon impacted on agricultural conditions in central Coromandel. In 1692 the French director of Pondicherry, Francois Martin, wrote in his memoirs that the presence of Mughal troops had made it impossible for peasants to plough their lands around Pondicherry in the regions of Valudavur and Alamcoupam. The French had been fearing a siege of Pondicherry by the Dutch and they received rice from the Golconda coast (possibly from their compatriots in Masulipatnam). Martin pointed out that rice had become dear because the peasants had failed to cultivate their lands due of the wars. Merchants tried to send rice from places inland that still had stocks (perhaps due to hoarding and having escaped the effects of the wars). For example, two bullock carts laden with rice and travelling from the inland plains towards Pondicherry were seized by the Mughal and Maratha troops.[61]

Bhimsen's *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*, sums up the effects of the Mughal-Maratha wars on agriculture in this region:

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[60] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 180, 186–188.
[61] Varadarajan transl., *India in the 17th Century, Volume II, Part II*: 1374–1375, 1394, 1420.

> In the whole world nowhere else are there so many temples. The cause of the building of these temples is that the country is very wealth producing, every year it yields four crops, and a large revenue is raised, the amount of which is known only to the Revenue Angel.

He was candid enough to add this:

> During the sovereignty of Bijapur, Hyderabad and Telang, the country was extensively cultivated. Many places have been turned into wastes on account of the passage of the imperial troops, which has caused hardships and oppression to the people.[62]

In 1695 the Dutch wrote that while the Kaveri delta had a good harvest, the region to the north of Tanjore was not so fortunate. Merchants kept coming from the north to buy rice in and around Tanjore. This had made grains expensive.[63] Providing more evidence of declining food security in central Coromandel, Bhimsen points out that food was becoming very scarce when the Mughals moved towards Doderi after a battle with the Marathas near Vellore during November and December 1695. Many horses and cattle died.[64] Although southern Coromandel usually had greater food security, in 1698 the region suffered from the effects of a poor monsoon; cotton became expensive and indigo production dipped.[65]

As discussed in Chapter 3, rice was a major commodity in the trade between southern Coromandel and Ceylon, and the VOC would export rice from Nagapatnam to their colleagues in Ceylon. The winter harvest of January 1700 of *nely* rice in Tanjore was quantified by the Dutch at 22,000,000 *calangs*.[66] Thanks to good harvests, the VOC in Nagapatnam kept on supplying rice to their colleagues in Ceylon: in 1704 they shipped 305 *lasten* of rice and 612 2/3 *lasten* of *nely* rice to Colombo, 522 23/75 *lasten* of *nely* rice to Jaffna and 99 1/3 lasten to Trincomalee.[67]

In 1705, the VOC wrote, the cultivation of rice around Tanjore and Nagapatnam suffered due to a lack of water in the fields which came down the river; a poor monsoon had affected irrigation. Even when the production was better the following year when rainfall

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[62] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 193–195.
[63] NA VOC 1570, Letter dated 24.03.1695 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 187.
[64] Sarkar transl., *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*: 200–201.
[65] NA VOC 1610, Letter dated 18.05.1698 from Laurens Pit, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 36–f. 37.
[66] NA VOC 1638, Letter dated 25.01.1700 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 12. The VOC glossary defines 1 calange as equivalent to about 7.2 grams. See *VOC–Glossarium: Verklaringen van termen, verzameld uit de rijks geschiedkundige publicatiën die betrekking hebben op de Verenigde Oost–Indische Compagnie.* (The Hague: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 2000): 25.
[67] NA VOC 8822, Letter dated 191.10.1704 from Dirck Comans, governor in Nagapatnam to Willem van Outhoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 235. 1 last is equivalent to 1250 kg, *VOC–Glossarium*: 67.

improved, the VOC's supplier of rice around Nagapatnam withheld the supply to the Dutch and sold it instead to private merchants.[68] Possibly, the presence of other merchants had increased the prices and the latter were prepared to spend more. Rice was hoarded too, as we have seen, to create artificial scarcity and push up prices. Rice cultivators in Tanjore and around Nagapatnam also had to cope with problems caused by flooding in the Kaveri delta – in 1707 the northern part of the delta suffered particularly bad floods. The VOC in Nagapatnam remarked they had not witnessed such a flood in that region in the previous fifty years. The floods ruined the *nely* (or *neli*) rice stored in ground pits as well as the newly sown in rice paddies all the way from the interior to the coast. As was usual in such conditions, the VOC only expected rice to get dearer.[69]

Rains failed in 1708 and consequently the prices of *nely* rice sold in the markets of Nagapatnam increased over a month and a half from December 1708 to January 1709. The VOC in Nagapatnam could not supply the quantities requested by Jaffna and Colombo; they had no choice but to ask their colleagues in Colombo to look for rice further south along the coast around Madurai or the Kanara Coast in south–western India.[70] In 1710, agriculture was affected by political insecurity caused by the war that the king of Tanjore, Sahaji Raja, had been fighting against the rebels in his kingdom. Many rice fields around Tanjore lay uncultivated because of the death and migration of peasants, write the Dutch. Then, even the meagre harvest itself was ruined by a severe storm that hit Nagapatnam. There seems to have been a shortage of rice at this point in southern Coromandel. The VOC unsuccessfully sought to buy it around Karaikal and other places near Nagapatnam.[71]

However, the harvest seems to have been better again the next year (1711). At times Tamil merchants who were domiciled in Colombo and had commercial networks in the Kaveri delta worked as middlemen to help the VOC buy rice for their colleagues in Ceylon. That year, the VOC governor in Nagapatnam bought 1290 1/3 *lasten* of *nely* rice, with the help of a certain Sedassua Moddelij, a resident of Colombo in Ceylon. This consignment was shipped to Colombo, Jaffnapatnam and Trincomalee for the Dutch garrisons in these places.[72]

Agriculture in southern Coromandel, especially the Kaveri delta, suffered from poor monsoons and floods on four occasions during the period that we have surveyed, mainly after the siege of Gingee ended in early 1698: in 1698 (poor monsoon), 1705 (poor monsoon), 1707

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[68] NA VOC 8824, Letter dated 25.05.1706 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 387.
[69] NA VOC 8686, Letter dated 09.09.1707 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 466–f. 468.
[70] NA VOC 8373, Letter dated 07.05.1709 from Joannes van Steelant, governor in Nagapatnam to Joan van Hoorn, governor–general in Batavia: f. 104–f. 105.
[71] NA VOC 8827, Letter dated 22.08.1710 from Daniel Bernard, governor in Nagapatnam to Abraham van Riebeeck, governor–general in Batavia: f. 99, f. 144, f. 148–f. 149.
[72] NA VOC 8828, Volume One, Letter dated 10.07.1711 from Daniel Bernard, governor in Nagapatnam to Abraham van Riebeeck, governor-general in Batavia: f. 136–f. 138.

(flood) and 1708 (poor monsoon). In 1710, cultivation in Tanjore was affected by the king's war against rebels, which led to the death of peasants. However, an important point to remember is that even after the aforementioned cases of natural calamities such as poor monsoons and floods, the VOC did not speak of depopulation in the Kaveri delta caused by a lack of food. The only occasion when they do speak of depopulation is in 1710, during a rebellion in Tanjore. We can therefore fairly safely assume that during natural calamities which affected agriculture, people in the Kaveri delta survived on rice that had been stored from previous years. In short, food security seems to have remained good.

5.4 Conclusion

Like Chapter 4, we will distinguish between the immediate effects, short–term and long–term aftermath of wars and conquest to understand the impact that Aurangzeb's southern campaigns had on central and southern Coromandel.

The immediate effects of the conquest of Golconda (1687) were felt in central Coromandel by 1688–1689. The VOC wrote of how major economic centres had been plundered by Mughals and Marathas in the region up to Madras. The EIC complained of unsafe roads which had made it difficult to transport cotton and thus engage weavers for work. The French were compelled to increase prices of textiles around Pondicherry in 1689. Also, the decision to transfer the Dutch headquarters of Coromandel from Pulicat to Nagapatnam in 1690 was shaped by the Mughal conquest of Golconda and the beginning of the siege of Gingee in 1689.

Within a couple of years the siege of Gingee had affected the economy of central Coromandel. Its short–term impact was first felt in the region between Kanchipuram and Pulicat that had turned desolate by 1692, thanks to the movement of troops which had denuded vegetation and reduced the cultivated area– a fact bemoaned by the Mughal chronicler Bhimsen in *Tarikh–i–Dilkasha*. Another short–term effect of the siege of Gingee on the economy of central Coromandel was how the presence of the Mughal army had created demand for certain commodities, mainly food and fodder. Coastal crafts disembarking at the ports of central Coromandel brought rice, wheat and lentils that were sold to the Mughal army. The sales of Bengal silk and broadcloth to the Mughal army (or at the Mughal camp) are more examples in this regard. In this respect, an element of the hypothesis presented in Part I also holds good: the Deccan and South India could not be won without co–opting the European enclaves. As in the case of Masulipatnam, Aurangzeb's reinstatement of the VOC's privileges in Pulicat was an example of the larger Mughal project of integrating the coasts with the heartland of the empire. In the context of the southern campaigns, the income accruing from sharing of tolls in Pulicat and profits from sales of textiles could be invested in wars. Moreover, these encalves acted as sources of military supply: both the VOC and the EIC supported Mughal war efforts in Gingee by supplying gun powder, gunners, technicians and surgeons. The effects of the siege of Gingee were especially hard on Pulicat which had been poorly performing as a centre for procuring textiles for the VOC's trade in the Indian Ocean

by 1693. About the same time, 1692–1693, the Dutch did not have much to complain in southern Coromandel, although they feared devastation would follow to Tanjore because of the slow progress the Mughals had made at the siege of Gingee.

This concluding section evaluates the long–term aftermath of Aurangzeb's southern campaigns in central and southern Coromandel from two perspectives: the applicability of the long–term hypothesis in the conclusion to Part I, and the shifts that Aurangzeb's southern campaigns brought to the economy of central and southern Coromandel.

Part I of this dissertation shows that during wars in northern Coromandel, people tended to migrate to the Kaveri delta because it offered greater food security. After assimilation, these migrants helped to expand agricultural and textile production in the delta, such as during the rule of the *nayakas*. It is the hypothesis of this dissertation that although long wars doubtless detrimentally affected textile production in the Kaveri delta and pushed up prices, the greater food security of the region ensured it was somewhat immune to the devastating effects of wars, making it attractive for migrants from the regions to the north. This pattern was repeated during Aurangzeb's campaigns, and we can therefore declare that the hypothesis holds true in this case. Due to depopulation and famines in northern Coromandel, weavers and artisans had migrated to the south. The survey conducted by the VOC official Theodore Telghuijs and presented in this chapter, points to the presence of weavers who had migrated from the north and were active in the villages that the Dutch factor visited in 1695.

This development was primarily a result of good food security in the Kaveri delta even during the years of the siege of Gingee. The low incidence of Mughal campaigns in southern Coromandel during the 1690s compared to central Coromandel also helped the Kaveri delta remain stable: the main site of Mughal–Maratha contest was the region around Gingee and Vellore, while Zulfiqar Khan raided the Kaveri delta only thrice (1691, 1694 and 1697) to collect tribute from Tanjore and secure supplies. In retrospect another factor that could have also shaped the decision of weavers to settle in southern Coromandel was a high demand for their skills: the prospective employers of weavers in southern Coromandel comprised the European companies (in our case the Dutch) and indigenous textile merchants who had a strong presence in Porto Novo and Nagore, as we have seen. So, from a weaver's perspective (although we do not have references to support this argument!) the profusion of prospective employers in southern Coromandel would have made an attractive proposition. The VOC survey of weaving villages in the Kaveri delta not only reveals the survival of the textile industry, but also points to a reorientation of focus: during the war years, the absence of investments from buyers prompted some centres which had previously produced for the export markets to begin producing for inland domestic markets. As in northern Coromandel, in the south the high prices of cotton, higher costs of living (grains) and general insecurity meant weavers could only be contracted to work at high wages. So, the hypothesis

constructed in Part I stands good: the textile industry survived in southern Coromandel thanks to greater crop security, albeit with high costs of production.

In northern Coromandel, examining the performance of Masulipatnam as a regional entrepot helped us understand the impact of Mughal wars on overland and maritime connections. Unlike Masulipatnam, both Pulicat and Nagapatnam were local centres and, therefore, less sensitive to imperial crises. Masulipatnam's primary strength as a regional entrepot of Bay of Bengal in the seventeenth century was the connection it could forge between the west of the Deccan and South–East Asia, mainly thanks to its role as an exporter of textiles. If long wars struck at this maritime–overland node, Masulipatnam's fortunes were likely to deteriorate and this hypothesis holds good– as we have noted in Chapter 4. However, both Pulicat and Nagapatnam were mainly VOC relay stations in Coromandel in the seventeenth century; they supplied locally produced textiles as a part of Dutch commercial operations in the Indian Ocean, had little presence of non–Dutch merchants and were part of a network of coastal trade in the Bay of Bengal. In other words, the extent of their maritime–overland networks and scale of commercial operations were nowhere near that of Masulipatnam in the seventeenth century. Although wars in the hinterland of these ports could (and did) affect their role as exporters of locally produced cloth, the intensity of impact would be much less compared to northern Coromandel and thus, we may say, these ports were less sensitive to an imperial crisis involving the Mughals in South India.

Evidence for maritime connections for ports in central Coromandel, especially Pulicat, is meagre during the 1690s. In this conext, we allude to its poor performance as a supplier of locally produced textiles for the VOC's operations. At the end of the seventeenth century, the Dutch concluded that the central Coromandel region had been put to waste by the Mughal wars and any recovery would take years. Ports further south, however, seem to have performed better. Despite the ravages unleashed by warfare which caused prices of grains to increase, food security was still high in southern Coromandel. The years of the Mughal wars saw the rise of Porto Novo which had a strong presence of indigenous merchants backed by the support of local Mughal military commanders, and Persian and other merchants traded here with South–East Asia. Another port that had attracted migration of indigenous merchants was Nagore. Finally, the career of the southern Coromandel port of Nagapatnam points to the survival of both overland and maritime connections. The old commercial routes from Malabar across the passes in Western Ghats to the Kaveri delta remained largely unaffected by the Mughal wars. In addition to the textiles being exported to South–East Asia, good harvests allowed the VOC in Nagapatnam to keep supplying rice to their colleagues in Ceylon. We may conclude that the VOC's continued operations and reasonable performance at Nagapatnam contradict Sinnappah Arasaratnam's formulation (cited in the introductory chapter of this dissertation) that the Dutch factories were in general decline. Indigenous coastal trade between the Kaveri delta and Ceylon defied the system of Dutch passes and persisted during the wars. This would support Sanjay Subrahmanyam's observation of coastal trade in South India being relatively immune to the aleatoric life cycles of ports. The single

biggest impact of the Mughal wars in central and southern Coromandel was the rise of port cities of southern Coromandel.