

**CHRISTIANITY AND LOCAL SOCIETY
IN SOUTHERN COROMANDEL
(1540-1660)**

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

AJANTA PANDA




**CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI -110067
INDIA
2002**



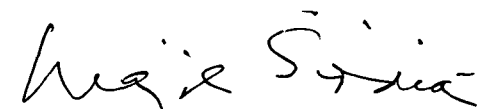
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **CHRISTIANITY AND LOCAL SOCIETY IN SOUTHERN COROMANDEL (1540-1600)** submitted by **AJANTA PANDA**, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**, is her own work and has not been submitted for the award of any degree of this or any other university.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.



Dr. Yogesh Sharma
(Supervisor)



Prof. Majid H. Siddiqi
(Chairperson)

Acknowledgement

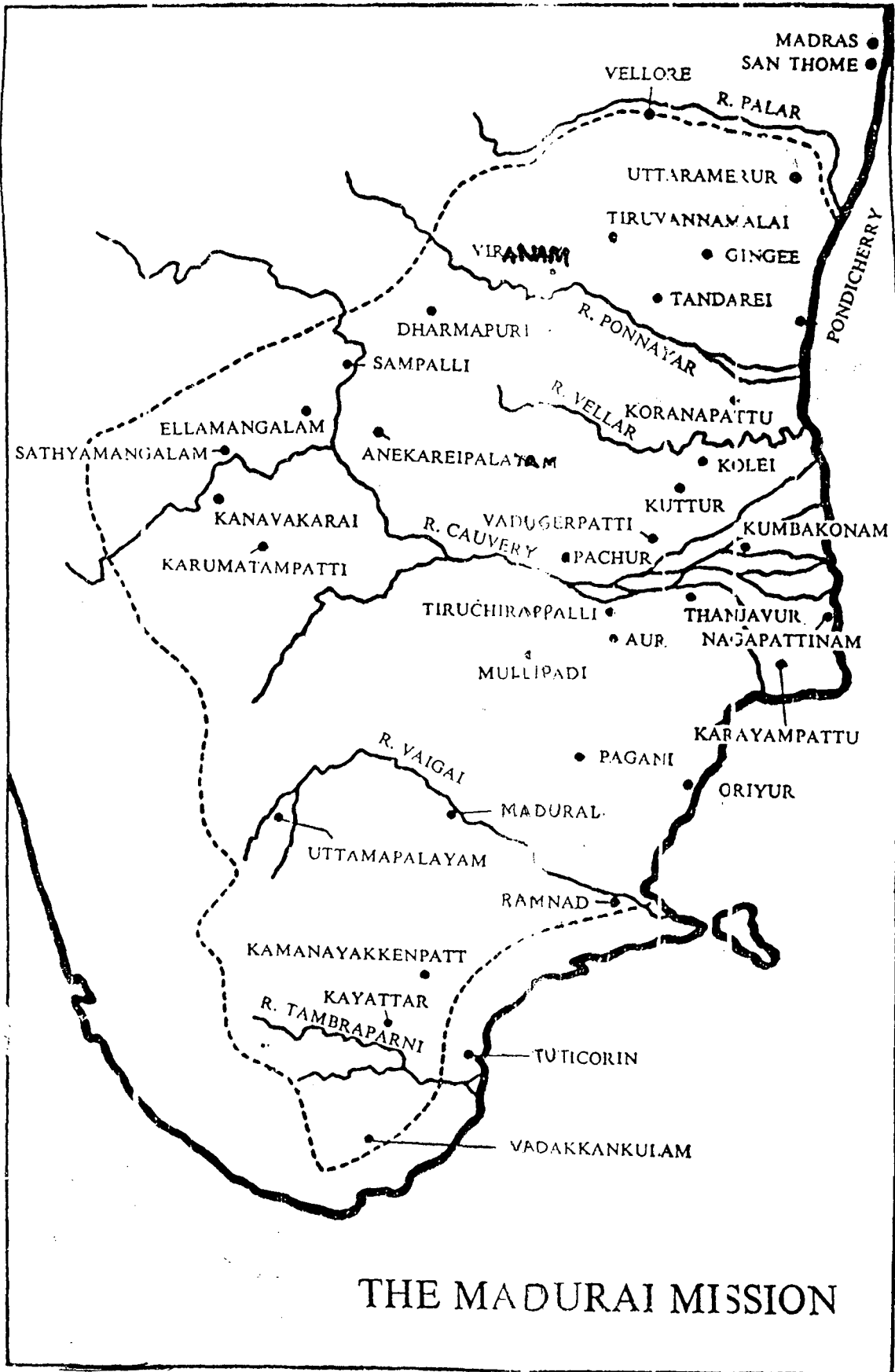
I am greatly indebted to my guide and supervisor Dr. Yogesh Sharma for his invaluable guidance, constant encouragement and advice throughout the project.

A very special thanks to Prof. J.L Ferreira who took time out from his busy schedule to help me in translating the Portuguese Documents.

I would like to express my thanks to the staff members of the JNU Library, National Archives Library, Nehru Memorial Library, Vidyajyoti Library and the DSA Library who have helped me in my search for books and documents.

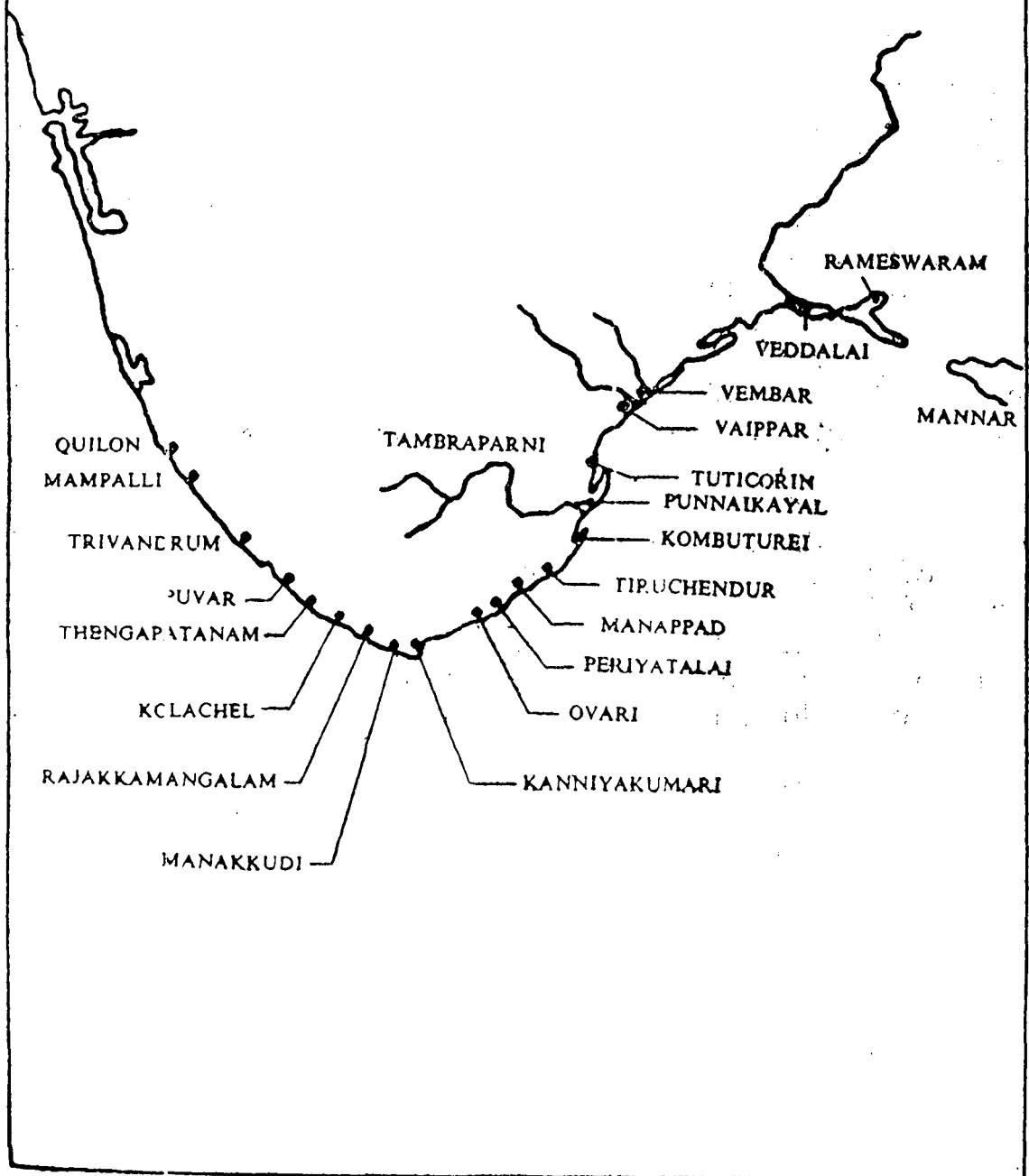
I would also like to express my gratitude towards Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) for their aid towards the research for my project.

Last but not the least, I am grateful to my friends and family for their constant support and encouragement.



THE MADURAI MISSION

THE FISHERY COAST AND THE TRAVANCORE COAST



Contents

1. <i>Acknowledgement</i>	<i>i</i>
2. <i>Maps</i>	<i>ii-iii</i>
3. <i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
4. <i>Chapter 1 - The Jesuits and their Missions in India</i>	<i>28</i>
5. <i>Chapter 2 - The Jesuits and their Activities</i>	<i>47</i>
6. <i>Chapter 3 - The Dimensions of Jesuits Problems</i>	<i>78</i>
7. <i>Conclusion</i>	<i>116</i>
8. <i>Appendix</i>	<i>119</i>
9. <i>Bibliography</i>	<i>122</i>

Introduction

The aim of the study is to trace the growth and development of Christianity in 16th -17th century Southern Coromandel region vis a vis the efforts of the Society of Jesus, a religious order which though new in the field was able to achieve tremendous success than any of its counterparts in India - the Franciscans, the Dominicans etc. The reasons for the Society's success in two different geographical locations -the coastal region and the interior, and in the midst of people of diverse groups was largely due the efforts of men like St.Xavier, Fr.Henriques and Fr.Nobili who through their zeal and innovations were able to plant the cross of the catholic faith at a time when the Estado hardly had any official presence on the coast and which rendered them helpless to come to the aid of the missionaries like they used to do on the west coast. However, the problem was not just limited to the absence of a sizeable Portuguese presence, there were other problems as well but credit must be given to them that not only were they able to

overcome those obstacles but they also proved successfully in winning a lot of souls from diverse background to the Christian faith.

For a proper understanding of the subject, the topic is divided into three main chapters, (excluding the introduction and conclusion) which traces the development as well as the progress of the Christian faith on the Southern Coromandel Coast, both on the coastal region as well in the interior (Madurai) under the able direction of the Society of Jesus.

Thus while chapter one takes a look at the beginning of the Society of Jesus in Europe and its consequent arrival in India under the guardian ship of St. Xavier. It also traces the reason behind the adoption of the Christian faith by the Paravas, the attempts made by the Society (namely Xavier) to get rid of some of the Hindus customs that were still prevalent amongst the Paravas. Apart from this the chapter also takes a look at the reasons as well as the attempts made by the Society to start a mission in the interior - amidst the king of Vijaynagar and his Nayaks.

Chapter two attempts to understand the strategies and the innovations that were adopted by the Jesuit missionaries during the course of their work in both the coastal as well as in the interior regions, strategies that not only helped them to get closely integrated with the day to day life of the people but which also helped them to win people from diverse backgrounds to the Catholic faith. And in this regard the role and work of missionaries like Fr. Henriques and Fr. Nobili has also been dealt with.

Unlike the above chapters, Chapter three attempts to look at the obstacles as well as the oppositions and the persecutions that the missionaries faced from both the local populace as well as from their own, problems that came to shake the very foundation of Christianity that men like Xavier and Nobili had laid out.

As per the sources, the primary sources consists largely of letters that were written by the Jesuits to their Superiors and fellow brothers in Rome. But while they are helpful in reconstructing the

history of the coastal regions, they totally disregard the interior region except for one or two references for which the construction of the history of the Madurai mission becomes a bit problematic. However a few letters translated by S. Rajamanikcam as well as those quoted in few of the books proved helpful. A select number of articles dealing with the relations of the Jesuits and the Portuguese with the local elites have also being used. Also, books by Ferroli, Bangert, Alden have been used to have an understanding of the development and role of Society of Jesus. Apart from this there have been the usual travelogues and secondary sources also.

However, before we go on to take a look a per the development and role of Society of Jesus t their activities as well as the problems faced by them in course of their work, it becomes necessary to know about the type of conditions - political, social, religious etc that was prevalent on the coast during the time of their arrival in order to have a better understanding of the subject.

At the time of the arrival of the Portuguese on the Coromandel Coast in the 16th century¹, the Tamil country was under the sway of the Vijaynagar rulers, who had brought the area under their control way back in the 14th century. The Vijaynagar empire which was known as '*Bisnaga*'² or as '*the kingdom of Narsinga*'³ to the Portuguese, has been described in glowing terms by both Muslim and European travellers alike, " the city is such that eye has not seen or ear heard of any place resembling it upon the whole earth". While the empire during the reign of Krishnadeva Raya (1509-1529) extended from the extreme south of the banks of river Krishna and Godavari and from South Konkan to Vishakapatnam⁴. The Coromandel coast described by Barbosa⁵ as one of the five provinces of the kingdom extended from Point Calimere in South to

¹ The earliest reference to the Portuguese on the Coromandel coast (at Nagapattinam) dates back to 1506 though they came to settle on the port in the mid 1520's, a few years following their settlement at Pulicat and its satellite town Sao Tome de Mylapore, the site of the martyrdom of St.Thomas. See Sanjay Subrahmanyam (ed): *Improvising Empire-Portuguese Trade and Settlement in the Bay of Bengal, 1500-1700*, {New Delhi, OUP, 1990}, p 71.

² 'Bisnaga' was the corruption of the name of the city. The name was written and pronounced differently by different travellers who visited the area during the 14th-15th centuries. Some other variants of the name included Bisnager, Bizenegalia etc.

³ This name was apparently derived from the ruler, Vira Narshima, who was ruling the empire during the time of Varthema's visit towards end of 1504. See R.C.Temple (ed.): *The Itinerary of Ludvico di Varthema of Bologna from 1502-1508*, {Hakluyt Society, London, 1928} p.xxv.

⁴ M.A.Mundadan: *History of Christianity in India - From the middle of the 16th century to the end of 17th century, 1542-1700, Vol.II* {Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1982} p 143.

⁵ M.L.Dames: *The Book of Duarte Barbosa- An Account of the Countries bordering the Indian Ocean and their inhabitants, Vol.II*, {Asian Educational Services, 1989} p 182-84.

the extremity of the Godavari delta in the north encompassing much of the modern day Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu ⁶.

The Coromandel Coast as much as was it known for its trade in textiles and rice was also known for its ports that carried out extensive trade with the West Coast as well as with countries bordering the Bay of Bengal, Southeast Asia, Ceylon etc. Infact, it was largely for trade purposes that the Portuguese came to settle on the coast and the area where they first settled down was Sao Tome de Mylapore, which quickly became an important settlement an account of it being the pilgrimage site for St.Thomas Christians as well as for the trade that was being carried out from the nearby port of Pulicat. Apart from Pulicat, which basically traded with the countries of Southeast Asia namely Malacca and Pegu⁷, the port settlement of Nagapattinam also became well known for its trade in rice and elephants with Ceylon.

⁶ Sanjay Subrahmanyam: *The Coromandel Malacca trade in the 16th century, a study of its evolving*, p 44-45. Also see Om Prakash: *European Commercial Enterprise in pre-colonial India*, {Cambridge University Press, 1998}, p 18.

⁷ Sanjay Subrahmanyam : *Political Economy of Commerce in South india, 1500-1600*, { Cambridge University Press, 1998},

An unique feature of these settlements on the Coromandel Coast was the fact that most of these were inhabited by private Portuguese traders, *casados*, army deserters etc who carried out their own trade along with official trade of the Estado. These settlements were free from the Estado's control largely due to the fact that unlike in Goa where there was a sizeable official Portuguese presence with a proper civil and administrative set-up that controlled the day to day affairs of its inhabitants, in the Coromandel settlements, there was hardly any official presence except for a Captain-Major who was a representative from Goa and whose main duty was to collect customs and issue cartazes. Most of these settlements were viewed by Goa as abnormally lawless and unruly and any attempt by Goa to bring them under its ambit was met with resistance, even if it was for their own good. For example: when in early 1630's, the Viceroy of Goa, Conde de Linhares attempted to persuade the settlers of Nagapattinam to fortify their settlement against the incursions of the Dutch and the Nayak of Tanjore. The *Eleitos de Nagapatao* (which represented the settlers) steadfastly refused ⁸. Infact it was largely the absence of the official

⁸ Sanjay Subrahmanyam: *Improvising Empire*, p77.

Portuguese presence coupled with their inability to check the aggression of the Nayaks⁹ and the Dutch that made the Portuguese to establish a system of alliance with the local elite and the common people with the hope that they might come to their aid in times of need and in this effort they were helped by the Jesuits following their arrival on the Indian shore in 1542. The Jesuits namely Francis Xavier and Robert de Nobili tried to win the people - the Paravas and the Upper castes, whom they hoped would prove to be loyal to the Portuguese crown and would come to the aid of the Portuguese considering the fact that they both now shared the common faith- Christianity.

The Tamil society on the eve of the 14th century was in a state of flux. The Tamil society apart from the usual division of the society according to the caste system however had certain peculiarities namely the division of the society into right hand castes (Valangai)

⁹ The siege of Sao Tome by Ramaraja and the constant attack and repeated persecution meted out by the Nayak of Tanjore on Nagapattinam was one of the reasons why in 1561 the Viceroy considered transferring the settlers of Sao Tome and Nagapattinam to Mannar along with the Paravas who themselves were feeling from the persecutions that was being meted out on them by the then Nayak of Madurai- MuttuVirappa Nayak. See Letter No.146, Fr.A.Anrriques S.J to

comprising mostly the respectable castes together with the Pariahs (who are called *Valangai matter* or friends) and left hand castes (Idangai) represented by the artisans and other lower castes which made the Tamil society even more complex¹⁰. Though the origins of these groups are difficult to ascertain due to the fact that each group comprised members of different castes, occupations, professions and trades. This division of the society into Valangai and Idangai in course of time came to represent the struggle between the landed stable agricultural groups represented by the Vellalas on one hand and the artisans and merchants group on the other¹¹. The reason for this struggle can be traced to the attempts made by each of them to claim a higher status for itself given the absence of any clear cut occupants for the Kashtriya and Vaisya status in the Varna system which was yet another peculiar feature of Tamil society. And it is also in this context - their desire to move up the social hierarchy, that their quarrels to win certain social privileges especially during the festival times can be viewed. As Abbe Dubois noted

Fr.J.Lainze S.J,Mannar, 8 January 1561 in V.Perinola S.J (ed): *The Catholic Church during the Portuguese period, Vol. I, 1505-1565*, { Tisara Prakasakayo Ltd, Sri Lanka, 1989}

¹⁰ J.H.Nelson: *Madura Country-A Manual* { Asian Educational Services, New Delhi,1994}., p4.

" The opposition between the Right-hand and the Left-hand arises from certain privileges to which they both lay claim; and when any encroachment is made by either it is instantly followed by tumults which frequently spread over the whole provinces, accompanied with every excess and generally with bloody contests".... " Perhaps sole cause of the contest is right to wear slippers or to ride through the streets in a palanquin or on horseback during marriage festivals. Some times is the privilege of being escorted on certain occasion by armed retainers, sometimes that of having a trumpet sounded in front of an procession or of being accompanied by native musicians at public ceremonies. Perhaps right is simply the particular kind of musical instruments suitable for such occasions that is in dispute; or it may be the right of carrying flags of certain colours or of certain devices during the ceremonies." ¹²

Furthermore, the extension of Vijaynagar authority in the Tamil countryside apart from leading to a change of boundaries, it had

¹¹This group consisted of the Panchalar who represented the five-artisan class of Carpenters, Goldsmiths, Blacksmiths, Braziers and the Masons.

¹²T.V.Mahalingam: *The Administrative and Social life under Vijaynagar*. {University of Madras, 1940}, p 26. Also See Nelson: *Ibid.*, p 5.

also led to a restructuring of the state administrative set-up which saw the appointment of Telugu and Kanares people to the important posts of Viceroys and rulers of the districts. This extension of Vijaynagar authority coupled with the appointment of Telugu and Kanares people as viceroys also saw a large scale migration of people of diverse background and caste from the north, many of whom came to form the retinue of the Viceroys. Also, the patronage accorded by the Rayas to learned men and religious teachers, especially Vaishnavs attracted a large number of Brahmans. They were followed by a good number of Sudras who entered the civil service of the government as well as the merchants, particularly the Beris who flocked to the villages and towns for trade.¹³ The period also saw the incorporation of the various hill and forest dwellers into the Tamil society, who got assimilated into the lower castes of the Brahmans and sat Sudra dominated hierarchy.¹⁴

This continuous migration of people from one part of the peninsula to another which led to the colonisation of a province by a

¹³ T.V.Mahalingam: *ibid.*, p 6

particular community not only upset the traditional social set up but it also witnessed the displacement of the older Tamil community who were settled there earlier. As M. S. Ayyangar while citing the example of the Senmans who on the advent of the newcomers gave up their old profession of leatherwork and took to menial service.

"This contributed to the old inhabitants giving up their original occupation and taking up menial work".¹⁵

And this, to some extent might have been the reason for making the Tamil society more complex.

When the Portuguese arrived on the scene, they found the Indian society divided into various groups which they called "caste" - from the Portuguese word 'casta' which meant tribe or clan.¹⁶ This concept of caste, was found quite strange by the travellers, who just divided the people either into Brahmens (the priestly class, the

¹⁴ A.Appadorai: *The Right and Left Hand Castes of South India*. IESHR. Vol. 14, No.1, 1977, p 223.

¹⁵ Mahalingam: *ibid.*, p 254.

highest in the order) or into Gentus (who hold the same principles which the learned clergies, the brahmens have from great antiquite¹⁷) or just classified them into three categories - the brahmens, the king and another folk very like the brahmens (Lingyats)¹⁸ or as Fr. Balthasar da Costa did, just divided them into three castes -high caste which comprised of the Brahmins, middle caste in which were included the rajas, commatis or chettis and also a multiple of castes under the general term of Sudras, whose main profession was agriculture and in these are included the Vellalas, Maravas etc.¹⁹ While to the third class belonged those without any caste or the outcaste i.e. the Pariahs, Pallers etc. They were regarded as the most base of all the castes whose mere presence is believed to taint the air, they were not allowed to reside inside the villages, nor to touch anyone person of caste or to enter a temple.²⁰ Their primary occupation was beating of drums during

¹⁶ S.Rajamanickam: *The First Oriental Scholar*. Tirunelveli, 1972, p61.

¹⁷ W.H.Moreland: *Travels of Thomas Bowrey* 1931,p 13.

¹⁸ Dames: *Barbosa* Vol. I, p 217-19. The Lingyats are described by Castanheda as *Baneanes* (Banya) See Donald.F.Lach: *Asia in the making of Europe -A century of Discovery*, Vol. I, {University of Chicago Press, 1965} p 378.

¹⁹ J.H.Nelson: *Madura Country Manual* p 27-34.

²⁰ R.Temple: *ibid.* , p 41; Moreland: *Relations of Golconda in early 17th century.*, p 70.

funerals and they were also employed as praedial slaves and did all kinds of menial and degrading jobs.²¹ As Bowrey notes

"they do not have gentile occupation, neither are they admitted into the society of the Banjans or Gentus. Either in their houses or Pagodas... they are of noe cast whatever deficient in knowledge of any Religion, whatever worshipinge nothings but live and dye quite often in the manner of beasts and noe better, neither do they abstaine from anything that is fit for a man to eat or drunke".²²

In this category the Indians included the Portuguese who on account of their life came to be regarded as Parangis and any one of whatever caste who associated with them too came to be regarded as Parangis.

Most of the foreign travellers who visited Vijaynagar were impressed and struck by the respect that the Brahmins " who are

²¹ Nelson: *ibid.*, p 75; Moreland: *ibid.*, p 70.

²² Temple: *Thomas Bowrey*, p 41.

priests and rulers of their houses of worship" commanded and the pious life that they led. As J.H.Van Linschoten sums up

"The Brahmins are the honestest and most esteemed nation among the Indian Heathens; for they doe alwaies serve in the chiefest places about the king as Receivers, Stewards, Ambassadors and such like officers. They are of great authority among Indian people for that the king doth nothing without their counsell and consent"²³.

Most of the Brahmins belonged to the sacerdotal class and led a pious life studying the Vedas, the Sastras and discussing abstruse philosophical subjects and performing daily rites. Few were priests attached to temples. Speaking about them Paes says "those who have charge of temples are learned men and eat nothing that suffers death."²⁴ Some were owners of estates and subsisted upon fruits that they got from their lands. Few took to trade and settled down as merchants, while others remained as inmates of pagodas or monasteries. Some were also active as politicians,

²³ Samuel Purchas: *Purchas His Pilgrims*, Vol. 10, p 225-26.

²⁴ Vasundhara Fillozat (ed): *Vijayanagar*, {NBT,New Delhi, 2001} p 68-69 ; Dames : *Barbosa*, Vol. 1, p 217; Robert Swell: *Vijaynagara: A Forgotten Empire*, p 245.

administrators, generals etc. There are many instances of Brahmin ministers guiding the destinies of vast empires. In the reign of Deva Raya I & II as also during the reign of Krishnadeva Raya they are said to have held important positions in the state administration and are even said to have followed the kings in their expeditions. For example: Vyasa Raja went to the south along with Saluva Narsinga and led a contingent of army to the battlefield. Similarly, Apatsahayam of Tirukkadiyur is said to have taken part in the Raichur campaign of Krishnadeva Raya.²⁵

Though the Brahmans enjoyed high places in the society and enjoyed certain privileges as well²⁶ yet there were certain traits and characteristics that drew resentment from the foreign travellers. Barbosa says that they had great appetite and never worked except to eat well. "They will start at once on a six days journey only to get a good meal".²⁷ While Nuniz remarks " King always give large sums in charity, in the palace there are always 2000 or 3000 Brahmans who are his priests and to whom he gives alms. These Brahmans

²⁵ Mahalingam: *ibid.*, p 242.

²⁶ They were not liable to be put to death for whatever crime they might have committed. Dames: *Barbosa*, Vol. I, p 217; Swell: *Ibid.*, p 361.

²⁷ Dames: *Ibid.*, p 217

priests are very despicable men; they always have very much money and are so insolent that even by using blows the guards of the doors can not hold them in check".²⁸

Even the Jesuits writers who in their letter describe three sorts of priests - the Brahmins, the Yogis and the Gurus did not had a high opinion of the Brahmins until they become converts and while the Jesuits recognise the Gurus as being authorities on Hindu teachings, and show a marked respect to the Yogis for their spirituality, abstinence, learning and willingness to listen ²⁹.

Apart from people of Tamil origin, the Tamil society also included people of diverse castes and religion who following the extension of the Vijaynagar authority came to reside in the Tamil countryside. Chiefs among them were the Vadagas who were of Telugu origin and were involved in both trade as well as in cultivation. They were generally Vaishnavites and wear the sacred thread. The Nayaks of Madurai and Tanjore are said to belong to this caste. Next came the Tottiyans or Kambalatar and the Reddis who too belonged to

²⁸ Swell: *Ibid.*, p 379-81.

the agricultural caste though the Tottiyans came to be employed by the Vijaynagar kings as Poligars, soldiers and armed retainers. There were also present in the Tamil countryside many Muslims namely the Labbies, the Sedans (Kanares weavers), the Seniyans (Telugu weavers) and the Pattu-nul-karans -who were a caste of Surat silk weavers whose ancestors had settled down in Madurai. They often kept themselves aloof from other castes, lived independently from the general society preserving their own customs.

In the late Vijaynagar period, the division of the society into various castes and groups led to a rise of social consciousness amongst the different communities and each community irrespective to which caste and community they belonged to began to clamour for certain privileges and honours which would set them apart from the others³⁰ just like the Valangai and Idangai castes used to do. As far as customs and ceremonies was concerned, they differed from caste to caste with each community

²⁹ Lach: *ibid.*, p 442

³⁰ Mahalingam: *ibid.*, p 244-50.

having its own distinctive customs and traditions that may or may not differed from one another.

As far as religious affinities were concerned, practically all the religious sects -Madhvaism, Vallabhavism, as well as religious systems such as Jainism, Islam came to exist side by side with Christianity during the later half - and though the bulk of the population was predominately Saivites, Vaisnavism was slowly gaining ground especially in the 15th century following its patronage by the later Vijaynagar kings. Infact, this change of faith by the ruling princes from the Saiva faith to Vaisnavism had its indirect on the faith of the people of the empire and in the 16th-17th one finds Sri Vaisnavism spreading with amazing rapidity. Apart from worshipping the 'high gods', the people also worshipped the divinities of blood and power, who were recognised as healers and protectors as well as their own patron deities. Further, since the demographic of South India was continuously changing with the migration of people from the fringe areas (Vellalas, Maravas etc) to the core areas, there was a further adoption of new religious and traditional system by both groups of people to establish a kind of

ritualised alliance system with its own hierarchical orders of precedence that was confirmed and recognised through allocation of distinctive ceremonial status markers, to heads of powerful lineage's or leaders of entire caste group or status category.³¹ This system of alliance building with the caste leaders or groups was later on used by the Portuguese with the help of the missionaries in establishing their hold on the Paravas, following their adoption of the Christian faith.

"We came in search of Christians and Spices"

- -----Vasco da Gama

"My main purpose in taking the India was always to increase the
flock of our Holy Catholic faith "

----- King John III to Viceroy Pedro
Mascarhenas, Lisbon, 4 August, 1539

The early beginning of European Christianity in India can be traced to the year 1498 when Vasco da Gama having reached the

³¹ Susan Bayly: p 19-23, 35.

TH-10698

western coast of India and questioned as to what brought him to India answered that they have come in search of Christians and spices thereby setting the tone for the development of Christianity in the country. Though controversy surrounds as to what exactly did Vasco da Gama meant by that answer there can be no doubt that the Portuguese were as much interested in trade as they were in effecting conversions³². As Padre Antonio Vieira observed in his *History of the Future* 'If there were not merchants who go to seek for earthly treasures in the East and West Indies, who would transfer thither the preachers who take heavenly treasures? The preachers take the Gospel and the merchants take the preachers.'³³. Thus there is no denying that the Portuguese crown from the very beginning was interested in trade as well as in the evangelisation process. As the soldier-chronicler Diogo do Couto observed in his sixth *Decade* (1612)

'The Kings of Portugal always aimed this conquest of the East at so uniting the two



³² Both M.A.Mundadan & K.M.Mathew are of the opinion that the Portuguese were primarily interested in establishing trade relations and that their motive of evangelization of the local populace was secondary. While C.R.Boxer opines that they had a mixed aim - a mixture of commercial and religious targets in the discovery of the sea route to India.

Di 23

K<I

DISS
282.9548

P1922 Ch



TH10698

powers, spiritual and temporal, that the one should not be exercised without the other.'³⁴

As a result of this, it became difficult to separate the civil and the ecclesiastical power, for, very often the preaching of the Gospel was accompanied and protected by the weapons. This becomes clear from the Portugal political constitution, which held that-

“the Portuguese Catholic mission and the institution for preparing the personnel for their services and those of the *padrão* shall enjoy judicial personality and shall be protected and assisted by the state as institute of teach and assistance and under the terms of concordats and other agreement signed with the Holy See.³⁵”

This indissoluble union between the crown and the cross got exemplified in the *Padrão Real* or the royal patronage of church overseas which was one of the most jealously guarded and tenaciously maintained prerogatives of the Portuguese crown. The

³³ C.R.Boxer: *The Portuguese Sea borne Empire*. P.65.

³⁴ Boxer: *Ibid.*, p. 229.

Padrado , which was conferred in 1540 through the papal bull *Jus Patronatus* by Leo X were a series of rights and privileges that were granted by the papacy to the crown as the patron of the Roman Catholic missions and ecclesiastical establishment in the vast overseas regions. These rights and duties which were derived from a number of papal bulls and briefs not only served the crown interest in seeking papal approval for their enterprise and aggression but also allowed the papacy to hand over the evangelisation process to the rulers who had access to resources far greater than the church.

Thus broadly speaking the pope as the Vicar of Christ appointed the king acting through the grand prior as his vicar for the whole of the eastern region with almost unlimited power. Infact, as Pombal, in his *ultra regalism*, told the newly appointed Archbishop of Goa in 1774 that the king of Portugal by virtue of his position as the supreme head of the Order of Christ was a '*Spiritual Prelate*' with jurisdiction and powers 'superior to all those of the diocesan

³⁵ Rao : *Portuguese rule in India (1510-1961)* p.42.

prelates and to the Ordinaries of the said churches in the East'.³⁶ As a result the king became a kind of Papal Legate and his ecclesiastical legislation had the force of a canonical decree. No bishop could be appointed to an existing See nor a new one could be created without his permission. He could give them orders without reference to Rome and could also control their activities. They did the same with the provincials or acting heads of the religious orders working in the territories of the padrado and even on occasions with the individual missionaries and parish priests. They also refused to recognise the validity of any Papal Briefs, bulls or Provisions, relating to matters within the padrado and which hadn't been approved by the Portuguese crown and registered with the *Regium Placet* in the royal chancery.³⁷

Thus it is evident that the cross and the crown, throne and altar, faith and empire, God and Mammon often worked together in unison. While on one hand the Portuguese acted as crusaders aiming at the propagation of the Christian faith, on

³⁶ Boxer. Ibid. p 230.

³⁷ Boxer, ibid. p 230. Also see Stephen Neill, History of Christianity in India: From the beginning to 1707; V01.I, p 112 –113.

the other hand they, as merchants adventures also aimed at the control of the sea-borne trade of India and in this endeavour the Portuguese regime extended its full support As a result of which there came to be behind the missionaries activities an organised political power which, however, from time to time aided and even embarrassed the missionaries.³⁸

This union of the crown and the cross as also prevalent dictum *cajus regio illius religio* which held that the ruler and the ruled should share the same faith first got exemplified following the conquest of Goa in 1510 which not only led to the establishment of the Portuguese administrative machinery in India and but also provided an opportunity to some of the zealous Portuguese officials to further the cause of the faith by allying themselves with the missionaries. Though the state provided many incentives to effect conversions yet the flow of the evangelisation in the early part of the 16th century was very slow for the priests who came to the newly discovered areas were not only lazy and

³⁸ S.Manickam: *Studies in Missionary History-Reflections on a cultural contact*. Christian Literature Society, 1988,p 35.

licentious but were also highly ignorant of the scriptures as well as of the language and customs of the area concerned. Moreover many of them were far more interested in serving the Mammon than God as a group of clerics told the vicar of Malacca in 1514: 'that the chief reason why they had come out to the east was to amass a fortune in cruzados'. All this was somewhat liable to change following the arrival of the Society of Jesus in 1542 under the aegis of Saint Francis Xavier.

As far as the Coromandel coast was concerned the earliest reference to Christianity can be traced to Mylapore which was the seat of the martyrdom of St.Thomas. However, as far as catholic Christianity was concerned, the earliest reference to it can be traced to the port settlements that were settled by the Portuguese for in 1518 Fr. Alvarvo Pentado wrote that there were several clerics on the coast who were more interested in trade rather than in care of souls. Also a few Franciscans³⁹ chronicles mention that the Franciscans went to Nagapattinam along with the Portuguese and that they had built a church and had also converted around

3000 people⁴⁰. However the first recorded visit of a friar to the Vijaynagar court was in 1510 when Affonso de Albuquerque sent the Franciscan friar Luis do Salvador as his emissary to the court in order to establish friendly relations. This resulted in the signing of treaty between the two for the continuation of the horse trade that Vijaynagar heavily depended upon for its battles with the Muslim powers. As far as religious developments are concerned it is said that the Vijaynagar rulers allowed friar Luis to preach and construct churches though it pertained to the Malabar coast.

³⁹ The Franciscans were the first and the only religious order on the Coromandel Coast until the end of the 16th century. The Jesuits and the Dominicans later followed them.

⁴⁰ Mundadan: *ibid*, p 402

CHAPTER 1

The Jesuits and their Missions in India.

The earliest reference to Christianity on the Coromandel Coast can be traced to Mylapore, which even before the arrival of the Portuguese was known as an important pilgrim site of the St. Thomas Christians. As the Muslim historian Mufazzal ibn Abil Fazali (1358 A.D) had noted in his history of Mamlouk sultans

" From there (Ceylon) the pilgrims go to visit the monastery of Mar Thoma, which posses the eternally living hand of one of the disciples of Our Lord, the Messiah...the pious visitors cannot terminate their pilgrimage before they have visited four [consecrated] places and it is in this that the complete pilgrimage consists: the four ceremonies consists in visiting the tomb of Ratan Moammar as Saheb...the monastery of Mar Thoma, who was one of the Apostle"⁴¹.

⁴¹ M.A.Mundadan : *History of Christianity in India: From the beginning upto the middle of 16th century (upto 1542), Vol.I, {Theological Publications of India, Bangalore, 1984,} p 57.*

The area, however, grew into prominence both as a sacred site and an important trading area following the arrival and the beginning of a Portuguese settlement coupled with the erection of a church in 1523 on the tomb of St.Thomas which they had discovered in a ruinous state in 1517 and in the hands of a non-Christian.⁴² As a result by 1635 there were around 120 Portuguese families and 200 Indian Christians inside the walls of the city with another 6000 Indian Christians outside.⁴³ The number of Christians on the coast continued to grow following the establishment of various other Portuguese settlements notably Nagapattinam, Mauslipatnam, Proto-Novo etc along the coast.

The spiritual needs of the people- both Portuguese and local Christians were at first looked after by the Franciscans who were one of the earliest Religious Orders to have arrived on the Coromandel coast following the conversion of the Paravas in 1536-

⁴²The first recorded visit of the Portuguese to Mylapore was in 1517 by two Portuguese gentlemen- Diogo Fernandes & Bastiao Fernandes, though official attempts to learn about the coast and the area was made way back in 1507 when the Viceroy of India- Dom Francisco de Almeida had sent four men to gather information about the whereabouts of the tomb. The official presence on the area was however, maintained by a Captain who was appointed by Goa and who resided at Pulicat.

⁴³ Joseph Thekkedath : *History of Christianity in India: From the middle of the 16th century to the end of 17th century (1542-1700)*, Vol.II, {Theological Publications of India, Bangalore, 1982}p 204

37.They were subsequently followed by other Religious Orders with the Jesuits arriving on the coast towards the end of the 16th century- on the fishery coast during the 1540's with the arrival of Francis Xavier and in the interior of the Tamil countryside in the 1590's.

The arrival of the Society of Jesus in the 1540's witnessed important changes and attempts being made by the Society to spread the Catholic faith in India (Coromandel coast). Their origin and their consequent arrival in India, which coincided, with the Counter-Reformation of Europe saw them pursuing their aim of bringing back wayward christians and winning non christians to the catholic faith with such a vigour that they soon became one of the most successful and dominant Religious Orders of India.

The success of the society in the beginning was slow largely to their outlook that made them view the local religion as false and its customs as superstitious. Their conviction that only their religion represented the true faith and the air of cultural superiority with which they surrounded themselves clouded their entire outlook as

a result of which they not only failed to adapt to the local conditions but also failed to understand the nuances of the local customs and manners of the area. A perception that was soon to undergo a change following the arrival of men likes Xavier, Henriques and de Nobili.

The Society of Jesus: Its Initial Beginning and Arrival in India:

"The end of this Society is to devote itself with God's grace not only to salvation and perfection of the members own souls, but also with same grace to labour strenuously in giving aid toward the salvation and perfection of souls of their fellowmen."

- Loyala, General Examen.

" Whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the Cross in our Society...should ...keep...in mind [that he] is a member of a Society founded chiefly ...to strive ...for the defence and propagation of the faith and the progress of souls in christian faith and doctrine."

- Loyala, Formula of the Institute of Society of Jesus

The Society of Jesus is a religious order founded by Saint Ignatius Loyala (1491-1556) at a time when important changes were taking place within the Church establishment- the Counter-Reformation. Designated by him as "The Company of Jesus" to indicate its true leader and its soldier spirit, the title was Latinized into "Societas Jesu"⁴⁴ in the Bull of Pope Paul III approving its formation and the first formula (Formula Instituti) of the Institute (Regimini militanis ecclesiae on 27th September 1540). The term "Jesuit" (of fifteenth century origin, meaning one who used too frequently or appropriated the name of Jesus), was first applied to the society in reproach (1544-52), and was never employed by its founder, though members and friends of the society in time accepted the name in good sense. The Society ranks among religious institutions as a mendicant order of clerks regular, that is, a body of priests organised for apostolic work, following a religious rule and relying on alms for their support.

The Society aimed not only at reviving and strengthening the beliefs of wayward Catholics but also to win back disobedient

⁴⁴ The name Societas Jesu was born by a military order approved and recommended by Pius II in

Protestants and in lands beyond the confines of Europe, to persuade devotees of non-Christians faiths to convert to what they, along with all Catholics, were convinced was the true faith.⁴⁵ Infact Ignatius Loyala in the Society's constitution observed 'the Society of Jesus was instituted to serve or glorify the Lord and His Vicar on earth, and especially to promote the spiritual, progress of souls in Christian and living ,and the propagation of faith, by means of a wide variety of ministries.'⁴⁶ The Jesuits aimed to achieve this goal, as far as fellow Christians were concerned, through preaching, public disputations, counselling and other techniques and by demonstrating to the pagans the superior wisdom and virtues of Christianity. Apart from this they also used their proximity to the rulers to influence policies which they thought was beneficial for the Society and for the propagation of the faith. And it is in this regard that their close proximity to the kings of Portugal especially to King John III and King Sebastian can be viewed.

1450, the purpose of which was to fight against the Turks and aid in spreading the Christian faith.

⁴⁵ Daurill Alden: *The making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal. Its Empire and Beyond 1540-1750*. {Stanford University Press, 1996},p.14.

⁴⁶ Alden: *Ibid.* p 24.

As a result , the Society within a few years got firmly established in Italy, France, the Germanies, eastern Europe and the Iberian Peninsula. Infact, the Iberian Peninsula particularly Portugal became the springboard of Jesuit enterprise on the four continents beyond Europe following the arrival, in June 1540, of two members of the Society - Francis Xavier and Simao Rodrigues at Lisbon on the request of King John III, who wanted to recruit Jesuits to serve at the Portuguese stations in the east, and while Simao Rodrigues stayed back at Portugal, Francis Xavier set sail for India.

The Mission among the Paravas:

Arrival of the Society under the leadership of Francis Xavier took place at a time when the Portuguese power was at its height; they were the masters of the seas whose political influence and trading network not only extended over a wide area (Persian Gulf, East Africa, Indian Ocean, South China Sea) but who's aid was also sought out by the native powers in times of need. In South India, the relation between the Portuguese and Vijaynagar kings, in

whose dominions the Portuguese had established a number of fortresses, was, for most part cordial and the reason for this can be traced "to their complementary economic interest as well as to their identical political military and military position vis a vis Islam."⁴⁷ The political and diplomatic success of the Portuguese as well as their good relations with the Vijaynagar rulers opened a new era for the Christian enterprise and the Jesuits used the opportunity to gain the acceptance of the rulers to carry out their work among the native populace.

A close study of the Society work reveals that the main centre of their activities on the South Coromandel Coast was the Fishery coast, whose inhabitants were converted to the Christian faith by the Franciscans and some clerics way back in the 1530's⁴⁸ and in the interior the areas that were covered by the Madurai Mission and the reason for the Jesuits for concentrating on these areas can be discerned from the political and economic needs of the time.

⁴⁷ M.A.L Cruz: *Notes on Portuguese relation with Vijaynagar, 1500-1565*, in Sanjay Subrahmanyam (ed). *Sinners and Saints*, {OUP, New Delhi, 1998,} p17-18.

⁴⁸ S.V.Fernando: *The Evangelization of the Pearl Fishery Coast under the Portuguese Padrado*, p 155, {Indian Theological Studies, Vol. 15.1978.}

The Fishery coast (or the Pescaria as the Portuguese called it) which extended from Cape Camorin to the island promontory of Rameswaram and from there to Mannar off the coast of Sri Lanka since time immemorial was known for its pearl and shank fishing and various writers and travellers have from time to time had spoken about its lucrative trade and profit derived from it. The Portuguese also knew about the trade and they ever since their arrival had maintained a commercial interest on the pearl fishery coast ⁴⁹ and so when the Paravas who used to fish for the pearls and the shanks sought their help in their fight against their Muslims chieftains following the failure of the Nayaks to come to their aid, the Portuguese were quick to exploit the situation and they readily came to their help with the condition that the whole community should accept the Catholic faith. This was readily agreed to and in 1536 around 50,000 men were baptised followed by women, old men and children. The following year also witnessed

⁴⁹ Both Vasco da Gama, in his diary, and Antonio de Miranda de Azevedo, the Captain of Sri Lankan coast had talked about the trade in pearls and had also pleaded to Dom Manuel (1495-1521) the king of Portugal to take over the trade from the Muslims. Consequently, Lisbon in 1519 sent orders to the governor of India to take necessary action and in 1523, Joao Flores was appointed as Captain and Factor of the Coromandel and Pearl Fishery coast to look after the crown's trade interest. See Stephen Jeeyaseelan: *Portuguese on the Tamil coast: Historical Exploration in Commerce and Cultural (1507-1749)* {Navjyothi. 1998,} p 62; M.A.Mundadan: *History of Christianity in India: From the Beginning upto the middle of the 16th century (upto 1542). Vol.I,* {Theological Publications of India, Bangalore, 1984.} p395.

mass baptism of the Paravas who lived to the north of the Tambarpani river, in Tuticorin, Vembar and Vaipar and all territories belonging to Vijaynagar as a result by end of 1537, the entire community had accepted the Christian faith.⁵⁰

The Paravas conversion suited both the political, economic and ecclesiastical needs of both the Portuguese and missionaries alike. While the political superiority and the civil authority of the Portuguese helped the missionaries by bringing the Paravas under the Catholic fold thereby helping them in their endeavour to win souls for the cause of the faith. It also marked the beginning of Christianity in the Coromandel Coast, for soon after the Paravas conversion, various other Fishery castes like the Makkuvars and the Karaiyas too adopted the Christian faith. On a larger scale, the conversion of the Paravas put them at par with the Portuguese as far as religious affiliation was concerned and the Paravas came to display the same zeal for their adopted faith as their European counterparts and they very often came to the aid of their fellow brethren at the time of need. Like when the Karaiyars of Mannar

⁵⁰ Mundadan: *ibid.*,p 396 ;George Schurhammer, S.J: *Francis Xavier: His life and Times.Vol.II*

were slaughtered by the king of Jaffna following their conversion to the Catholic faith, the Parava Christians were so enraged that they declared that if no other help came, they would go unaided to avenge the death of their brethren.⁵¹ Moreover, they also gave liberally to the churches. Xavier in many of his letters mentions one Manuel de Lima who often donated generously for the building of the churches.⁵² Furthermore, the Christianisation of the Paravas not only helped the Portuguese to sustain their economic and political presence by ensuring a steady flow of income, it also helped them in having a sizeable Christian population whom they considered would prove to be loyal to the Portuguese crown considering the fact that they both now shared the same faith. In fact, Xavier in one of his letters speaks of them "as the subjects of his Portuguese Majesty."⁵³

For the Paravas, however, the conversion to Christianity didn't help much, for, the protection that was assured by the

(India; 1541-45) {The Jesuit Historical Society, Rome, 1977}, p 264.

⁵¹ Thekkedath: *ibid*, p 163.

⁵² Henry James Coleridge S.J.: *The Life and Times of St. Francis Xavier*, vol. I, {London 1886.} p 209.

⁵³ S.Manickam: *Studies in Missionary History: Reflections on a Cultural Contact*. {Christian Literature Society, 1988}, p25.

Portuguese was restricted more or less to the fishing season and most of the Captains who came to the coast to collect the taxes treated them as badly as their Muslim oppressors did before them⁵⁴. Far more important than these grievances was their lack of spiritual needs. Most of the Paravas hadn't received any instruction in Christian faith. The priests who had gone there to administer baptism left the place when they found the climate unhealthy and food scarce as a result no kind of pastoral ministry was available to them, there was no church and the children who were born between 1537 and 1542 had not been baptised and as the Paravas told Xavier 'they were Christians in name only'. Still, there can be no doubt that the conversion of the Paravas not only opened the ground for many other castes like the Kadeyars, Mukkuvars and the Paraiyyars who adopted the Christian faith but in course of time it also helped in giving shape to the mission in the interior - Madurai Mission.

⁵⁴ Both Mundadan (ibid.,p398-99) and Schurhammar (ibid., p 266) speak of the tyrannies and oppression that were perpetuated on the Paravas by the Portuguese Captains. Infact, while one (Joao Flores) was hated for his greed, the other (Joao Fernandes Correa, who took charge following the success of the battle of Vedalai) was removed from the post and shifted to Goa by the Governor Dom Estavao da Gama(1540-42)

The Mission in the Interior

Efforts to establish a mission in the interior of the Tamil hinterland was made towards the end of the 16th century as a result of the changing socio-political conditions that followed in the wake of the defeat of the Vijaynagar Empire at the hands of the Muhammadans powers in battle of Talikota (1565). The defeat, which witnessed a shift of capital to Chandragiri also, coincided with the rising power of the Nayakdoms of Gingee, Tanjore and Madurai with each trying to assert its independence from the Empire. This coupled with the declining fortunes of the Portuguese powers that made it impossible for the Portuguese to come to their aid in times of need placed the missionaries in a precarious situation. The realisation that the survival of the mission now rested on the goodwill and favour of the native powers necessitated a change in the strategy and resulted in moving their centre of activities from the coastal region to the interior - Chandragiri, Vellore and Madurai.

The mission in the interior began in 1597 when Fr. Pimenta, on behalf of the General, directed the establishment of a mission house at Chandragiri and assigned to Father Simon de Sa, the rector of the College of Sao Thome the duty of opening the mission. Consequently Venkat I (1580-1614) not only gave the Jesuits permission to establish a residence in his capital (Chandragiri) but also granted them various other privileges as well.

"In this kingdom and residence there are two Fathers and a Lay Brother: they have a house and a church in the very royal city of Chandegri wherein the court resides: the king treats them benevolently and bestows favours upon them and does it more and more everyday. He had given them for their maintenance an income upon some villages and lands: but it was never settled, because of the chief Governor and some grandees of that court who claimed that the revenue of the villages belonged to them. Hence the king as a sign of his love for the Father gave them yearly a thousand pagodes out from the tribute paid by one of the Naiks who are his subjects, until some lands will be free, from which the

maintenance of the Fathers will unobjectionably be taken...."⁵⁵

The mission was soon followed by the establishment of a mission at Vellore whose Father (Fr. Melchior Coutinho) was considered as being a close friend of the King. Infact, the relations between the Jesuits and Venkat I was very cordial, a fact which was always mentioned in the numerous Jesuits letters.

"There are eight (Jesuits) in the College of Sao Thome, and two or three reside in the court of the King of Bisnaga, who treats them until now as benevolently and frankly as ever, favouring them as much as a Christian King can do." ⁵⁶

The success of the mission at Chandragiri and Vellore was soon followed by the establishment of a mission in the Nayakdoms of Gingee⁵⁷ and Madurai. The emerging power of Madurai, the

⁵⁵ H.Heras: *The Jesuit influence in the court of Vijaynagar*. {Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society, Vol.14, no.2, Jan 1924,} p.131-32.

⁵⁶ Heras: *ibid.*, p 137.

⁵⁷ The mission at Gingee is said to have begun when Krishnappa Nayak permitted Fr. Pimenta to build at the city of Krishnapatnam, a church and a residence for a priest .In addition to this, he also earmarked two hundred pieces of gold for that purpose. Consequently, Fr. Pimenta appointed Father Alexander Levi, a man of renowned holiness and of great knowledge of the vernacular to

constant disturbances on the Fishery coast (will be discussed in the next chapter) as also the fact that the Fishery coast too came under its jurisdiction was an important reason as to why the Jesuits sought to seek the co-operation of the Nayak of Madurai. Infact, the need to establish a mission in Madurai was made way back in 1589, even before the establishment of the mission at Chandragiri.

" Being the Christianity of Pescaria in the present condition and being weak the position of the Christians, it is most convenient, the presence of a Father of the Company in Madurai, where the court of the Nayak is situated, who is also the master of the those lands, as this is of the knowledge of father Moncarlo."⁵⁸

The advise was taken and Fr. Francisco Cabral during one of his visit to the Southern provinces in 1594 talked of the possibility of securing from the Nayak the permission to build a church at

superintend the construction of the Church. See C.S.Srinivaschari: *A History of Gingee and its Rulers*, {Annamalai University Historical Series no.2, Annamalai University 1943,} p 101.

⁵⁸ Letter No. 31.Fr. Pedro Luis, S.J., Brahmin to Fr. Cl.Aquaviva, S.J. General, Quilon, January 2,1589 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J., (ed.): *Documenta Indica. Vol.15 (1588-1592)* Rome,1984.

Madurai.⁵⁹ Apart from this in 1595 a request was also made to the Nayak to provide safety for the missionaries in his territories.

"Another mission has taken place in the town of Madurai, where the court of the Nayak is, master of the whole fishery coast and of the kingdom existing in the hinterland. He is rich and powerful. He like the natives of the land is Hindu. There are a few Muslims among them but very few. In this court for many years we have tried to establish contact as the king is the protector of the Christians and helps them when their *adhikaris*, '*resedores*' persecute them as well as to have access to an area with such a huge population of Hindus and to help many Christians slaves that have found refuge there from their masters and received payment from the Nayak."⁶⁰

And it was in this context that Fr. Goncalo Fernandes, who had worked on the fishery coast for many years, was sent to Madurai to seek permission from the Nayak the permission to establish a

⁵⁹ Letter No. 133. Fr. Francisco Cabral, S.J., Provincial to Fr. Cl. Aquaviva, S.J. General, Goa, November 20, 1594 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.16 (1592-1594)*.

⁶⁰ Letter No.46. Annual Letter of Fr. Francisco Cabral, S.J.. in Joseph Wicki,S.J., and John Gomes,S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.17(1595)*

mission at Madurai. The request was soon granted and a church followed by a hospital was soon established on the land provided by the Nayak under the general supervision of Fr. Goncalo Fernandes.

"This year has been sent to the Nayak, the great master of these lands, one of our fathers in whose company have gone some notable Christians and has obtained from him a large number of privileges and favours to the Christians. Of them were non-Christians (who were his vassals) who would be allowed to become Christians if they so wish. What we hope in the future to give us a larger tranquillity than we have enjoyed till now: because if any honourable non-Christians would convert to Christianity we immediately had to face difficulties, as certain circumstances, that all places were abandoned and the Christians were compelled to suffer in the hands of the gentiles large difficulties.

"They had agreed that in Madurai (a town where he keeps the residence of his court) we would be allowed to have a house, a thing that until now we have never succeeded to get from

him. Another benefit that is a result of this mission and that is most important, it is that from now on ours will have open doors when we wish and think necessary to speak to the Nayak and his nobles. What would have shown bringing to them larger pleasure acquaintance with the fathers that wasn't there before."⁶¹

"(The) Nayak has written to the Rector of the Fisheries Coast requesting a Father to be sent to Madurai and that he would give him a place to build a Church and for this he would be most welcome..."⁶²

Though the mission in Madurai finally got underway under the guardianship of Fr. Goncalo Fernandes, it could not make much headway amongst the local populace, at least, not until the arrival of Roberto de Nobili, under whom the mission was able to achieve a great deal of success.

⁶¹ Letter No.53. Annual Letter of the Province of India by Fr. Francisco Cabral, S.J.. Provincial, Goa, November 15,1593 in Joseph Wicki,S.J., and John Gomes,S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.16(1592-1594)*.

⁶² Letter No.46. Annual Letter of Fr. Francisco Cabral, S.J.,. in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes,S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.17(1595)*

Chapter 2

The Jesuits and their Activities.

The success following the establishment of the Christian Missions in the coastal as well in the interior region was however marred by few problems that came to threaten the development of Christianity in the Coromandel Coast. In the absence of sufficient number of workers coupled with the inability of the Missionaries to converse with the natives in their local language, the instruction of the converts was completely neglected with the result that many of them often relapsed back to their former religion. As the Italian Missionary Niccolo Lancilotto wrote to Ignatius de Loyala

...They are baptised whenever or wherever they express a wish for the sacrament without any instruction and many revert to their old paganism...this country is so vast that a

hundred thousand priest would not be sufficient to evangelise all of its population.⁶³

Such was the case among the Paravas, the fact that were only five priests to shoulder the burden of visiting about 30 villages and baptising about 20,000 souls was difficult. What made it worse was the unhealthy climate and food scarce, which made the Missionary to leave the area. As a result the Paravas were unable to receive any instruction in the Christian doctrine and they continue to live the same life as they did before. The situation in the interior (Madurai Mission) also was no better though there were other problems too that hindered the progress of Christianity⁶⁴.

Though these obstacles were a great hindrance in furthering the cause of the faith. Yet, Christianity, under the able leadership, zeal, efforts and innovations of men like St. Francis Xavier, Father Henrique Henriques (on the Fishery Coast) and Father Roberto de Nobili (Madurai Mission) was able to reap great benefits largely due

⁶³ Vincent Cronin: *A Pearl to India: Life of Robert de Nobili*. { London, 1959}, p 29.

⁶⁴ The details will be discussed in the later part of the Chapter

to certain strategies that the Society of Jesus adopted to make their work a success.

The strategy that the Jesuits adopted in their mission fields was broadly based on three basic principles⁶⁵:

- (i) The study of local languages and translation of catechismal texts - a lead that was first given by Xavier was later on followed by his fellow Jesuits- Henrique Henriques and Roberto de Nobili who wrote not only translated the Christian catechism in the vernacular languages but also wrote books on Christian doctrines and on Indian religion and customs.

- (ii) a policy of recruiting missionaries- was yet another strategy that the Jesuits adopted to overcome the problem of lack of missionaries. This problem, which was constantly lamented upon time and again by the

⁶⁵ J.M.Dos Santos Alves: *Portugal and its Missions in Asia and Brazil*, {1997},p 78.

Fathers that "the harvest is abundant but the labourers are few" was soon overcome with the establishment of Colleges and seminaries, where native people were taught to become clergy and priests, though it took a few more years to rectify the problem.

Because it is of the interest of the Jesuit Order and of Christianity to create a body of native religious and thus to allow us that in future they would recognised them as being in their own houses as they are the product that has been responsible for the formation of the missionaries...and there will be in each place a native clergy that would help ours in their missionary activities. Besides this, the Christians would be taken more care because by now there is a shortage of priests. What would going to happen always if we would not try in this way a solution. It would always be a shortage if we do not start the seminary and we will never be in a position to do our duty⁶⁶.

⁶⁶ Letter No.78, Alessandro Valingnano S.J Provincial to Fr. Cl. Aquaviva S.J General, Cochin, January 13,1587 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J., (ed.): *Documenta Indica, Vol. 14 (1585-1588)* {Rome}, 1984.

(iii) a policy of alliances- the Jesuits as part of their strategy also entered into alliances with the local elite to further the cause of the faith and it is largely in this regard that their persistent lobbying with Mughal Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) in close co-operation with the private Portuguese merchants for a concession to set up a permanent trading post in the Ganga delta can be viewed. Hugli founded around 1579/1580 eventually became the centre of Society's missionary activity in the region complementing the mission in the Mughal capital.⁶⁷ Similarly, on the Coromandel Coast also, the Jesuits played an important role especially in their role of mediators and interpretators between the King of Vijaynagar and the Estado da India as also between the Nayaks and the Paravas. The role of Fr. Antony Rubino S.J, the rector of Tuticorin in getting tax relief for the Paravas from Tirumala Nayak who not

⁶⁷ Dos Santos Alves : *ibid.*, p 86.

only cancelled the yearly tax of 800 patacas for three years, but also reduced it to 500 after that can be viewed in this regard.⁶⁸ Infact, in response to criticism that the Jesuits were seen at the viceregal court with unnecessary frequency, the Provincial of Goa, Pedro Martins wrote to the General Aquaviva

Our attendance can not be avoided because of the many transactions (negocios) we have concerning the affairs of the Company and of Christianity. It is impossible for a single person to dispose of all of them because the Father of the Christians has his concerns and the Provincial his⁶⁹.

These strategies in its varying degrees, went along with the various innovations and zeal and personality of the missionaries to make the mission on the Coromandel Coast as elsewhere in India, a success. Apart from this, the Jesuits presence in the courts also proved helpful to the Estado for the Jesuits acting on behalf of the

⁶⁸ J. Thekkedath : *History of Christianity in India : From Middle of 16th century to the end of 17th century (1542-1700), Vol. II,* {Theological Publications of India, Bangalore, 1982,} p 179.

⁶⁹ Daurill Alden: *The making of an Enterprise - the Society of Jesus in Portugal, its Empire and Beyond,* {Stanford University Press, 1996,} p 79-80.

Estado came to check the influence of the other European companies in the courts of the native rulers. Infact, William Hawkins, the English representative had developed a strong antipathy towards the court Jesuits who had persuaded Jahangir that the English were merely sea robbers and that to trade with them would be to risk a merciless blockade of his coastline by the Portuguese. As Henry Middleton, the Chief governor and lieutenant general of the Company opined

The fake Jesuits and their deceitful promises...(for) they are like serpents which thrust themselves in princes affairs with their false reports, thereby to induce them to war against one another.⁷⁰

How important were the Jesuits for the Estado is further evident from the letter of 1613 written by the Viceroy of Goa, Dom Jeronimo d' Azevado to the king of Portugal, which held that

These Religious who were in Bisnaga and resided at Chandegri, where the King resides,

⁷⁰ Alden: *Ibid.*, p 163

too, as soon as their Superiors knew what your Majesty wrote about them, they called them back to their Province; it was a great loss to Your Majesty's service, and on account of that the Dutch have already a fort in Paleacate (Pulicat), and war was waged with Meliapore by order of this King, which was very pernicious for that city, and many other bad consequences of their departure may be daily seen. Therefore I think that they must reside at Chandegri, near the King, and besides in Paleacate, too, after taking that fort from the Dutch.⁷¹

Jesuits Activities on the Fishery Coast.

Though the mission on the fishery coast was almost four years old by the time Xavier reached the coast (Manappad), not much headway was made in terms of baptism, pastoral care etc. The people were highly ignorant of the Christian doctrines and there

⁷¹ H.Heras: *Venkatapatiraya I and the Portuguese*, {Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society, Vol.14,

was hardly any differences between them and their Hindu neighbours. Infact, Xavier was highly disappointed by their ignorance. As he observed

As soon as I arrived, I tried to know what knowledge they had of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I questioned them on the articles of our faith and asked them what they thought of them and what more they believed now, then, when they were infidels. I had no other reply but that 'we are Christians'.⁷²

Xavier sought to remedy the situation and he started his work by rebaptising about 15000 Paravas and Mukkuvars⁷³. This was then followed by the mass baptism of the villages of the Karaiyas (a caste slightly inferior than the Paravas) and the Parivaras (a lower caste of the Maravas) both of whom adopted the Christian faith in 1543.⁷⁴ Since, the native language was a big barrier, which was faced by the missionaries in instructing the new Christians the

No.2, July 1924,} p 317

⁷² G.M.Moraes: *Saint Francis Xavier, Apostolic Nuncio (1542-1552)*, {Indian History and Cultural Series No.2, 1952,} p 14-15.

⁷³ Susan Bayly: *Saints, Goddesses and Kings - Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society (1700-1900)* {Cambridge University press, 1992,} p 328.

⁷⁴ Joseph Thekkedath: *History of Christianity in India - From the Middle of 16th Century to the end of 17th Century (1542-1700), Vol.II*, {Theological Publications in India, Bangalore,} p 158-159.

tenants of the faith, Xavier not only started learning the Tamil language but also translated many of the Catholic catechism⁷⁵ into the local language. He also left behind the copies of the religious instructions in each village and appointed catechists (*kanakkappillai*) to teach the children as well as the people the Christian doctrine, a process which he repeated in all the fishing villages along the coast. Apart from this he also took steps for the building of churches with the result that by 1551, there were about thirty churches along the coast.

The Jesuits, however, did not confine themselves in satisfying the spiritual needs of the people. They also worked for the moral and well bringing of the people by launching a program of social reform. The impetus was provided by Xavier who apart from taking care of the sick, burying their dead also took up steps to improve their social manners. He rebuked the usual vices of the people, had the adulterers publicly flogged and imprisoned by the *pattangattis* and waged a relentless war against idolatry and took

⁷⁵ Xavier had the *sign of the Cross, The Creed, The Commandments, The 'Our Father', The 'Hail Mary', Salve Regina and Confitear* translated with the help of three local seminaries from Goa who had accompanied him to the coast.

serious steps for the suppression and prohibition of drunkenness⁷⁶ as is evident from one of his letters to Mansilhas.

I am sending you a bailiff (meirinho) who will be useful to you in my absence. For each woman he catches drinking arrack. I give him a fanam and she will be imprisoned for two days. You should declare this in every locality and you should tell the pattangattis that if I come to know that any of them is drinking liquor at Punicale, they will have to pay for it dearly. See that by the time I return the pattangattis change their manners otherwise I shall send them all to Cochin and they will no longer see Punicale...⁷⁷

The groundwork laid down by the Xavier was then carried on with the same zeal by his fellow Jesuits who not only conducted the marriages of poor Christian girls but also opened schools and hospitals for the community.

Having occur in the same place, a urgent and serious situation, a Father has spoken with

⁷⁶ Thekkadath: *ibid.*, p 157-158. Also See George Schurhammar S.J: *Saint Francis Xavier - His Life, His Times (India - 1541-1546) Vol. II*, { Rome 1977}, p 337-38

⁷⁷ G.M.Moraes: *ibid.*, p 20.

three Christians and each one of them has offered fifty pardaus. With the alms that have been offered, it was celebrated the marriage of thirteen orphan girls and two Christians girls who were owned by Hindus and that have been free thanks to the good means used by the Fathers⁷⁸.

The very first hospital, which was established at Punnikayal in 1561, was not only made from the funds and alms donated by the members of the Christian community⁷⁹ but its expenses which included caring for the sick⁸⁰, the salary of the nurses and servants⁸¹ was also met by them. The success of the Punnikayal hospital as well as the charitable nature of the Christians led to the opening of more hospitals as a result by 1594 there were two more hospitals along the coast - at Tuticorin, Punnikayal⁸², not to mention the one at Mannar⁸³.

⁷⁸ Annual Letter of Pedro Martins S.J, Provincial, Goa, end of 1590 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.15 (1588-1592)* {Rome},1984

⁷⁹ Letter No.152, A.Anrriques to J.Lainez (General), Mannar, 19 December 1561 in V.Perinola S.J (ed.) *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka during the Portuguese Period (1505-1565) Vol.I.*

⁸⁰ Letter No.155, A.Anrriques to J.Lainez (General), December 29-30, 1562 in V.Perinola S.J (ed.) *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka during the Portuguese Period (1505-1565) Vol.I.* The Christians are said to have contributed about 100 cruzados a year for this purpose.

⁸¹ Revenue and Payment in Mannar, December 31, 1582 in V.Perinola S.J (ed.) *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka during the Portuguese Period (1566-1619) Vol.II.*

⁸² Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J., (ed.): *Documenta Indica, Vol.16.Introduction*, p 56.

⁸³ In Mannar the two separate hospitals, one for the native Christians and the other for the Portuguese were later combined into one to create a bigger hospital. Annual letter of the Province

Besides the hospital that there is at Punnikayal for the poor, it seems to be necessary to have another one at Tuticorin, being a much larger place and having in its neighbourhood a larger number of those necessary. A Father has requested five Christians of high position having induced them that during their lives they would give some help for the said hospital. They accepted easily the proposal and have compromised to give away every year eighty five pardaus, soon after others, moved by the Holy wish, promise forty five each yearly for the same work. And in this way, the hospital has collected one hundred thirty pardaus as rent. For the same hospital, the Bishop has instructed the Vicar of Tuticorin to grant yearly an amount that corresponds to a half. One of the five Christians is the treasurer and maintains the said hospital. He is helped weekly by one of the followers.⁸⁴

of India by Pedro Martins S.J, Provincial, Goa, November 30, 1591 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.15 (1588-1592)* {Rome},1984.

⁸⁴ Annual Letter of Pedro Martins S.J, Provincial, Goa, end of 1590 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.15 (1588-1592)* {Rome}.1984

Apart from the hospitals, the Jesuits also constructed a number of churches from the alms that were given by the Christians for these purposes

Some alms were given to the church and among them one of the two thousand pardaus in order to start the construction of a church of stone and mortar (calcium) because the one that we use is of wood having its walls of mud and is covered by straw. It was given other alms that raise the total amount to two hundred pardaus, to produce some religious dress and other purposes⁸⁵.

They also constructed a number of elementary schools where children were taught reading, writing, Latin and moral theology and where girls were given instructions in catechism⁸⁶. Likewise these schools were also paid for and were maintained by the Christians themselves.⁸⁷ Similarly, a seminary for native clergy was also established at Tuticorin in 1587 where around twenty-six boys

⁸⁵ Annual letter of Fishery Coast by Fr. Goncalo Fernandes S.J, Tuticorin, November 12, 1588 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J.,(ed.): *Documenta Indica, Vol.15 (1588-1592)*

⁸⁶ Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J., (ed.): *Documenta Indica, Vol.17.Introduction*, p 17.

⁸⁷ Revenue and Payment in Mannar, December 31, 1582 in V.Perinola S.J (ed.) *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka during the Portuguese Period (1566-1619) Vol.II.*

were studying⁸⁸ and for which the Christians had contributed an annual three hundred cruzados⁸⁹.

In the coast of Pescaria (Fishery coast) and Cape of Camorin, which is same area, asks for larger number of Fathers of the Company in order to give help to the Christians and converting the gentiles. It is a fact that this year, a seminary for young boys, natives of the land was established. It is hoped that with time larger results would be reached⁹⁰.

Apart from building hospitals, churches, taking care of the poor and the needy, the Jesuits also played an important role as arbitrators in settling disputes. What was unique was the fact that apart from Christians even Hindus also sought their help.

Two Hindus were fighting amongst themselves and were fed by hate for the last many years. Having failed all attempts to settle the matter,

⁸⁸ Letter No.104 Fr.Francisco Durao S.J to Cl.Aquaviva S.J General, Tuticorin, December 4, 1587 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J., (ed.): *Documenta Indica, Vol.14 (1585-1588)* {Rome}, 1984.

⁸⁹Letter No.105, Fr.Alessandro Valignano S.J Visitor to Cl.Aquaviva S.J General, Goa, November 20 1587/ December 6, 1587 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J., (ed.): *Documenta Indica, Vol. 14(1585-1588)*.

⁹⁰ Letter no 10,Albert Laerzio S.J to Nuno.... Goa, November 22,1588 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.15 (1588-1592)*.

they decided among themselves to go to a place where the Christians were settled and in the presence of the Father would follow what he would tell them, and they so proceed. In another place, for many years there were frequent confrontations among Hindus and being related by blood there was even cases of killing some of them. Having failed all the attempts by the kings and the nobles to settle matters and make them friends. Under the suggestion of one of them, they decided to come to a place where the Christians were settled in order that one of them would find solution to the differences. Taking as a decision that what the Christians would propose would be in conformity with the reasons as their law (Christian) did not allow neither hypocrisy nor mistake.⁹¹

Even the Jesuits selfless role of helping the people during the time of natural disasters also won them a lot of people to the faith. The famine of 1626 saw about 4000 people adopting the Christian faith after being touched by the relief measures that was undertaken by the Jesuits. Similarly the famine of 1646-47 followed by the

⁹¹ Annual Letter of Pedro Martins S.J, Provincial, Goa, end of 1590 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J., (ed.): *Documenta Indica. Vol.15 (1588-1592.*

pestilence of 1648 also proved to the Jesuits as it led to around 300 conversions in 1648.⁹²

The " *Confraria da Caridade* " (*Confraternity of Charity*) which was founded by Fr. Henrique Henriques also played an important role in improving the quality of Christian life on the coast. The Confraternity, which was based "on the love of God and the love of one's neighbour"⁹³, asked its members to live as good Christians and to help others to do so.

Main purpose of this brotherhood is to live according to the commandments of God and to do the utmost in keeping obedience to the instructions of the superiors, to preserve the chastity along side the year, to love and understand our neighbours as you love and understand yourselves....⁹⁴

⁹² Thekkadath: *ibid.*, p 205.

⁹³ Thekkadath: *ibid.*, p 172

⁹⁴ Annual Letter of Pedro Martins S.J, Provincial, Goa, end of 1590 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J., (ed.): *Documenta Indica, Vol.15 (1588-1592).*

As a result the members⁹⁵ of the Confraternity in accordance with the rules laid out by Fr. Henriques in 1578 led exemplary Christian life, did penance and fasting, strove for personal perfection, helped their brethren especially the dying and the sick who were poor or abandoned in times of need, took up the nursing of the sick and saw to the needs of the hospitals.⁹⁶

In fact, the participation of the Christians and the role that the Jesuits played in this regard not only helped to consolidate and entrench the Jesuits and the Catholic Church in the daily life of the Coast but it also provided an opportunity to the Jesuits and the Church to play a much larger part in the political, social and economic spheres.

The conversion of the Paravas to Christianity, which put them at par with the Portuguese as far as religious affiliation was concerned, acted as a boon for the Portuguese Estado. The economic benefits that could be derived from the pearl fisheries,

⁹⁵ The Confraternity of Fr. Henrique allowed women to become members unlike the Society of Jesus, which did not favour Confraternities for women.

⁹⁶ J. Wicki S.J: *Fr. Henrique Henriques, S.J.* {Indian Ecclesiastical Studies, Vol.5, no.3, July 1966}, p187-188. Also see Thekkdath: *History of Christianity in India*, p 172-173.

coupled with the realisation to have a group of people loyal to the Portuguese crown given the precarious position of the Portuguese on the coast, made the *Estado* enter into a system of alliance building with the Paravas caste notables - the *pattangattis* and other figures of authority whom they considered would serve as local collaborating elite sensitive to the interest of the Portuguese Estado. And it was through religious patronage that the Portuguese sought to create these bonds of affiliation⁹⁷. In this regard the recognition of some of the social and religious institutions of the Paravas including some Hindu customs⁹⁸ by the Church as well as the establishment of the Miraculous Virgin as the patron of the Paravas at Tuticorin on the lines of the Paravas tutelary goddess of Virapandyapatnam can be viewed both as a part of the alliance building process as well as an attempt on part of the Church to establish a foothold amongst the Christian community without hindering the delicate social balance that had existed since time immemorial.

⁹⁷ Bayly: *ibid.*, p 327-328.

⁹⁸ The Portuguese as well as the Dutch and the British recognised and accepted the rituals that were performed during the pearl fishery by the shark charmers in an attempt to drive away the

As a result Christianity not only became a part and parcel of the Paravas community life but it also came to highlight the authority of the group's caste notables who while being recognised as the enforcers of the moral orders⁹⁹ were also recognised as the guardians of the Church also came to play an important role in the local festivals.¹⁰⁰ In the Christian social calendar, events like feasts and festivals characterised by mass baptism, dramas highlighting events of Christians saints etc were the highpoints of the Paravas social and spiritual life and it was during such festivals that mass communion and baptism usually took place. In 1593, while 100 people were baptised in Tuticorin on the feast of their patron, our Lady of Snow, similarly around 800 were baptised other churches during the feasts of their patrons¹⁰¹.

Frequently has been written that we work a lot
to celebrate certain religious dates the best we

sharks. This recognition was an attempt on part of the colonial powers to make the pearl and shank fishery a success.

⁹⁹ As part of their role as a moral policing agency, the pattangattis were not only given the powers to levy fines for drunkenness and other transgression but they were also given the right to appoint senior and respected members of the community as judges in the presence of Portuguese captains. Letter No.152, A.Anrriques to J.Lainez (General), Mannar, 19 December 1561 in V.Perinola S.J (ed.) *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka during the Portuguese Period (1505-1565) Vol.1*. Also See Bayly : *ibid.*, p 331-32

¹⁰⁰ Bayly: *ibid.*,p 331-32 , 342-43.

can and considering the limitation you dispose of these lands, as being mean for these Christians to maintain alive their faith and to proceed on. We work a lot to associate with these celebrations a spiritual aspect marked by confession, communions, preaching, processions and other alike items and externally we have we have been working a lot to decorate the churches and favouring the performance of dances, fireworks and even performances of the life of some saints¹⁰².

These feasts and baptism coupled with the recognition and authority given to the caste notables as well as their own work among the Christian community not only helped the Church to consolidate its relationship with the dominant sections of the Parava community also helped them to influence the day to day life of the Paravas.

¹⁰¹ Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J., (ed.) : *Documenta Indica*, Vol.16 (1592-1594) Rome,1984.p 16 (Introduction).

¹⁰² Annual letter of Fishery Coast by Fr.Goncalo Fernandes S.J, Tuticorin, November 12. 1588 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica*, Vol.15 (1588-1592)

Robert de Nobili and the Madurai Mission

Though, the Madurai Mission by the time Nobili reached there was around eleven years old, no significant gains had been made till then by Fr. Goncalo Fernandez, who had been there since 1595, except for the building of a church ,a presbytery (residence for priest) and a school. The reason for this, can be traced to the failure of the missionaries to understand the intricacies of the Indian caste system which forbade any kind of interaction between the High castes and the low castes. Hence, the association of Fr. Goncalo and the Portuguese with the low castes Paravas coupled with the immoral and abhorrent lifestyle of the Portuguese made the caste Hindus to regard Christianity as a religion good enough for the Parangis and the outcastes but not for the respectable Indians¹⁰³. Further, the general view that whosoever joined or received baptism from them would straightaway lose all his titles of nobility and be covered with infamy for the rest of his life was yet another reason why the bulk of the upper caste population tend to

¹⁰³ P.Thomas: *Christianity in India and Pakistan*, p 63.

stay away from the Christian faith.¹⁰⁴ Infact, this was one the reasons for the failure of Father Goncalo to make any convert as also for his failure to expound the principles of Christianity before the Nayak of Madurai.¹⁰⁵

Nobili, unlike his predecessors was quick to grasp the important role that the Brahmans played in the Indian society. He realised that without impressing the upper strata of the Indian society Christianity in Madurai could make no headway. The methods which were adopted in the conversion of the Paravas could not be applied to the lofty, intellectually complacent Brahmins who laid down laws for kings and subjects alike and dominated the social, religious and political life of the Hindus. Furthermore, unlike the Paravas and other fishing communities, they had no grievances or material advantage to be derived as such, and therefore did not show much interest for adopting the Christian faith. He also realised that if the Brahmin as a class could be persuaded to

¹⁰⁴ Thekkedath: *ibid.*,p 212.

¹⁰⁵ Infact, whenever Father Goncales made any attempt to seek an audience with the Nayak in this regard, he was always turned down and once he was even told by the Nayak that if the sole purpose of his work was to convert the people, then it would be better if he leave Madurai and returned to the coast.

accept Christianity, then the conversion of others would be possible.

That the Brahmans played an important role in the Hindu society was realised as far back in 1547 when the *Cathedral Chapter* noticed in people refused to become to Christians "*until these honoured ones do so*" for they ill treat them very much and molest them greatly and the people do not dare speak. These people posses great influence among them in this matter and strive to prevent anyone from becoming Christians. Thus, the realisation that, the conversion of the people won't be possible until the "*honoured ones*" converted may have been the reason why the Madurai Mission concentrated on wooing the upper caste to the faith. Even, Nobili in his treatise on *Indian Customs* himself noted

As the Brahmins alone in India represent the Intelligentsia and the teaching profession, from the earliest times it becomes an established custom for well nigh every one from the inferior orders, before attempting anything, particularly in matters connected with sciences and the religious sects, to take

counsel on the subject from some learned Brahmins. And so it is from this popular attitude that emerges the greatest obstacle and the most frequently encountered obstacle in the way of the conversion of the heathens; so we feel in this our religious community: for almost every one of those, to whom we propound the catechetical teaching of Christ, immediately goes to consult the Brahmins or brings them along to our house so that, being conscious of their ignorance in such matters, he may learn what their wise men have to say in rebuttal; and thus well versed in logic and philosophy as these men are, they at once lead the minds of the enquirers astray by their complicated and abstruse argument¹⁰⁶.

Nobili, in an attempt to further the cause of the faith amongst the caste Hindus introduced a new epoch in the history of Christianity by endeavouring to make it recognised as a superior to advance Hinduism in respect of intellectual culture and equally ready like Hinduism to sanction social gradation and customs. Unlike his predecessors who were unable to gauge the feelings and understand the prejudices of those whom they want to convert and

¹⁰⁶ S.Rajamanickam S.J: *Madurai Mission -Old and New*, in Anand Amaladas S.J (ed.) *Jesuit*

who on account of their ignorance and their honest and tactless sincerity had gone to extremes in their condemnation of every thing Hindu and popular. Nobili introduced a system of compromise and adaptation. He discovered that the way to open the door of India to Christianity was to relinquish western social concepts and to adopt those of the subcontinent¹⁰⁷. He therefore began a systematic study of Indian languages and literature-Vedas, Agamas, Upanishads etc, which by helping him to distinguish society from religion, caste from creed and custom from belief also helped him to refute some of the popular beliefs on the Hindus by entering into discussions with the Brahmins and the Pandarswamis ¹⁰⁸.

Furthermore, as his main focus were the Upper caste Hindus therefore, in order to be more acceptable to them and to claim a place for himself in the upper ranks of the local caste ranking scheme he not only isolated himself from the other Padrado missionaries and their converts but also established for himself a

Presence in Indian History, {Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1988,} p 307.

¹⁰⁷ William. V. Bangert S.J: *A History of the Society of Jesus*, {Institute of Jesuit Sources, St.Louis, 1989}, p 152-153.

separate residence in the high caste residential quarter of Madurai. He also gave up his priestly grab for the robe of a Brahmin sanayasi and adopted its rigorous lifestyle and dietary customs¹⁰⁹. Infact Nobili's policy of adaptation, which allowed the high caste converts the use of *sacred thread, kudumi, the celebration of the festival of Pongal* etc with some sort of modification had won him by 1609 sixty converts, which by 1611 had increased to one hundred and fifty¹¹⁰.

However, Nobili and his fellow Jesuits didn't just confined themselves to the Brahmins only, they extended their influence among the low castes especially the *Pariahs*. Since any kind of relationship between a sanayasi and a lower caste was unacceptable to the higher castes, administrating sacraments to the lower castes was difficult and any discreet attempts by the missionaries to meet the spiritual needs of the lower castes not only alienated both the groups but they also provoked official disapproval by their infringement of caste rules. Therefore, to

¹⁰⁸ V.Rangachari: *History of the Nayak Kingdom of Madurai*, {Indian Antiquary, Vol. XLV, 1916}, p 108.

¹⁰⁹ Bayly: *ibid.*, p 389-390.

¹¹⁰ Bangert: *ibid.*, p 153.

overcome this problem, Nobili created *the Pandaraswami Mission* or the *Mission of the Yogis* on 4th July 1640 with Fr Balthasar da Costa as the first Pandaram ¹¹¹. The Pandarams¹¹² who were a group of Indian gurus or spiritual teachers found, among the Vellala caste, were sufficiently respected and at the same time could deal with all the castes including the Brahmins, though they could not be their teacher nor could they eat nor lodge with them or engage Brahmin servants. Moreover, it was not necessary for them to be Sanskrit scholars nor be vegetarian. Since the work of the Pandarams was very similarly to that of the Missionary or Brahmin sanayasi. They apart from ministering the outcastes also laboured among the Cheetis, the Vadugans and other respectable castes and were received by the Nayak rulers¹¹³. To quote Fr Balthasar da Costa who wrote in 1642

The Pariahs who are under our special care
are scattered in all the province and
constantly I move about in every direction in

¹¹¹ Nobili got the idea to establish the Pandaraswami mission following the conversion of a Pandaram named Muttiudeyuan (Hilary) to Christianity during the 1630's. See A. Francis: *Socio Historical study of the Pandaraswamy as instituted by the Jesuits* in Anand Amaladas S.J (ed.) *Jesuit Presence in Indian History*, p 321-23.

¹¹² A caste of non-Brahmin Saivites.

¹¹³ J.S.Chandler S.J: *History of the Jesuit Missions in Madura - South India in the 17th-18th centuries*, {Madras,1909,} p 41.

order to minister to the many communities of the caste. There is no hindrance to my helping the other neophytes and even to the conversion of the many high-caste pagans¹¹⁴.

Though the Pandaraswamis were able to deal with the high castes, they however didn't command the same respect and authority as the Brahmin sanyasis did. Furthermore, they were not able to make as many converts both among the high castes as well among the low castes as a Brahmin sanayasi did. As Fr. Emmanuel Martins noted in 1651

A Brahmin sanyasis makes more converts among the high castes than three or four Fathers who were the other dress (Pandaraswamis). Moreover, both the Pariahs and the Sudras were more easily converted by the Fathers with the status of a Brahmin and having disciples (though they are few)...Conversion made by the latter are chiefly due to the moral impressions produced ,even on the lower castes, by the sight of a

¹¹⁴ Francis: *ibid.*, p 324.

religion preached and practised by
Brahmins¹¹⁵.....

Still, inspite of the drawback the mission proved to be a success both among the high castes and low castes. Balthasar da Costa mentions that from July 1640 to July 1643, he had baptised in the kingdoms of Madurai, Tanjore and Sathiyamangalam no fewer than 2500 adults mostly Pariahs and other polluting castes but also some Sudras including army officers¹¹⁶. The mission also reached deep into the hinterland. One Jesuit made a perilous trip through the interior of southern Tirunelveli in 1638 while others moved north along the Kaveri and into the Kallar and Udaiyar poligar country. There were also forays into the southern Marava and Vaduga poligar country where large-scale mass baptism were carried out in the 1630's and 1640's¹¹⁷.

Though the innovations and adaptation made by Nobili was quite successful and won many people both from the high and low castes to the cause of the Catholic faith yet, it had its own share of

¹¹⁵Chandler: History of the Jesuit Missions in Madura - South India in the 17th-18th centuries, {Madras, 1909}, p 49-50.

¹¹⁶Cronin: *ibid.*, p253.

problems. While there were some like the Provincial Fr. Albert Laerzio and the Bishop of Cranganore Fr. Francesco Roz who wholeheartedly support Nobili's methods yet there were others like Fr. Goncalo, the Visitor Nicolau Pimenta etc who condemned his approach as superstitious scandalous and blasphemous for being against the tenets of Christianity. And though a majority of theologians voted against him at the conference of theologians in Goa in 1618, Pope Gregory XV in the Apostolic Constitution *Romanae Sedis* of January 31, 1623 upheld Nobili against his critics and approved the use by the Brahmin Christians of the cord, the sandal and the ablutions.¹¹⁸ And later on, these methods were later on adopted by the Jesuits in the Malabar, Tanjore, Mysore and Mysore in their evangelisation process.

¹¹⁷ Bayly ; *ibid.*, p 394.

¹¹⁸ Bangert: *ibid.*, p 237-38.

CHAPTER 3

Dimensions of Jesuits Problems

The zeal with which the Jesuits carried on their work won them a lot of people to the Catholic faith; it also brought them a great deal of problems. These problems which came from both within and outside the Church establishment came to threaten the very existence of Christianity in India. While the problems from outside came in the form opposition to and persecutions of the Christian faith by the local populace and wars between the political elite's, that from within the Church was far more serious. The friction between the Bishops and the Society as well as among the various religious orders, the glaring problem of nationality etc shook the very foundations of Christianity in India. If this wasn't enough the declining fortune of the Portuguese coupled with the arrival of the non -catholic Northern Europeans -the Dutch and the English made the work of the missionaries even more difficult.

Persecution from the local elite/populace

One of the main reasons for the slow progress of Christianity in India can be ascribed to the various oppositions and persecutions that the missionaries faced in the course of their work. These persecutions however, had a lot to do with the aggressive attitude and unlawful activities of the Portuguese rather than any antagonistic feeling on part of the native populace and it is largely in this regard the adoption of the Christian faith by the Paravas which was interpreted by the Vijaynagar rulers as a change of fealty or allegiance to the King of Portugal and which was also regarded to be the main reason for the drying up of Vijaynagar's treasury, the capture of a brother in law of Rama Vitthala Raya by the Portuguese¹¹⁹ as also the covetousness of the Portuguese captain of the Fishery coast, Joao Fernandes Correa who demanded a pilgrim tax from the pilgrims visiting the Rameswaram

¹¹⁹ St. Francis Xavier in a letter to Mansilhas dated September 7, 1544 from Trichendur mentions that while he was in Trichendur, Tinnevely mentions that in the beginning of June of that year, he had heard " of a rising in the country because the Portuguese had captured a brother in law of Betermeal (Vitthala) and they (the insurgents) wanted to capture likewise the Christians of the Cape Comorin".

temple (1549)¹²⁰ can be viewed. And it was largely these reasons which apart from resulting in the periodic incursions of the Badagas on the Fishery coast also led to the migrations of the Paravas to the island of Mannar.

The Badagas invasions proved to be detrimental for the Christians settled there for they were the ones who suffered the most. Their houses and boats were burnt and many had to sought refugees in island around Cape Comorin which though inaccessible to the Badagas lacked in drinking water and vegetation. Xavier in his letters to Mansilhas while talking about their miserable condition also orders him to make arrangements for them.

I am given a letter of Gaurim just now, in which he informs me that the Christians have fled to the forest, since the Badagas have robbed their property and two, one Christian and one Hindu were stabbed by them.¹²¹

¹²⁰ H.Heras S.J: *Rama Vitthala Raya, Viceroy of Southern India*, {Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society, Vol.15, no.2, January 1925,}p 186.

¹²¹ Letter from Xavier to Mansilhas dated August 19,1544, Manappad, quoted in H.Heras S.J: *Rama Vitthala Raya, Viceroy of Southern India*, {Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society, Vol.15, no.2, January 1925,}p 183-184.

It was indeed pitiful to see them. Some had nothing to eat; others had become blind on account of their age and hardships; many were married men and their wives brought forth children while enroute and there were many pitiful things; had you seen them you would, I am sure, have pitied them more than myself.¹²²

I am anxious about the Christians of Tuticorin who are in the greatest possible misery. Go at once with all the boats at Kombutturai and Punnaikayal and Tiruchendur. I conjure you, by our Lord, never let it be that Beterbemali (Vitthlaraya), the leader of these robber Badagas and all his horde of plundering ruffians, should have their hearts desire fulfilled, that remnants of this most afflicted people should perish of hunger and thirst¹²³.

Such frequent attacks which resulted in the Paravas paying one day's tribute amounting to 70000 pardaus (1551)¹²⁴, the capture of missionaries like Joao de Mesquita and Francisco Durao, who was

¹²² S.Manickam: *Studies in Missionary History -Reflections on a Cultural Contact*, {Christian Literature Society, 1988,} p 27-28.

¹²³ S.Manickam: *ibid.*, p 27. Also see Georg Schurhammar S.J: *Francis Xavier, His Life, His Times, Vol II (India, 1541-45)* p 452.

later released on payment of 50 pardaus ransom and finally the death of Father Antonio Criminali (1559) led to suggestion of transferring the Paravas to the island of Ceylon. Infact it was in view of the troubles that were faced by the Christians of the coast following the frequent attacks by the Badagas that Fr. Henriques like his predecessors before him suggested the transfer of the Christians

Before I returned from Cochin to Punicale, the Badaga called Vichuvanayque (Visshvanayak or Vishvanather) who has many years been ruler of land where Christians of Fishery Coast reside demand that the Christians should give him a day's fishing of seed pearls and to see his demands carried out posted guards in some villages of the Christians threatening to arrest women and children...Already for many days Christians had been deliberating to go away from coast to escape the tyranny of Badagas, tyranny often inspired by their great enemies the Moors, whose advice the Badagas asked...¹²⁵

¹²⁴ S.Stephen Jayaseela: *Portuguese on Tamil Coast - Historical Explorations in Commerce and Culture (1507-1749)* {Navjyothi, 1998,} p 74-5.

¹²⁵ Letter No. 146, Anrique Anriques S.J to J.Lainez S.J, General, 8 January 1561, Manar in V.Perinola S.J (ed.) *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka during the Portuguese Period, 1505-1566, Vol.I.*

The part of Ceylon to where Paravas migrated to was Mannar, which came under the control of the Portuguese following a successful military campaign against it in 1560 by the then viceroy Dom Constantino de Braganza (1518-1561) who, following the erection of a fortress allowed the Franciscans and the Jesuits to build their respective houses. However the Paravas migration which took place in the 1560 followed by yet another migration in 1590 did not led to any dramatic change in their lifestyle for they practically remained in the same neighbourhood though without the injuries and molestation of the Nayaks¹²⁶.

However the persecutions weren't just limited to the Fishery coast. The Madurai Mission in interior wasn't free from it either. But while in the Fishery coast the perpetrators were usually the local elite's, that in Madurai included both the local elite's as well as the Brahmans and the Pandarams. While the opposition of the Hindu religious leaders had a lot to do with the gains that Christianity

¹²⁶ The Franciscans in Mannar (1560) in V.Perinola S.J (ed.) *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka during the Portuguese Period, 1505-1566, Vol.I.*

was making that of the Nayaks officials had a lot to do with the treasures which they perceived that the Jesuits had with them. The arrest of Nobili and his companion Sebastian de Maya by Sivandi Pillai ¹²⁷ can be understood in this regard, as reflected in de Maya's correspondence with the Malabar Provincial Emmanuel de Azevado S.J dated the 8th August 1640 which he wrote from the jail itself

The fruit of the plunder was laid at his feet: Mass vestments, church ornaments, missal, breviary, crucifix, pictures of our lady, two inkstands, two small boxes, the register of baptism etc. But neither the chalice nor the other precious objects were to be seen: probably they had been pilfered by the plunders...in this way our persecutors hope to discover the immense treasure we are supposed to have. This thirst for gold is always the most powerful incentive our enemies have recourse to, when they want to turn against us the courtiers or magistrates, who live by such plunder. Although in their repeated searches in the past they found nothing in our house except extreme poverty,

¹²⁷ Sivandi Pillai was a relative of Venkat Raya Pillai, who apart from torturing Father Emmanuel Martinez and arresting several other Christians in Tiruchirapalli, had also

they still persevere torturing us in the hope of discovering hidden treasures.¹²⁸

Even the royal officials who were so intimate with the missionaries, now or then turned against them on denial of their demands. The persecution by Erumeikatti, who was once a close associate of Nobili was on the Jesuits, was largely on the refusal of his demand of a velvet coat. The Jesuits were only following the fulfilment of this desire.¹²⁹

Yet another reason for this hostility was the Nayak's relations with the Portuguese¹³⁰ that, indirectly had an effect as far as their relations with the Jesuits was concerned. As long as the Portuguese were on good terms with the Nayaks, the Jesuits and the Christians were free from trouble but, the moment there was a

ordered his relative Sivandi Pillai to throw de Nobili and Sebastian de Maya in prison.

¹²⁸ S.Rajamanickam: *De Nobili in the Madurai jail: A letter of Sebastian De Maya*, {Indian Church Historical Review, Vol.18, no.2, 1984,} p 91-92.

¹²⁹ T.Sundararaj: *The relation between Jesuit Missionaries and the Native powers in Anand Amaladass (ed.) Jesuit Presence in Indian History*, {Gujarat Sathiya Prakash, 1988,} p 122.

¹³⁰ Certain acts of the Portuguese such as the capture of the Brother in law of Rama Raya Vitthala, as well as the capture of a servant of the prince of Kayalpatnam which resulted in Xavier writing a letter to the Mansilhas (11th September 1544) ordering him to request the Captain of the Coromandel to look into the affair and to set the man free. As also the attempt of the Portuguese Viceroy, Martin Affonso de Souza to raid the temples

problem it was usually the Jesuits and the Christians who had to face the ire of the emperor and the Nayaks. The Badagas aggression following the capture of the brother in law of Rama Vitthala Raya is to be viewed in this regard. Rama Vitthala Raya as such didn't had any problems with the Christians except perhaps on the question of the revenues from the pearl fisheries and he perhaps would not have attacked the fishery coast if the Portuguese had not captured his brother in law. Furthermore the failure of the Portuguese to come to the emperor and Nayaks aid in their wars against each other, the failure of the Portuguese to pay the revenues on time as also their failure to check the aggression of the Northern European companies was yet another reason why the Christians had to bear the anger of the local elites. As Manuel Barradas and Antonio Bocarro wrote in the 1630's with regard to the attack of the Nayak of Tanjore on Nagapattinam

This Naique of Tanjaor has two extremes with the Portuguese of this settlement of Negapatao, because he gives by an ancient custom a village that 6,000 xerafins of the coin of Goa for the sustenance of the clerics of

of South India, not to mention the expedition to attack the temple of Tiruchendur led to a kind of friction between the Nayaks and the Portuguese.

the See, which is paid without any trouble or contradiction, so that they are among the best paid that are in the Estado, though from the treasury of a Gentile...but on the other hand, he takes many levies and very large tributes from the settlers of Negapatao, and when they do not give them of their own will, he comes in person to the settlement with the great apparatus of his state, and enters into the houses of the Portuguese, and has even taken images of the saints from them, and he also wishes to do the same with the white women whom he fancies....¹³¹

This however does not mean that the Nayaks were hostile to the Christians all the time. Infact there are numerous instances of the Nayaks coming to the aid of the missionaries at the time of need. The help rendered to the Nobili by Erumeikatti who provided with land to build a house and a church, the grant of land as *manyam* to the See church by the Nayak of Tanjore, the reducing of pearl fishery tribute for three years by Tirumala Nayak following the

¹³¹ Sanjay Subrahmanyam: *Trade and Flag: The Portuguese in Nagapattinam, 1530-1658* in Sanjay Subrahmanyam (ed) *Improvising Empire- The Portuguese Trade and Settlement in the Bay of Bengal, 1500-1700*, {OUP, New Delhi, 1980}, p 89.

famine of 1626¹³² as also his help to Nobili during the latter's imprisonment suggests that the rulers were generally tolerant of the Christian faith.

Even the wars between the Nayaks on one hand and those between the king of Vijaynagar and his feudatories, which, ultimately sounded the death-knell of the Vijaynagar Empire also, created problems for the missionaries. The cry for independence by the Nayaks of Madurai, Gingee and Tanjore from the kingdom of Vijaynagar which had begun since the defeat of the kingdom at the hands of the Muslim forces in the battle of Rakshasi-Tangadi (Talikota) in 1564 assumed alarming proportions following the civil war of 1614-17. As Ferishta had noted

The country (Vijaynagar Empire) at present has been seized by the tributary chiefs, each of, whom hath assumed an independent power in his own district.¹³³

¹³² T.Sundararaj: *Ibid.*, p 122 . Also see Vincent Cronin: *A Pearl to India -Life of Robert de Nobili.* {London, 1959,} p 242.

¹³³ R.Sathianathaier :*Tamilham in the 17th century, University of Madras,*{1956}, p13

This defiance of central authority became acute during the nayakship of Tirumala Nayak (1623-59) who along with the Nayak of Gingee not only resisted the efforts of Sriranga III to restore the power of the empire, but by conniving with the Muslim powers of Bijapur and Golconda, he brought about the occupation of the whole territory to the north of Cooleron by the Muslims in the mid 17th century. As William Methwold, the English factor at Mauslipatnam (1618-1622) noted

"the first kingdom upon the mayne is the ancient one of Bisnagar, rent at this time into severall provinces or government held by the Naikes of that countrey in their own right, for since the last king (who deceased about fifteen yeeres since) there have risen severall competitors for the crowne unto whom the Naikes have adhered accordind to their factions and affections, for whence hath followed a continuall civil warre in some parts of the countrey and such extreme heat and famine in most of it..."¹³⁴

¹³⁴ W.H.Moreland: *Relations of Golconda in early 17th century*, {Hakluyt Society, London, 1931} ,p 2-3.

That the wars were still continuing well into the 1640's is evident from the letter of 21 January 1646 which notes that

"ever since ...the 12th August last the king hath live in warres with the king of Vizapore and in the civil warres with three of his great Nagues"¹³⁵.

While another letter from the English factory from Madras (10 February 1646) notes:

"this country is present full of wars and troubles for the king (of Vijaynagar) and three of his Naiques are at variance and the king of Vizapore (Bijapur) army is come into this country on the one side and the king of Golconda upon the other, both against this king." ¹³⁶

These various wars which affected both Hindus and Christians not only forced them to abandon their homes and take refuge in the forests, thereby hindering the building up of a sizeable stable Christian community it also made the work of the missionaries in

¹³⁵ William Foster: *Founding of Fort St. George*, 1902, p 34.

terms of communions, baptism etc even more difficult. As Albert Laerzio writing to Aquaviva from Cochin on 25 November 1611 noted

The war, which has broken out between the great Nayak and king of Tanjore, has deprived me of the pleasure of seeing our Fathers at Madura.¹³⁷

And in this regard, the attempts by Sriranga II to regain his territories¹³⁸ proved futile for while Tanjore and Gingee submitted to Bijapur in 1649, Madura and Mysore continued to remain independent states well in to the 18th century.

If it was not the wars it was certain activities of the Portuguese that created problems for the missionaries. As Fr.M.Roiz, Rector of the College of Sao Thome on November 1st, 1606, wrote to Fr. J.Alvares, at Rome

¹³⁶ Foster: *ibid.*, p 35.

¹³⁷ R.Sathianathaier: *ibid.*, p27.

¹³⁸ Sriranga III is even said to have sought the aid of the Mughals in an effort to regain his territories.

When I reached this country, on September 3rd, 1606, I found the Portuguese quarrelling and fighting among themselves, as they were doing two or three years ago; a few months back the same Portuguese of this town fought also against the Hindus that live outside our city. The reason was because they murdered a Portuguese gentleman married here; on hearing this the Portuguese became very angry, went out and took by storm and plundered the Hindu town that was near; they went besides to a fortress of the Hindu king, who is king of Bisnaga, which stands next to our city, and set in on fire; the king who resides eighteen or twenty leagues far from here became very furious even with our Fathers.¹³⁹

Epidemics and famines

Apart from the man made disasters the 16th -17th century also witnessed a spurt in natural disasters. The first disaster to hit the

¹³⁹H.Heras: *Venkatpatiraya I and the Portuguese*. {Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society, Vol.14, no.4, July 1924,} p 315-316.

Coromandel Coast was the epidemic of Mannar¹⁴⁰ that apart from leaving thousands of Paravas dead also resulted in the returning back of the Paravas to their old homestead thereby putting the plan of the missionaries to settle them on the island of Mannar into total disarray.

Christians returned to the coast with some Fathers (belonged to the community of Paravas, the Carea not affected by epidemic stayed behind). These people so weakened by their stay in Mannar that beside all those who died of the epidemic other died in winter from its effects. Hence, hardly anyone who (?) care to go back. Informed of this, the Bishop of Cochin (Dom.Jorge Themudo O.P) wrote that they could remain in their old abode to which they had come.¹⁴¹

It weren't just the Paravas who fell victims to the epidemic. The epidemic also took under its ambit a few missionaries who were

¹⁴⁰ Though nobody knew what kind of epidemic it was, it is generally believed to be some of a plague which, however didn't affect the original inhabitants of the island. See Letter No. 157, Anrique Anriques S.J to J.Lainez S.J, General, 24 December 1564, Punicale in V.Perinola S.J (ed.) *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka during the Portuguese Period, 1505-1566, Vol.I.*

working on the island. The coast as such reeling under the acute shortage of missionaries lost a few more.

On this coast (Fishery coast) and in the island of Mannar we are settled for most of this year, we are 18 members of the Company with 2 companions that previously were working in the coast of Travancore. Due to the wars that were fought there, they were asked to come over to the Fishery coast. I said larger part of the year because since God Our Lord has taken from us for Himself the two, both remarkable by their virtuous and each one of them having best referred about their past and that have helped to plant this vineyard with a lot of effort... This year God permitted that the coast should be visited by a famine, by an epidemic and by the vexation of a war... epidemic, though not spread over whole coast was very severe in island of Mannar, where it lasted six months.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Letter No. 157, Anrique Anriques S.J to J.Lainez S.J, General, 24 December 1564, Punicale in V.Perinola S.J (ed.) *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka during the Portuguese Period, 1505-1566, Vol.I.*

¹⁴² The two Fathers who died were Fr. Estevao de Gois and Fr. Jeromino Vaz.. Annual Letter of Fishery Coast by Fr. Goncalo Fernandez, Tuticorin, November 12,1588 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.15 (1588-1592)*. Also see Letter No.56 in V.Perinola S.J (ed.) *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka during the Portuguese Period, 1566-1619, Vol.II.*

Not only epidemics, even famines created havoc in the lives of the period. The years 1580's, 1626, 1646-47 saw the Coromandel Coast reeling under the bout of a severe famine. Most of these famines said, to be a result of the wars being fought between the Nayaks and the king of Vijaynagar not only resulted in the death of many but it also saw many people selling themselves and their children into slavery largely to the Dutch.

How to describe the anguish and sufferings of our Christians wandering on the mountains as so many living skeletons, a prey to the horrors of war and to the distress of famine! ...Our neophytes above 10,000 died of misery. The Province of Tanjore suffered most...A large number of émigrés proceeded to Trichinopoly, where war and hunger pursued them; others took refuge in Sao Thome...

...Besides this King of Visiapore had not long before the siege, made an inroad into the country and by destroying all the Fruits of the Earth and whatever else he met with occasioned such a famine, that the poor country wretches being forced to fly to the city for want of rice and other eatables. You saw the streets covered with emaciated and half

starved persons, who offered themselves to slavery for a small quantity of bread and you might have brought as many as you pleased at the rate of 10 shillings a head; about 5000 of them were these brought and carried to Jaffnapattnam, as many to Columbo, besides several thousands that were transported to Batavia.¹⁴³

Role of the Portuguese and God Vs. Mammon

Yet, another reason that also created problems for the missionaries was the role that the Portuguese especially the Portuguese viceroys and the Captains played. Unlike the 15th and early 16th century that saw the crown and the Estado da India taking a keen interest in the evangelisation process and in the Christians with the king Dom Joao III (1521-1557) extending all possible help to his Paravas subjects and the Viceroys ensuring that the Paravas are not exploited¹⁴⁴, the late 16th century saw the Portuguese officials more interested in their own selfish needs. As Hugo Grotius observed in his celebrated *Mare Liberum* (1609)

¹⁴³ Philip Baldaeus 's description of Tanjore (1660) quoted in R.Sathianathaier: *Tamilham in the 17th century*, {University of Madras, 1956}, p 75-76.

The Portuguese in most places do not further the extension of the faith or, indeed, pay any attention to it at all, since they are interested only in the acquisition of wealth.¹⁴⁵

This was true in the case of the Fishery coast whose Captains were found to be more interested in trade and in pearls rather than helping the Jesuits.

Second and important means for the welfare and growth of the Christian community and conversion of the infidels is to have the good officials both governor and captain. Governors are better aware how much His Highness has at heart the interest of Christian religion. Hence some of them to certain extent foster the work of religion. But, the captains, as aren't fully aware of desire of His Highness and even if are aware, as majority of them come in full debts, think of pay their debts and providing for their kinsmen and servants. And as making money -principle aim can't serve two masters and thus show almost no concern to favour the Christians and much less convert the infidels. This is deeply expressed with such grief and anguish by the

¹⁴⁴ Jayaseela: *ibid.*, p 72-72

Fathers who dedicate themselves to the work of conversion. Very Often captains cause anguish to Fathers and bring their work to nought because on account of the unjust ways with which they treat the Christians for sake of their own interest. They cause the loss of fruit and work of many years among the Christians.¹⁴⁶

Such oppression and mistreatment of the Paravas led to a growing friction between the two and often resulted in the Jesuits making complaints to the king about the oppression of the captains. Infact it was largely this oppression by the Portuguese captains that led the pattangattis of the Fishery coast to write to the King of Portugal (4,November, 1644) requesting him to place them under the Jesuits priests rather than the Portuguese captains.¹⁴⁷

However, it wasn't just the captains who were interested in pearls and in trade even the missionaries and the religious orders too were involved on it. Though the reason cited for this was said to be

¹⁴⁵ C.R.Boxer: *Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415-1825*, {London,} p 78

¹⁴⁶ Letter No.2 M.Nunes Barreto S.J to J.Miron S.J, Cochin, 20 January 1566 in V.Perinola S.J (ed.) *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka during the Portuguese Period, 1566-1619, Vol.II*

¹⁴⁷ Jayaseela: *ibid.*, p 288

inability of the Crown of Portugal to provide the funds and the alms and charitable bequests being not enough to meet the needs of the missions and that they participated in it solely for the sake of the missions¹⁴⁸. There are also instances of Jesuits trading in pearls purely for temporal gains and of attempts by the superiors to check it.

Also it seems necessary that instruction be given on this coast, our Fathers will be not allowed to purchase pearls for non-religious purposes, because the situation is getting larger and larger and is a source of scandal. This year has come one of our Fathers who was procurador of this coast and brought with him 10 or 12 thousand pardaus to invest in pearls for persons from outside the Order as well as for the House of the Novice. The said Father, when I talked to him about this matter justified himself that the Father Provincial and other Superiors knew about it. It was a reason for disturbance of the said Father that he has not succeeded to purchase more than 2000 or 3000 pardaus of pearls. It was necessary to

¹⁴⁸ C.R.Boxer: *Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415-1825*, {London,} p 77

remove him from his activities and make God that he settles his mind.¹⁴⁹

...So this takes place not only for them to dispose of resources that seems necessary... but also to make a personal profit. And what is worse that not only the Superiors and procurados are involved with the aim of complying with these necessary but also I believe that the same is performed by the prefectos of the churches with the purpose to provide them of resources and also I am informed that private persons with residence in church, christians recently converted are restoring to the same. What is compromising the spirit of poverty and cleanness of the religion. I don't bring forward examples of what has succeed on this matter to avoid being inaccurate but the Father procurador of the province has great necessity to be informed about regarding ours participation in a matter which is of sinful nature. ¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Fr.Francisco Durao S.J to Cl.Aquaviva S.J General, Fishery coast, December 6,1592 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.16(1592-1594)*

¹⁵⁰ Fr.Nuno Rodrigues S.J Superior to Cl.Aquaviva S.J General, Fishery coast, December 20,1592 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.16 (1592-1594)*

Lack of Missionaries

The lack of missionaries was perhaps one of the most important obstacles that the missionaries faced in course of their work on the coast. This problem was further confounded by the lack of desire of the missionaries to follow the footsteps of men like Xavier, Henrique and Nobili in learning the vernacular languages. Infact, these were the two important problems that were constantly harped about the Jesuits letters. And if this wasn't enough those did come to India were far more interested in staying in Goa rather than moving on to the Coromandel Coast.

Larger results have been reached in this coast in the development and improvement of the souls but our work would be even larger if we could count with more labourers (Fathers) The Provincial Father had promised us, but as those that were accepted from the king, some are missing, I do not know if it would be possible to succeed because in these areas those that are looking for our help in larger numbers and spread over larger areas and ask for many dedicated workers. Besides these, all these Christians would have to go to

confessions but this will be only possible if Father incharge of confession will be available...¹⁵¹

"Largely the reason for the cooling down of the wish to serve here in this coast, persons that are wishing to dissociate themselves from the order...This contributed for to reduce the wish of those that were thinking to come here and also contribute for the reduce in enthusiasm of those that are already serving here. It also seems to me that the dismissal of those that for many years had served the order create among the candidates to come here a fear to join us.¹⁵²"

In the last three or four years had come to this coast companions sent for the help of the Christians that are settled here, most of them lack the motivation of mortify and also lack the spirit and zeal of Christians and they have been sent back to Goa. And if only one among them was dismissed others have run the risk to incur in the same situation....

¹⁵¹ Fr.Diogo da Cunha S.J to Cl. Aquaviva S.J General, Tuticorin, December 29,1585 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.14(1585-1588)*

¹⁵² Fr.Francesco Durao S.J to Fr.Cl.Aquaviva S.J, General, Tuticorin, December 7,1586 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.14(1585-1588)*

All this is a result of being sent to these areas persons that lack an experience in mortifying themselves and also lack experience of the sort of labour that awaits them here. All of them are young men without experience. The superiors /elders have learnt the language of the land but the younger do not care. May God, that a change of mentality would take place among those that are already here and among those that would come in the future because it is clean that the cooling down of religious spirit that characterised those in the early days would carry with them and were helped by Our Lord...

Concerning learning of languages, the matter is losing interest if compare with what usually was the norm. Those that are still able to speak are nine, but this is not enough for the 30,000 souls that ask for help....¹⁵³

I have heard that in Goa there is a large number of religious that, due to their activities as preachers resist the possibility of moving out to other parts which do not adjust to their preference... but I must confess too You that it deeply hurts me to see towns, where there are

so many religious, so crowded with ours and how cold they show themselves to move to other areas where they are highly in demand as this is the case of one and many others, which I do not know but which I have heard about.¹⁵⁴

This problem persisted well in the 17th century and even the creation of the Malabar Province in 1601 could not solve the problem. Infact, the Provincial Albert Laerzio often complained about the step motherly treatment of Goa towards the new Province. As he remarked in 1604

What grieves me most is the little help, which the Province of Goa gives us. One would say - to judge from what has taken place last year - that they do their best to prevent us from Organising ourselves and from being independent, they do not want to give us any one...This province finds in Goa neither help nor remedy for its troubles. It is useless to write there. They do nothing for us.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Fr.Francesco Durao S.J Consulator to Fr.Cl.Aquaviva S.J, General, Tuticorin, November 29, 1593 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.16 (1592-1594)* Rom

¹⁵⁴ Fr.Francesco Durao S.J Consulator to Fr.Cl.Aquaviva S.J, General, Tuticorin, November 20, 1589 in Joseph Wicki, S.J., and John Gomes, S.J.,(ed.) : *Documenta Indica, Vol.15(1588-1592)*

¹⁵⁵ D.Feroli S.J: *The Jesuits in Malabar, Vol I, {1939,} p 271.*

In fact between 1593-1598 there were about 18 priests in the Fishery coast, the number somewhat increasing to 20 around 1600 of which, a few were attached to colleges of Tuticorin, Sao Thome and Pulicat while others resided in Mannar or cared for one of the Society's 22 parishes, six of which were in the interior (Madurai).¹⁵⁶

Problems from Within

All the impediments to the progress of the natives did not just originate from the native populations, there were several thorny problems among the missionaries and the religious orders that went a long way in hindering the cause of the faith. One such serious problem that came to threaten the missions was the relationships between the bishop and the Jesuits. This problem rose due to the difficulty of reconciling the rights of a bishop to direct the missions in his jurisdiction and the status of the missionaries as members of a religious order. This problem of jurisdiction placed the religious in an awkward situation where he

was torn between the bishop and his superior to whom he was bound to whom he was bound by a vow of obedience. As a result conflicts, destruction of peace etc roses whenever the bishop made his official visitation of the churches cared for by the Jesuits or any other religious orders.¹⁵⁷

In India such a situation rose between the Society of Jesus and the Bishop of Cochin Frey. Andre de Santa Maria (of the Order of the Recollects of St. Francis) over the question of the transfer of the See of the Seera of Angamale to Cranganore¹⁵⁸ and on the jurisdiction of the Fishery coast. While the situation of the transfer was rectified with the charge of Cochin put in the hands of the Archbishop of Cranganore¹⁵⁹ the problem of the jurisdiction of the Fishery coast was far more serious for it resulted in the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Fishery coast for a period of sixteen years (1605 -1621).

¹⁵⁶ Daurill Alden: *The making of an Enterprise- The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire and Beyond*, p 50-51.

¹⁵⁷ W.V.Bangert S.J : *The History of the Society of Jesus*, p 170-171

¹⁵⁸ This transfer, which was regarded as an infringement of his right by the Bishop of Cochin, was done on the request of the Bishop of Seera Fr. Fransisco Roz S.J who found Angamale unsafe on account of it being exposed to the invasion of the warring Rajas.

The reason for this conflict can be traced back to the time when the Provincial of Malabar Fr. Laerzio considering the problems been faced by the Paravas on the coast on account of the frequent fights amongst the Nayaks and the Vijaynagar kings decided to move the Parava community to the island of Tuticorin. This transfer was considered by the Bishop of Cochin as ' a cunning device to escape from his jurisdiction and he gave the order to the Fathers and the Paravas to leave the island and return to the mainland.' The Jesuits maintaining that they derived their jurisdiction from the king of Portugal and not from the Bishop refused to move. This resulted in the taking over of the Jesuits churches of the Fishery coast and the installation of two secular priests by the Bishop as Vicars at Punicale and Manapad.¹⁶⁰ This problem persisted till the 1630's and was only solved when the king of Portugal Phillip II ordered that the churches (which were then under the care of the secular priests and the Franciscans) be given back to the Jesuits.

¹⁵⁹ Ferroli: *ibid.*, p 333.

¹⁶⁰ Ferroli: *ibid.*, p 318-20.

I have come to know of the behaviour of Bishop of Cochin (D. Sebastiao de Sa Pedro¹⁶¹) and of his Chapter regarding my decision that the churches on the Fishery coast should be given back to the religious of the society and of the objective they have tried to excogitate in this matter. Therefore by this letter it seems good to order you as I actually do hereby order you that you see to it that my decision be fully completed with the decision I have taken in this matter and that in keeping with it, you issue an order that all churches be effectively returned to those religious.¹⁶²

Religious Orders Vs the Jesuits

Jealousies among the various religious orders were yet another problem that affected the policy of evangelisation. The success of the Society at so small a time at the expense of the other religious orders led to jealousies and often provided an occasion for friction.

As Fr. Laerzio wrote to Fr. Aquaviva in 1606

¹⁶¹ D. Andre de Santa Maria was succeeded by D. Sebastiao de Sa Pedro, the Bishop of Mylapore as the Bishop of Cochin in November 1616

¹⁶² Letter No.7 Phillip II to F. de Albuquerque, governor of India, Lisbon, 26, March 1620 in V.Perinola S.J (ed.) *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka during the Portuguese Period, (1619-), Vol.III.*

The friars of St. Francis are our greatest enemies. Nothing keeps them quite; on every occasion, both private and public, they endeavour to do us harm¹⁶³.

Not only this, friction among the religious orders also led to attempts by one religious orders to disallow another religious order to preach in the same area. Such a scenario was visible in Ceylon where the Franciscans created problems for the Jesuits.

.... They (Fathers of St.Francis) based themselves on a provision which they asserted to have received from Cardinal Alberto, stating that no other religious should go that island besides the Fathers of St.Francis...Since they were unable to prevail on the viceroy and on the Archbishop or on the bishop of Cochin who felt it as a great obligation to look after his flock, they turned against us. Tried to oblige us to leave Ceilao where we had already settled down and to prevent other Fathers from coming.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Ferroli: *ibid*, p 280

¹⁶⁴ Letter No.104, Fr. N.Roiz S.J to Fr. Cl. Aquaviva S.J General, Goa, 17 December 1602 in V.Perinola S.J (ed.) *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka during the Portuguese Period, (1566-1619)*, Vol.II

The Problem of Nationality

Though it was basically the lack of men for the mission fields that necessitated the Society and Portugal to send missionaries of diverse nationalities to Portuguese areas as long as it was within the purview of Padrado system the situation changed drastically when in 1575 Lisbon received the report of the Spanish missionaries urging the Phillip II to undertake the conquest of China which Lisbon considered to be within its sphere of influence. This resulted in a change of approach and henceforth only Italians who didn't had any overseas colonies and Germans whose homeland posed no threat to Portugal were sent and though a few Spanish personnel continued to sail, their number fell precipitously.¹⁶⁵

Initially the Portuguese did not had any such problem with the Italians as long as the Portuguese occupied the key administrative posts. But the creation of the Malabar Province which saw the

¹⁶⁵ Alden: *ibid*, p267.

Italian Albert Laerzio rise to the post of Provincial and the subsequent appointments of Italians to various other key posts bred resentment and frequent complaints were made to Rome that the Malabar Province be once more be subjected to Goa. As Fr. Palmeiro, the visitor wrote to his assistant N. Mascarenhas on 15 December 1619 followed by another on 19 December 1619

They will tell you that some Portuguese do not get on well with the Italians.... I thing which I often hear and which I see with my own eyes is a source of discord. It is generally believed that the Italians write to Rome to complain about the Portuguese for every little trifle...when Fr. General send his advice, they are even more convinced that it is so and they say, "if you want to live in peace, venerate the Italians". The matter is deplorable; but they are not cured; rather they get angry with all these advice from Rome... the common opinion is that the superiors dare not contradict Fr. Laerzio or the Italians because they take pains to make them heard...It is being said that the higher superiors will be

Italians. Have they not this year made an Italian (Fr.Rubino) rector of Colombo...¹⁶⁶

Quarrelling between the Italians and the Portuguese persisted well till the 1630's and even the viceroy began to move into the matter on plea of patriotism and uniformity. Even the crown was not unmindful of these concerns and it repeatedly acted to exclude foreigners from the Assistancy particularly those designated for supervisory positions. And in 1620 the Philippine regime issued an order directing that no foreign missionaries without its consent and that no royal licence would be issued unless superiors presented a list of the names and nationalities of those they planned to lead overseas. And finally the Conde De Linharres communicated this order that held that only Portuguese should have higher posts other wise the *Ordinaries*¹⁶⁷ would be withheld.

Seeing what the Conde de Vidiguera wrote to me by the mail of 1627 when he was the Viceroy of the State about informing the General of the Society of Jesus not to appoint to the office of superiors of that state religious who might not be natives of Spain. I gave

¹⁶⁶ Ferroli: *ibid*, p 379-380.

order that on my behalf they recommend to the General (and this has already being done) that he should always appoint Portuguese Religious as superiors in that state as this is suitable for good government, the peace and welfare of souls. I have given orders, calling the attention of those concerned that when for this kingdom they give information for choice of subjects who will go to that state in the ships, if some have to be left behind for want of place for all, it is always the foreigners who will have to remain behind.¹⁶⁸

Rhythm of European Aggression

By the beginning of the 17th century the intrusion of two rival non-Catholic nations -the Dutch and the English had shattered Portugal's long time hegemony of the eastern seas. Acting both independently and in concert with each other, they exploited Portugal's weakness at home and overseas to gain mastery over most of her lucrative empire. But these gains were not just at the

¹⁶⁷ They were the stipends that were paid to the Ecclesiastics.

¹⁶⁸ Letter No.73, Phillip II to Conde de Linhares, Lisbon 31 January 1629 in V.Perinola S.J (ed.) *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka during the Portuguese Period, (1619-), Vol.III.*

expenses of the Portuguese crown, they also deprived the Society of many of the spiritual outposts that Xavier and his successors had planted so confidently in the previous century. The failure of the Portuguese in checking the Dutch not only resulted in the taking over of their entire possessions in the Coromandel, Ceylon and Malabar it also resulted in the expulsion of the missionaries from those areas.

No catholic clergyman should be tolerated in Cochin or dependant lands without special permission of the Company. The Jesuits and all other European priests should for all time be expelled.

Infact the Dutch were particularly hostile to the Jesuits for while discussing the terms of the Luso Dutch treaty (July 1661) a Dutch general remarked to a Franciscan commissary that the Jesuits would never be permitted to return.

For they are the devil's blood. I would rather allow thousands Portuguese to stay near Cochin rather than a single Jesuit.¹⁶⁹

As a result of such persecutions, by 1666 there were on the Coromandel Coast only nine to ten Fathers who however could not stay in their presbyteries in the Parava villages but had to lodge in some huts or chapels far from the coast. The Dutch further not only placed one or two soldiers of theirs in every church on the coast to make sure those churches would not be used by the Jesuits but had by 1685 turned the churches of the coast into godowns and the presbyteries into houses for their factors.

Yet inspite of this the Dutch weren't able to stop the Jesuits from administering sacraments for every Sunday the Paravas would go out in groups from Tuticorin and other villages on the coast to places where the Fathers were residing in order to hear mass and perform their religious duties. The situation however somewhat improved towards the end of the century, the Dutch became more tolerant in their attitude towards the Catholic priests and the allowed them to live in the villages to carry on the spiritual ministrations as before.

¹⁶⁹ Alden, *ibid*, p 189-190.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it appears that the Society of Jesus, inspite of it being a relatively new entrant in the sphere was able to achieve far more success than any of its counterparts at a time and in an area where not only was the official Portuguese presence was limited but where the local elites represented by the Nayaks exercised a greater deal of political power and where there existed a complex society with diverse religious affiliation. The reasons for this success as much as can it be found in the spirit of Catholic reformation as well as in the aims of the Society, also owed a lot to the type of men it had in its ambit. Men like Xavier, Henriques and Nobili who through their personalities and courage had not only the desire to do something new but also to keep the flag of Christianity flying higher. Xavier's method of translating Christian doctrines and catechism into local language, a process later adopted by his fellow brothers not only made the administrating of the sacraments and ministrations possible, it also provided the

groundwork for the establishment of a seminary where in addition to the music, moral theology, language too came to be taught. This, apart from helping in the formation of the native clergy, also helped to take care of the persistent problem of the lack of men, a problem which was regularly highlighted in the Jesuits letters.

Furthermore, the efforts made to understand the religion, customs and traditions of the very people whom they went about to convert went a long way to make the faith a success among the people. Their understanding of the local customs apart from helping them to adopt certain customs though, bereft of any kind of superstitions within the tenets of the Christian faith not only provided them an opportunity to get closely integrated with people but it also went a long way in dispelling the view of "Christianity being a religion solely for the low castes and the Parangis". And in this regard the important role that was played by the Italian friar Roberto de Nobili can not be disregarded.

At the political and religious sphere, the Jesuits association with the local elite and the native population proved to be beneficial to

both the Estado as well to the Jesuits itself. For while their association with the local elites and the native Christian population ensured that the Estado's political and economic interests were taken care of, at the religious level the help that was rendered to them during the time of war and persecutions as well as in the frequent grant of money and land for construction of churches, seminaries etc not only made helped in the progress of the faith, but it also decreased their dependence on Goa.

And though, the missionaries in course of their work came to face various obstacles from both the local populace, the European companies as well as from their own fellow brothers - problems that came to threaten the very foundations of Christianity in Coromandel, credit must be given to them that they not only were they successfully in overcoming and withstanding those problem but they in course of time came to win the respect of those very people who had once created problems from them.

APPENDIX

A list of Jesuits Generals

1. Ignatius Loyala : April 19 1541-July 31 1556
2. Diego Laynez : July 2 1558- January 19 1565
3. St. Francis Borgia : July 2 1565 - October 1 1572
4. Everand Mercurian : April 23 1573 -August 1 1580
5. Claudio Aquaviva : February 19 1581 - January 13 1615
6. Muzio Vitelleschi : November 15 1615- February 9 1645
7. Vinzo Carafa : January 7 1646- June 8 1651
8. Francisco Piccolomini : December 21 1649 - June 17 1651
9. Lungi Gottifredi : January 21 1652- March 12 1652
10. Goswin Nickel : March 17 1652 - July 31 1659
11. Giovanni Paolo Oliva
 (as Vicar) : June 7 1661
 (as General) : July 31 1664 - November 26 1661

Malabar Provincials

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------|---|-----------|
| 1. | Albert Laerzio | : | 1602-1611 |
| 2. | Rodrigues Nunes | : | 1604-1605 |
| 3. | Pero Francis | : | 1612-1615 |
| 4. | Gasper Fernandes | : | 1615-1622 |
| 5. | Emmanuel Rodrigues | : | 1622-1623 |
| 6. | Gasper de Andrade | : | 1623-1628 |
| 7. | Albert Laerzio (ii) | : | 1628-1629 |
| 8. | Gasper Fernandes (ii) | : | 1629-1632 |
| 9. | Gabriel de Mattosi | : | 1632-1633 |
| 10. | Gasper Fernandes (iii) | : | 1633-1634 |
| 11. | Miguel de Faria | : | 1634-1637 |
| 12. | Emmanuel de Azevado | : | 1635-1640 |
| 13. | Pedro Paul Godinho | : | 1641-1643 |
| 14. | Manuel Barradas | : | 1644-1646 |
| 15. | Ignatius Bruno | : | 1646-1650 |
| 16. | Andre Lopez | : | 1650-1654 |
| 17. | Ignatius Bruno (ii) | : | 1654-1658 |

Malabar Superiors

1. Roberto de Nobili : 1609-1615
2. Antony Vico : 1616-1624
3. Roberto de Nobili (ii) : 1624-1632
4. Antony Vico (ii) : 1632-1638
5. Roberto de Nobili (iii) : 1639-1645
6. Emmanuel Martins : 1646-1648
7. Balthasar da Costa : 1649-1656
8. Emmanuel Martins (ii) : 1656-

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Coleridge, J.H - *The Life and Times of Saint Francis Xavier*, (London, 1886)

Dames, Mansel Longworth (ed.) - *The Book Of Duarte Barbosa : An Account of the Countries bordering the Indian Ocean and their inhabitants*, (Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1989)

Danvers, F.C - *Report to the Secretary of State for India in Council on the Public Sector relating to The East Indies*, (1892)

Foster, William - *Early Travels in India, 1583-1614*, (London, 1921)

Foster, William (ed.) - *Voyage of Nicolas Downton to East Indies 1614-1615*, (Hakluyt Society, London, 1929)

Foster, William - *Founding of Fort Saint George*, (1902)

Irvine, William (ed.) - *Nicolao Manucci's Storia Do Mogor, 1653-1708*, (New Delhi, 1981)

Love, H.D - *Vestiges of Old Madras 1640-1800*, (Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1996(Reprint))

Moreland, W.H - *Relations of Golconda in early 17th century*,(Hakluyt Society, London, 1931)

Nelson, J.H - *Madura Country: A Manuel*, (Asian Educational Services, New -Delhi, 1994)

Perinola, V, S.J (ed.)- *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka: The Portuguese Period*, Original Documents translated into English. Ceylon Historical Monograph Series, Volume XV.(Dehiwala, Sri Lanka: Tisara Prakasakayo Ltd.1991)

Volume I - 1505 -1565.
Volume II - 1565 -1619.
Volume III - 1620 - 1658.

Purchas, Samuel (ed.) - *Purchas His Pilgrims, Volume 10*, (Hakluyt Society, Glasgow, 1909)

Temple, R.C (trans) - *The Itinerary of Ludvico di Varthema of Bologna from 1501-1508*, Hakluyt Society, London, 1928)

Thruston, Edgar and Rangachari, K - *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, (Asian educational Service, 1993)

Wicki, Joseph, S.J and Gomes, John, S.J (ed.) - *Documenta Indica, Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, Institutium Historicum Societatis Iesu, Via dei Penitenziati, 20*, (Rome, 1977)

Volume 14 - 1585-1588
Volume 15 - 1588-1592
Volume 16 - 1592-1594
Volume 17 - 1595-1597
Volume 18 - 1595-1597

Secondary Sources:

Aiyar, R. Sathyanatha - *History of the Nayaks of Madura*, (Oxford University Press, 1924)

Alden, Daurill - *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, its Empire and Beyond, 1540-1750*, (Stanford University Press, 1996)

Amaladass, Anand S.J (ed.) - *Jesuit Presence in India* (Gujarat Sathiya Prakash, Anand, 1988)

Bangert, William S.J - *The History of the Society of Jesus*, (St.Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1989)

Bayly, Susan - *Saints, Goddess and Kings: The Muslims and Christians in South India, 1700-1900*, (Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 1992)

Boxer, C.R - *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415-1825*, (London, 1969)

Boxer, C.R - *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion, 1400-1700* (John Hopkins University Press, 1978)

Boxer, C.R - *Portuguese India in Mid Seventeenth Century* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1980)

Boxer, C.R - *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire, 1415-1825*, (Oxford Clarendon, New Delhi, 1963)

Chandler, J. S, S.J - *History of the Jesuit Mission in Madura: South India in 17th -18th centuries*, (Madras, 1909)

Correia- Afonso, John, S.J (ed.) - *Jesuits Letters in Indian History*, (Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay, 1955)

Correia- Afonso, John, S.J (ed.) - *Indo-Portuguese History: Sources and Problems*, (Bombay, 1981)

Correia- Afonso, John, S.J (ed.) - *The Jesuits in India, 1541-1773*, (Heras Institute of Indian Culture, Bombay, 1997)

Cronin, Vincent - *A Pearl to India: Life of Robert de Nobili*, (London, 1959)

D'Sa, M - *History of Catholic Church in India, Volume I-II*, (Bombay, 1910-1922)

DeSouza, Teotonio (ed.) - *Indo-Portuguese History: Old Issues, New Questions*, (New Delhi, 1985)

DeSouza, Teotonio (ed.) - *Discoveries, Missionary Expansion and Asian Cultures*, (Concept Publishing Company, 1994)

Dos Santos Alves, Jorge Manuel - *Portugal and its missions in 16th century Asia and Brazil*, (1997)

Ferrolli, D, S.J - *The Jesuits in Malabar, Volume I*, (1939)

Filliozat, Vasundhara (ed.) - *Vijaynagar*, (National book Trust, New Delhi, 2001)

Furber, Holden - *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient 1600-1800*, (Minnesota, 1976)

Heras, H. S.J - *Conversion Policy of the Jesuits in India*, (Bombay, 1933)

Jeyaseela, S.Stephen - *Coromandel Coast and its Hinterland: Economic, Social and Political System, 1500-1600*, (Manohar, 1997)

Jeyaseela, S. Stephen - *Portuguese in Tamil Coast: Historical Explorations in Commerce and Culture, 1507-1749*, (Navjyothi, Pondicherry, 1998)

Jeyaseela, S.Stephen (trans & ed.) - *Letters for the Portuguese Jesuits from the Tamil Countryside, 1660-1688*. Translated from original in Portuguese, (Institute of Indo European Studies, Pondicherry, 2001)

Lach, Donald - *Asia in the Making of Europe: A Century of Discovery, Book I, Part I*, (University of Chicago Press, 1965)

Latourette, K.S - *History of the Expansion Of Christianity*, (Michigan, 1971)

Mahalingam, T.V - *Administrative and Social Life under Vijaynagar*, Madras University Historical Series-XV (University of Madras, 1940)

Manickam, S - *Studies in Missionary History: Reflections on a Cultural Context* (Christian Literature Society, 1988)

Mathew, K.S - *Portuguese Trade with India in the 16th century*, (Manohar, New Delhi, 1983)

Mathew, K.S - *Mariners, Merchants and Oceans -Studies in Maritime History*, (Manohar, 1995)

Meersman, Fr. Achillies - *The Franciscans in Tamil Nad*, (Schoneck-Beckened, 1962)

Mundadan, M.A - *History of Christianity in India: From the beginning upto the middle of 16th century (till 1542), Volume I*, (Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1984)

Neill, Stephen S.J - *History of Christianity in India: From the Beginning to 1707*, (Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 1984)

Om Prakash- *European Commercial Expansion in Early Modern Asia – an expanding world*, (Varioum, vol.10, 1997.)

Om Prakash: *European Commercial Enterprise in pre-colonial India*, (New Cambridge History of India, II.5, Cambridge University Press, 1990.)

Om Prakash and Denis Lombard (ed.)- *Commerce and Culture in Bay of Bengal 1500-1800* (Manohar, 1999)

Rajamanickam, S, S.J - *The First Oriental Scholar*, (Tirunneveli, 1977)

Sastri, K.A.N - *History of South India from Prehistoric Times to fall of Vijaynagar*, (Oxford University Press, 4th edition, 1975)

Sastri, K.A.N and N.Venkataramanayya - *Further Sources of Vijaynagar History*, Madras University Historical Series-XVIII (University of Madras, 1946)

Sathianather, R - *Tamilham in the 17th Century*, (University of Madras, 1956)

Srinivaschari, C.S - *A History of Gingee and its Rulers*, (Annamalia University Historical Series II, Annamalai University, 1943)

Schurhammar George, S.J - *Francis Xavier- His Life, His Times, India (1541-1546)* Madras University Historical Series-XV (University of Madras, 1940) *Volume II*, (Jesuit Historical Society, Rome, 1977)

Stein, Burton - *Vijaynagar*, (Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Subrahmanyam, Sanjay - *The Political Economy of Commerce. Southern India, 1500-1650*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990)

Subrahmanyam, Sanjay - *Improvising Empire. Portuguese Trade and Settlements in the Bay of Bengal, 1500-1700*, (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1990)

Subrahmanyam, Sanjay - *Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700* (Longman)

Subrahmanyam, Sanjay - *Sinners and Saints: The Successors of Vasco da Gama*, (New Delhi, Oxford University Press 1998)

Subrahmanyam, Sanjay - *The Career and Legends of Vasco da Gama*, (Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 1997)

Thekkedath, J - *History of Christianity in India: From the middle of the Sixteenth Century to the end of the Seventeenth Century, 1542-1700, Volume II* (Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1982)

Thomas, P - *History of Christianity in India and Pakistan.*

Venkataramanayya, N - *Vijaynagar: Origin and Empire*, (University of Madras, 1933)

Articles:

Appadurai, Arjun - *Right and Left Castes in South India*, (IESHR, Volume 14, No.1, 1977)

DeSilva, C.R - *Portuguese and Pearl Fishery off South India and Sri Lanka*, (South Asia, new series, 1:1, 1978)

Fernando, S.V - *The Evangelisation of the Pearl Fishery Coast under the Portuguese Padrado*, (Indian Theological Society, Volume XV, 1978)

Fernando, S.V - *The Portuguese Patronage (Padrado) and the Evangelisation of the Pearl Fishery Coast* (Indian Church Historical Review, Volume 18, No.2, 1984)

Heras, H, S.J - *The Jesuit Influence in the Court of Vijaynagar*, (Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society, Volume 14, No.2, January 1924)

Heras, H, S.J - *Venkatapatiraya I and the Portuguese*, (Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society, Volume 14, No.4, July 1924)

Heras, H, S.J - *Rama Raya Vitthala - Viceroy of Southern India*, (Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society, Volume 15, No.2, January 1925)

Mundadan, M.A - *Portuguese Settlement in Mylapore*, (Indian Church Historical Review, Volume 3, 1969)

Rajamanickam,S, S.J - *An Account of the Progress of the Madurai Mission During the Year 1627 : A Letter of Roberto De Nobili*,(Indian Church Historical Review, Volume XI, No.2, 1977)

Rajamanickam,S, S.J - *De Nobili in the Madurai Jail: A Letter of Sebastian de Maya*,(Indian Church Historical Review, Volume 18, No.2, 1984)

Rangachari,V - *History of the Naiks of Madura*, (Indian Antiquary, Volume XLV, 1916)

Scammell, G.V - *European Exiles, Renegades and Outlaws and the Maritime Economy of Asia, c.1500-1700*, (Modern Asian Studies, Volume 26, No.4, 1992)

Scammell, G.V - *After da Gama: Europe and Asia since 1498*, (Modern Asian Studies, Volume 34, No.3, 2000)

Wicki, J, S.J - *Father Henrique Henriques, S.J, 1520-1600*, (Indian Ecclesiastical Studies, Volume 14, No.2, April 1965)

Wicki, J, S.J - *Father Henrique Henriques, S.J, 1520-1600*, (Indian Ecclesiastical Studies, Volume 15, No.1-2, January-April 1966)

Wicki, J, S.J - *Father Henrique Henriques, S.J, 1520-1600*, (Indian Ecclesiastical Studies, Volume 15, No.3, July 1966)