Chapter 1

Introduction

Trade provides humanity not just the place for the exchange of commodities but also ideas, cultures, religion and beliefs. People share their views and customs through these marketplaces which act as a platform for sharing rhythm of several communities. Most importantly journey of one commodity from one place to another helps the entire humanity in satisfying their needs. It ensures the availability of even a scarce commodity to anywhere in the world.

Indian maritime trade had grown as an important trading centre during the Roman period. Malabar was the prominent supplier of spices drugs, teakwood, and other exotic luxury items whereas Coromandel had established a name in textile production. Indian presence dominated both eastern and western water for exchanging commodities with the eastern and western world. In any period exports and imports were mainly guided by the requirements of the rulers. For example in ancient time during Mauryan and Guptan period, a large extent of supplies were dominated by spices, precious stones, sugar and several items of art and craft in exchange for silver and gold. Textile production of ancient India was far ahead in comparison to any other countries of the world. Similarly, in medieval time, a lot of luxury textiles and metal artefacts were imported from Islamic and near eastern countries as Sultans and their courts required such articles. Chinese silk and porcelain have a special place in Delhi sultan's kitchen and court. The excellence of India in trade and commerce was favoured by several factors like its skilled artisans and mercantile communities, knowledge of sea routes and several navigation aspects. Weekly fairs and mandi system also created a proper atmosphere for trade and commerce. Even long-term peace and prosperity gave impetus to interprovincial trade.

Trade patterns served a pivotal role in nomadic survival through the commercial and cultural exchange by bringing people together from one region to another, gave them permanent or temporary settlements. This encouraged intermarriages and political coalitions which further strengthened community cohesion and traditions. The exchange of techniques and skills between two different worlds took place and enriched the existing systems. It helped mutual
prosperity and assimilation of diverse and different culture. The trade that drives the world economy from one end to another is carried out through several sea and river ports which serve as bridges for commercial and cultural exchange. Several religions like Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism thrived in and around the coastal zone and made these ports as their base to spread their philosophy. Hence these ports had not just served as a place for economic activities but also a gateway for transmitting new philosophies. They were also a suitable centre for the intellectual development as these ports were exposed to the new concepts of citizenships, tolerance, and a political autonomy which further circulated to the interior. That is why most of the port due to their transnational and transcontinental network played a globalizing role in the history.

For any civilization, trade is vital to its success. It can be concluded through early civilizations, that rivers became the backbone for their rise and development. The Nile, Tigris, the Euphrates, the Indus, and the Yellow River had supported the extensive trade which kept the population of the world running. Several road and river routes were used to carry goods from one centre to another centre. Important seaports for the maritime trade also connected with these roads and rivers. Both western and eastern coastal ports were linked with the inland routes which facilitated an extensive trade with China, Ceylon, Java and Sumatra through its Eastern Sea ports and trade with the western world especially with Red Sea, Persian Gulf and East African coast through the Western Sea ports. Merchants participated in the Indian Ocean trade, and for the sake of their convenience, they segmented Asian water into three major trade zones namely Arabian Sea, South China Sea, and the Bay of Bengal.

Indian trade in early medieval time was mainly confined to trade with the Roman world. Some essential characteristics of trade at that time was the seasonal patterns which overall governed the trading exercise determined through monsoon winds and commodities exported and imported to the Indian subcontinent. Coromandel Coast developed as a centre of textile production and created huge demand due to its specific quality in Western and Eastern World whereas, Malabar Coast remained the main destination for the Spices, drugs, teakwood and precious stones that were exported across the Arabian Sea. Several foreign travellers who visited India in medieval times gave extensive accounts of prevailing domestic trade. Ibn Batuta had mentioned in his travel account that Delhi was a major trade Centre. Well-
maintained roads that connected different part of the country supported the trade. Though there was always the threat of theft and robbery of goods while transporting goods from one region to another that did not discourage movement of goods. Traders added numbers of armed groups for their safety and protection. According to Barbosa’s account, the road facilitated the movement of goods and their exchange between different parts of the country. Road routes connected not just the neighbouring places but also far-flung regions. Trade relation between Gujarat and Malwa flourished due to well-established road routes supported with all the convenience of commuting. Some of the important trade centres of Gujarat and Maharashtra linked itself with excellent inland routes that helped in uniting northern and southern half of the country. Bullock cards carried the goods. Several travellers have mentioned in their account about trade between Vijayanagara and Bhatkal was carried through 5000 to 6000 bulls. Engagement of such large numbers of bulls indicates heavy traffic between these two places only for carrying goods.

The trade by river route also got a boost during those times. Merchants who owned their boats handled businesses. Multanis and Punjabis from the north, Bhats from Gujarat and Rajasthan are some of the communities that captured the control of the trade in their regions. Indus and Ganges River was one the key routes for boats to ply on. Apart from traders belonging to India, Khorasanis from Central Asia also had some interest in the river route trade.

The officials and members of the government too started taking an interest in the river trade. It had its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage was that internal trade blossomed because of their involvement as they had strict rules and process in place. They had their manufacturing centres and employed local artists thereby generating employment avenues for their people. The 14th century Sultan, Alauddin Khilji had a very strict supervision of the marketplaces. Any shopkeeper violating rules received severe punishment. However, the disadvantage came with discrimination towards traders from the government officials. The traders suffered losses because of forcible selling products at lower prices. The government had their price list fixed that was not amenable to the traders because of fewer returns.

Amongst the Europeans, Portuguese was the first country who landed on the western shore first and last to leave the same. Portuguese navigators put their firm foot on the West coast of
India for Christian and spices which later shifted more towards political domination and that finally culminated in the opening of the very first chapter of Colonialism in India. Later control over the Indian Ocean can be perceived its origin from the letter obtained from the Vatican mentioning ‘Lord over conquests, navigation, and trade with Ethiopia, Persia, Arabia, and India’ (Raychaudhuri 1982: 382). By this, they not only got the domination over the Indian Ocean but also started waging war against the enemies of the holy faith. They initially targeted Muslim merchants like Moors who resided in Calicut for trading. Portuguese first informed to the king of Calicut in the name of their duty that they will capture the ship and Moors if they would encounter them in the Sea. Later they formulated their trade design in such a way so that they could control the trade predominantly spice trade from the Red Sea to Indian West coast and achieve this goal they focussed towards attaining naval superiority over Asian Ships. First, they targeted few key ports as strategic bases for naval control. They appointed their men and further built their fort to guard the sea and port as well. The very foundation of Portuguese maritime empire reached its zenith in the Asian water when they got the full control of Goa in Indian soil in 1510 and a year later Malacca in the Far East and finally conquest of Ormuz in 1515 in the Persian Gulf. These conquests virtually made Portuguese a giant sea power and due to their commercial supremacy, their maritime empire got named as Estado da Inda. The nature of changes that took place due to coming of Europeans to this particular region deserves a great deal of attention.

Earlier long distance trade in Asian waters had several implications. First, it was controlled by the merchants purely for which they used to pay a tax for their security and protection which was collected as revenue by the indigenous rulers and political authorities. Second, evolution of several exchange centres with well-equipped market mechanism and commercial links that revolved round the traditional modes of operations under the banner of protection and control. The historians termed protection at an inter-regional level as “redistributive enterprises” where ruler exercised their control over the movement of goods which passed through their territories (Raychaudhuri 1982: 384). But this was limited only to the land routes. Portuguese relatively coined a new word “Cartaz” with a new element within it, and that was the introduction of power into to the sea. They first time tried to introduce control into the vast open sea, and again they justified this practice on the ground of Papal decree
which gave quasi-political jurisdiction to them over the Asian waters. The Cartaz system demanded from every Indian ship to buy a pass to enter into the vast open sea. Failing to which led to the confiscation and seizure of its commodities and ship as well. To avoid such plunders Asian merchants and rulers opted for the safe and secured passes.

Indian Ocean trade from 15th Century onward had involved Portuguese and later Dutch, French and English. But before their arrival, it was Arabs and Persian who dominated the trade. One important reason for the development of trade was the huge demand for Persian and Arabian horses to the Indian rulers which were imported to the ports of western India. Indian bred horses were of very poor quality. Hence rulers of Vijayanagara Empire and Bahmani sultans competed for getting horses of the finest quality for their armies. According to an inscription found in Tanjavur of Cola Kulottunga I, who reigned from 1070 – 1122 A.D. states “possessed excellent horses resembling waves of the sea” (S.I.I. Vol II, No. 58. 229 – 236, lines 39 to 42). Though India’s exports far exceeded her imports both in the number of items as well as in volume.

Apart from horses, dry fruits and precious stones from Kabul and Arabia were considered to be the chief articles of import. The other items of import were Europe’s glassware, highest quality of textiles from West of Asia, for example, Satin, raw silk and porcelain from China. The wealthy and famous people along with the ones in higher places in the Government had a keen liking towards foreign products that included wines, dry fruits, precious stones, corals, scented oils, perfumes and velvets.

The items of export also carried prime importance. During the Sultanate period, silks, gold-embroidered cloth caps, exquisitely designed clay pots and pans, guns, knives and scissors were part of export items. Bengal and Cambay sent these items to Syria, Arabia and Persia. The other more important items like indigo, oils, ivory sandalwood, sugar, spices, diamonds and other precious gems and coconut were also part of the export. Arabian traders sent the Indian products through the Arabian Sea and Mediterranean Sea ports. Apart from the places mentioned above, Malaya, China, East Africa and the Far East were also some of the export centres from India. Indian silk was considered of a better quality than the ones in China.
The route of the trade was overland with Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Persia. The route passed through Kashmir, Quetta, and the Khyber Pass. The land route that connected Iraq and Bukhara also supported the trade. Local and foreign merchants were mainly involved in foreign trade. One of the major exporting centre was Limbodar in Gujarat. European travellers managed to settle in coastal regions so that they could participate in the export trade. The scale of India's foreign trade can be observed by the fact that Khambat port had an approximately 3000 ships visiting every year. The Calicut, Khambat and Mangalore had seen a lot of settlements from traders of Malabar, Gujarat and foreign traders. Imported horses from Arabia were sent to Southern kingdoms from the Bhatkal port. Calicut, Cochin, Quilon and Goa played a major role in bringing through imports of bronze, iron, wax and gold.

The port of Sonargaon served as the principal centre for facilitating the trade with China and Southeast Asia. One place that stood at its prominence was Vijayanagar. It was the richest state during the 15th and 16th Centuries. Such was its richness that the foreigners remained stunned with the possession of wealth irrespective of their societal status. The wealth included an enormous amount of gold, diamonds and other material wealth. Domingo Paes described the citizens as being heavily adorned. Treasury of the Vijayanagar Empire had its chambers filled with gold, as noted by Abdur Razzaq, the Khursani ambassador to the court of Vijayanagar.

Vijayanagar enjoyed immense maritime trade with several countries such as Persia, Arabia, Burma, China, the Malayan Archipelago and numerous islands in the India Ocean. The scale at which the trade was conducted could be concluded from the fact that there were 300 ports to help the transfer of goods. Both imports and exports tremendously benefited because of such an infrastructure in place. The shipbuilding thrived in the coastal towns.

In the other parts of the country, merchant community was considered an affluent lot. The Gujarat and Marwari traders controlled North India trade and were extremely well-off. They spent an enormous amount of money on construction of temples. The Multanis and Khursanis controlled the trade with Central and West Asia. Most of them settled in Delhi leading luxurious lives. Cambay too sheltered affluent merchant community.
The long chain of oceanic trade which not only brought the eastern and western world together but also provided prosperity and prominence to some of the small ports of coastal Karnataka. Their strategic location acted as natural complements and had helped in gaining a strong place in the seaborne commerce. These ports were not just mere a centre of exchange for commodities but also for the exchange of culture and customs. It provided the ground for interaction with the surrounding areas for the extraction of surplus and also with the foreign traders for the transaction of this surplus. Maritime history no doubt has received greater importance but again that too restricted to specific areas like important ports of Malabar and Gujrat in the West and few ports of Bengal in the East. Regional studies, especially to Canara coast are still in their starting stage. It is also true that sources relating to these specific areas are not sufficient, even though some of the scholars have worked on the available information of South Indian history. Aspects of trade and existing system of exchange have studied in detail by which they derived through vast ranging numerous inscriptions. The dynamic interaction between traders, producers and local communities had already attracted the attention and focus of the modern researchers. Geographical factors provide important reasons which were responsible for the growth of a port city, especially their location which play a pivotal role, is not temporary or transitory and not even eternal. Natural factors certainly hold great significance for such studies, but other dynamics and reasons cannot be ruled out. To my knowledge, it is worthy to mention that no research has been done so far in these two places of Coastal Karnataka where history needs to be recollected to answer and justify few questions of the past. It is evident that sources should be analysed from the multi-dimensional perspective of the role of various trading groups, attitudes of rulers and several local authorities towards trading activities. It will be interesting to examine the process that ultimately changed the scenario in the later period.

1.1 Key Concepts

**Maritime History:** Study of sea-based activities that broadly encompasses the study of shipping, shipbuilding, ship design and navigation. It also includes various sciences like oceanography, cartography and hydrography. As a subject it focuses on Sea exploration, sea linked to trade and economy along with several communities associated with it.
**Coastal Trade:** Exchange of commodities or goods that happen from port of one country to the port of another located along the coast. Country's law governs the mode of transportation being water (through ships) and it varies in each country.

**Littoral Societies:** communities located close to seashores mostly survive on maritime trading activities such as fishing and agriculture. These communities mainly depend on land-based economic forces, but their social and religious and cultural life revolves around the sea and its coast.

**Capitalism:** An economic system of production of commodities. Control of the trade in this system is under the private ownership mainly for the profit. The state has no control over such system. It is derived from the word capital which is evolved from a Latin word ‘Capitale’ means head. It emerged in the 12th to 13th centuries to refer to funds, stock, merchandise, money. It is only by 1283; it was used in the sense of the capital assets of a trading firm which later started interchanging with some other words — wealth, money, funds, goods, assets, property, and so on (Braudel1979:232)

**Hinterland:** A region lying away from the coast or banks of the river. Often they, unlike urban centres or towns, are less developed or rural part of a country. These inland areas are important and plays a significant role in supplying goods to port, especially trade goods.

**Coromandel:** It is South East coast of the Indian subcontinent that includes regions between the Eastern Ghats and Bay of Bengal. The term Coromandel usually referred by the travellers to the coast of present-day Tamil and Telugu countries. It does not have well-defined limits and boundaries, but it is believed that it extends from as far as Krishna River or even to the coast of Orissa to the southernmost tip of the Indian subcontinent.

**Malabar:** Region falling in the western part of Indian Peninsula between mountain and the Arabian Sea. Its long and narrow coastline is also the part of Western Ghats covers the most fertile land suitable for the plantation of spices and tea.

**Cartazes:** A shipping license issued by Portuguese officials of ‘Estado da India’ during the sixteenth century to the Indian traders to enter into the sea. This sea passes had to be taken by
those ships engaged in the trading of commodities. It was introduced with the intention of complete control over the Oceanic trade.

1.2 Objective of this research

- To trace various dimensions of India’s maritime trade history
- Find out major changes that happened in socio-politico and economic sphere with the arrival of Portuguese
- Examine the role of Indian merchants in Trans-Asian trading system
- To establish a relationship between different economic patterns and geographical location for the rise and growth of different port cities.

1.3 Work done and historiography of the field

Till now several works have been done on maritime history. Some have focused only on the political aspects that can be categorized under colonial history where the study was around the Portuguese territorial gains and hegemonic rule. The other most researched area is in the religious sphere where the eastward spread of Christianity and associated influences on the cultural life of people were taken up. Yet another area of research was the economic history with special impetus on a wider range of Commodities and specific goods and also their movement in the Indian Ocean. Cultural Diaspora has also been covered under sociological survey. Interestingly, this study neither purely categorized under any of the demarcated fields nor alienated from it. This research will take each and every trend of the Portuguese maritime

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1 "Maritime India: Trade, Religion and Polity in the Indian Ocean", by Pius Malekandathil have discussed various social processes linked with the settlements of foreign merchant groups in India; repercussions of the Christian expansion and its impact on the traditional Muslim merchants of South India.

2 "Indian Merchants and the Trade in Indian Ocean" by Asin Das Gupta; "Maritime Trade of India" by Simon Digby; "Non Agricultural Production and Urban Economy" by Irfan Habib; "European Trade with India" by K.N.Chaudhuri have done the detailed study of maritime trade and commerce in "Cambridge Economic History of India, C-1200 – C-1750", Vol I, ed. By Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib.

3 K. N. Chaudhuri in "Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750"; points out South Asian networks blossomed into worldwide diasporas and also questions the kind of circulation which took place in these network can be seen as an early form of ‘transnationalism’.
history, their rise and development which has connection and link to the two ports of Indian Coastal region which flourished during or before the coming of the Portuguese to India and subsequently disintegrated over a period of time.

Several researchers worked either on colonial history or regional history. However, this study is inclusive of both the worlds. To address these two dimensions, it requires historical evidence to establish the kind of relation between these two and bringing them under one umbrella. The main problem which is continuously coming to the forefront is that as this study is broadly divided into two heads. One is ‘Macro history’ that is Portuguese maritime trade history, for this enough of materials and sources are available in the form of several travellers’ accounts and official records and, therefore, having difficulties in zeroing in on the material that is most relevant. The other is ‘Micro History’ which is a focused study on two port cities and for that there is not enough material available especially to this particular context. So method for acquiring and accessing research material will solely depend on its availability. First, of course, this will be a descriptive study.

The second part of the study is based on the causal analysis, hence throughout it requires to be skeptical while correlating the cause and its impact. As paucity of enough material will compel to look into the other avenues for the information such as geographical and environmental factors of the ports. This will include important rivers and the major characteristics of the soils and its productivity that may demand exploratory and survey research as one of the tools for this research. For the topography, a study has to rely on the contour map, and the old land revenue maps apart from few references about the places under study have been given by the travellers in their accounts and also in the Imperial Gazetteers, District Manuals and other official records. To examine the questions concerning causation – why disintegration happened to the ports of Honnavar and Basrur and the process of how the events unfolded which led to the destiny of these two. To a greater extent I need to consider and rely on oral history, and for this, I will consider folklore, popular beliefs, traditions, songs, music, tales, proverbs. As these elements may fit in these two village societies to reconstruct history since nothing has changed much here neither in terms of local gods, customs, way of life nor any changes in the architectural designs of the houses and streets. Most importantly even the names of the places and streets are still the same. Therefore, in this close setup where
inhabitants consciously and wilfully preserved the history of their ancestors, scope for the survey as a tool for research carries great importance here. Moreover, in spite of mythical elements, oral history occupies significant place here and also to support this we have ample of evidence in the form of inscriptions, most of them as grants given to the temples by local authorities. Some of them are under the temple possession, and many of them are lying like that in the village giving Basrur a look at the whole archive in itself.

Until recently maritime history has touched each and every corner of economic history. Many types of research on trade and traders have already been conducted in large number especially in the Indian Ocean and Indian Maritime history. C. R. Boxer in his work “The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415 – 1825” has given a general survey of Portuguese empire and their Eastward expansion. The fullest account of Portuguese trade in India has been covered by F. C. Danvers and M. N. Pearson in their works “The Portuguese in India Vol I and II” and “New Cambridge History of India: The Portuguese in India, Vol I”, respectively. A.R. Disney’s valuable monograph “Twilight of the Pepper Empire – Portuguese trade in South West Asia in early 17th Century” has given good details on the pepper trade. It gives extensive details of Portuguese factory system and also provides historical prospectives of political and economic development in South Canara. K. S. Mathew has also done research on Malabar covering role played by European, Muslim and local merchants. Moreover, most the studies have been conducted in Malabar region especially Calicut and Cochin whereas Ports of Basrur and Honnavar, these two were heading the supply chain of Portuguese trade, lost its position totally over a period of time and consequently did not receive required recognition and attention by researchers.

Sanjay Subramanyam’s “Money and Market in India 1100 – 1700” analyses various economic aspects like the role of capitalism and political economy of early India. This work deals with markets and its structure, price and weight measures along with various prospectives of global trade that are determined by examining European demands for the Asian goods. This work

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4 A.R. Disney, “Twilight of the Pepper Empire – Portuguese trade in South West Asia in early 17th Century”, (providing information on production and processing of pepper in India and also comprehensive review of this very important spice crops, covering origin, history, geographical distribution, production, economy and their uses). Page – 39 – 43
provides information on merchants communities and their different categories in organizing trade in the Indian subcontinent. His research article “The Portuguese, The Port of Basrur and Rice Trade, 1600 – 50” has provided a comprehensive overview of Portuguese trade history in Indian soil and also the importance of Basrur as main rice and pepper supplier to Portuguese. It also tries to establish a relationship between the trading nexus of merchant communities and long distance trade. Major focus area of his research work moves around agrarian settings and the concept of forced commercialisation with regard to rice and pepper. He also highlights the local authorities Saiva Brahmins and taxation policies with regards to the temple and the group who controlled and channelized the trade (Subramanyam1994:28–29). However, the whole article was mainly written from the point of view of trade and commerce, and that is why no further attempt has been made by the author to trace out the later history of the place.

Dr. K.G. Vasanth Madhava points out environmental factor in “Basrur Port: Soil Erosion, Ship Wreck and Dislocation (AD 1600 – 1750)” as a reason for the dissolution of Basrur port. His studies mainly based on inscriptions and travelogues and concluded that drying up of river Varahi and soil erosion due to frequent flood affected rice cultivation and their trade which finally pushed port to closure (Madhava: 107). Though this work is fully authenticated and supported by the inscriptive studies, but unfavourable political situations and high taxation duties cannot be fully ruled out which gives a scope for further investigation. Shifting of headquarter to Mangalore too might have affected the urban nature of the place.

M. N. Pearson’s “Coastal Western India: Studies from the Portuguese Records”, has been written purely from the economic point of view and covered only those aspects which had relevance to trade and commerce. Two chapters of his work ‘Corruption and Corsairs in 16th C Western India’ (Pearson2004:18) and ‘The port city of Goa: policy and practice in the 16th C’ are important in understanding how Portuguese policies affected the local traders and foreign merchants which sometimes resulted in arm resistance (Pearson2004:67).

Unquestionably, such unfavourable climate might have affected the supply chain network which can help to assess the other repercussions associated with it. So coercive measures which Portuguese adopted in later years to control the maritime trade, actually disturbed the communities associated with it by raising the tax amount and also by charging revenue from
tax-free lands of temple property. Such measures upset the traders and merchants who then started looking alternatives and most often relocating remained the only way to escape the situation. In the same line, we can visualize the history of ports under study.

K. S. Mathew edited the proceedings of the international seminar, “Maritime Malabar and The Europeans 1500-1962”, it tries to shed light on several aspects of European contact with maritime Malabar. Malabar was, in fact, the entry point of almost all Europeans to India since the opening of the direct trade route through the passage via Cape of Good Hope. A few Articles throw light on various techniques of navigation whereas some articles explain the very fact that how European merchant who first came to Indian coast as mere merchants but in due course of time became the colonial master of India. Resistance and grievances of the local people are also discussed in length along with the mercantilist policies of the Portuguese in the Malabar region which were not acceptable to the Indian merchants and rulers. This investigation created a ground for the further exploration in this direction.

P. Gururaja Bhatt’s classic work “Studies on Tuluva History and Culture” gives useful details of early as well as medieval history of the South Canara. He writes not just about socio-cultural aspects but also gives valuable information about economic activities. This study emphasizes various trade guilds and traders of this region. This work is mainly based on inscriptive studies that put lights on the regional economy agrarian system and agrarian production that helps greatly in reconstructing the economic history of the pre-colonial period. Though his study puts light on the trading community, existing local trading corporations along with land structure, its tenure and various land revenue aspects but it does not much information on foreign trade, the urban trade centres, and port towns.

B. S. Shastry has done already a systematic analysis of Portuguese presence in Canara since beginning with their political influence in this region in his dedicated work “Goa – Canara Portuguese Relations 1498-1763”. He narrates development in a very interesting story telling format and has taken up all the activities of Portuguese, their role in spreading Christianity into this region (Shastry2000:254-260), trading patterns (Shastry2000:267-270) and also

5An article “Maritime Malabar and a Mercantile State: Polity and State Formation in Malabar under the Portuguese 1498-1663” by Pius Malekandathil, under Section I in K. S. Mathew edited the proceedings of the international seminar, “Maritime Malabar and The Europeans 1500-1962”
relation with local rulers and subsequent effects (Shastry 2000: 111, 150, 180, 207). However, the issues like India’s diversified economy and climatic variations which enabled her to create a wide spectrum of goods for export that had been exploited with great skills by the local merchants of the coastal region has not received the needed attention. His doctoral work “The Portuguese in Kanara 1498-1763” is useful from political points of view and also gives insight to examine the dynamics of Portuguese trade. He analyses the political relations between the Keladi Nayakas and Portuguese which was greatly influenced by the commercial interest of Portuguese in the coastal region. The systematic analysis and survey of Asian commodities are very elaborately captured in his another work “Studies in Indo-Portuguese History”. This work provides details of economic exchanges which clearly indicates its diversity and complexities. The group which engaged itself in this intense economic activities were the merchants from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds. They operated as private individuals with little state support, though enjoyed a high degree of freedom. However, the involvement of foreign traders in intra-Asian trade witnessed a kind of transition in terms of commodities of trade as well as the balance of trade. The Indian traders, however, resented this intrusion into what was once their near monopoly. Indeed there must be an attempt at united action against the foreigners like appealing to the local rulers to forbid the foreigners from breaking into the trade of their subjects. This economic conflict cannot diminish the coastal cities Basrur and Honnavar which could have cost its significance from being one the most flourishing centre for overseas trade. Moreover, no clear reason as such has been given behind the sudden loss of glory of these prominent ports. Approach as a whole has been positive and very stimulating for future research.

1.4 Scope and Significance of the Research
On this topic, the study draws the attention of some possibilities to explore the written and unwritten history which penetrates deeper into the lives of trading communities who were playing a vital role in conducting commerce in the coastal Canara region both interregional as well as overseas, in a variety of commodities. The arrival of Portuguese in this coastal zone not only marked a transition in the very dimensions of the trading system but also in the balance of trade. The Portuguese trade also sought to establish some trade centres and ports both small and large. Therefore, a need for the focused study holds importance to trace the history of two such important port cities of the period about this research and the reason for
their rise and sudden fall. The research requires a thorough study of all the aspects of trade and commerce, socio – politico and religious developments and most importantly a methodical study of local authorities and their governing economic policies which vastly or even slightly affected the ports of Honnavar and Basrur.

The present study is an attempt to show how maritime trade of Indian Ocean affected the lives of western coastal ports mainly Honnavar and Basrur, building up their position and role of these port cities in extracting the surplus by various networks and channels. The study also tries to look into the surprise disintegration of these ports which had been the urban base and played leading role in organizing the maritime trade of India as well as very significant in building up the vast sea-borne empire of the Portuguese.

The period chosen for research holds greater importance because of the end of the 15th century particularly the last decade of the 15th century saw the process of integration of the colonial presence and power in India which later brought affluence to the concerned countries. The rise of maritime trade can be visualized on the same line where geographical discoveries brought integration of different parts of the world and consequently it brought affluence, which is the generation of wealth that accumulated and concentrated in few hands. This accumulation of wealth gave birth to the domination which reflected clearly in the Portuguese trade design in India and later by other European powers. Moreover, this period also saw the transition from the feudal mode of production to the capitalist mode of production. This period study of a particular area will help us to understand many unanswered questions which can be employed for testing contemporary developments or plan for future developments. That means a proper analysis of this period and place will certainly help to a great extent in correlating it with many more aspects of present day situations. Thus the proposed research on this particular period which was dominated by vigorous trading activities both inland and overland has greater importance and significance even in the understanding of the contemporary western coastal economic. This study will look into various aspects of trade conditions and its impact on the future of Indian economy with the intention to bring out its relevance to present and future global trading scenario.

Intensive historical investigation of maritime trade in Indian coastal region together with the study of small town and port cities gives an opportunity to take radically two different
approaches of history – Micro and Macro history. Looking into multiple dimensions of the long march of trade and commerce in the Indian Ocean and then narrowing down the investigation from broader level to smaller. This slow shift in approach from wider to concentrate upon an in-depth study of a particular region which again envisages a scope for ‘Total History’.

There are some important areas of ambiguity on which the history have still to reflect and develop their methodology and presuppositions. Most pressing amongst these are an interaction between the political institutions and economic changes on the one hand and the general approaches to this along with consciousness, mentalities against the new patterns of economy and culture. In other words, a systematic investigation of the interaction between the group of merchants who controlled the maritime trade for centuries, the way they reacted to the new form of culture to protect their identity. An extensive study is required to understand the wide spectrum of trade channels, operated in an extended coastal zone of Indian subcontinent which includes not only interregional traffics but also encompasses various zones of Asian trading system and linking up of different routes.

1.5 Research Questions

- Why Ports of Honnavar and Basrur, once the most flourishing centres of overseas trade suddenly lost its importance from the maritime trading system?

- What are the consequences of Portuguese trading policies when introduced to India’s maritime trading system?

- How various rulers of port cities reacted towards the Portuguese trade design? Whether the pro-Portuguese policies of Indian rulers benefitted them in the long run or led them to total disintegration if resisted?

1.6 Limitations

A major limitation in the study of coastal Canara region especially to maritime activities is the paucity of contemporary sources. Epigraphia of Carnatica and court chronicles are mainly focussed towards the political affairs and do not produce much information on trade and economy. It is only the foreign travellers who supply the information on the desired area, but that too is filled with personal biased views.
From the Economic point of view, Portuguese materials are too limited and chances of differing perceptions while interpreting the subject is quite apparent.

1.7 Hypothesis
This research will facilitate in establishing reason behind the loss of glory of two prominent port cities Honnavar and Basur

- The traders might have failed to organize themselves on global lines and their resistance towards Portuguese monopoly that led them to total disintegration.

- Shifting of trade and the trading centre might be a result of environmental and natural compulsion or may be economic policies of the rulers or political climate was solely responsible for breaking down of established and well-organized trading ports including Honnavar and Basur.

1.8 Methodology
This study being interdisciplinary, data for this study is drawn to be investigated from the multi directions. For the systematic analysis of the social phenomenon, a wide range of social indicators and economic patterns are required. Hence, a descriptive study is central to this research as validity and authenticity of the evidence is not possible without rigorous examination of sources from all directions and that too, have to support through different dimensions. In consideration of the research questions, it required a deep scanning of History, Economics, Sociology, Geography and Anthropology pertaining to maritime activity in the coastal region of Karnataka. Hence methodology employed in this study is primarily analytical and descriptive. Qualitative research can answer the empirical questions by analysing available facts in new light and perception. Therefore, a good description is fundamental to this research. Basic data for the study have been collected from the Archives and Libraries of Delhi, Bangalore, Mangalore and Udupi. There are a whole series of original sources under following categories:

- Personal Documents-including letters, diaries
- Travelogues
- Inscriptions
• Old traveller’s Maps  
• Photographs  
• Recorded interviews, questionnaires, etc. 

Some of the sources fall under non-narrative categories. Among them, some are derived not from new sources rather through a fresh approach to using familiar sources. Of course, a humanistic perspective is required to use them as a source for the study. These are:
• Paintings  
• Folklore  
• Oral history 

Secondary sources includes studies both in periodicals and other publications like:

• Books  
• Journals  
• Internet Sources  
• Dissertations

1.9 Review of Literature

The select bibliography contains two parts. The first part gives a list of primary sources while second part gives details of secondary sources that also includes other published articles and papers. It is essential to note that despite the availability of several indigenous records and Persian records, the very foundation of this study is based on the European sources. Most of the information for the study is supplied by travellers who visited Canara region during Vijayanagara times and also the accounts of a visitor who came along with the colonial powers. Going away from the local records and inclining more towards European sources has nothing to do with authenticity and validity of the sources rather it is mainly because most of the records of these ports cities during 15th to 17th century are European and even later during British time all British records provide continuity of the information. Hence it is inevitable to ignore these records in port studies.

Study of Original /Primary sources:

• Annual Report of Indian Epigraph facilitated in highlighting various political and cultural and socio-economical and other aspects like dynasty and king’s name in
particular through temple grants and donations. References of various disputes and disagreement between different communities and groups are also available. South Indian Inscriptions especially VII carries vital information of the region under study.

- Annual Reports of South Indian Epigraphy (ARSIE), most of the inscriptions are still under the temples possessions.

- South Canara District Manual is the valuable source of the economic aspect of the Karnataka region. Land ownership and information relating to agriculture, agricultural classes are available here. It also includes classification of land and its produce, details of donors and grants.

- “Epigraphia Carnatica” records political, religious and commercial compacts, deeds of sale of land and labour or which deals with matters of revenue, law and temple administration. Much more pertain to the construction or renovation of temples and their adjuncts and annexes and the excavation and construction of and renovation of tanks, wells and lakes. It provides a great deal of information about the prevailing law and practices of the region under study.

- Archivo Portuguese Oriental (Portuguese Oriental Archive), this is compiled by J.H. da Cunha, Revara, National Press Nova Goa (Panaji) – 10 vols (1857-1876). It is a compilation of letters from the kings of Portugal to the Municipality of Goa from 1529 – 1611 covers mostly political, diplomatic and military history of the Portuguese.

- A Journey from Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar by Francis Buchanan, who was appointed by Lord Wellesley to conduct a survey of the kingdom of Mysore in the south of the country, which had recently been annexed by the East India Company. In the resulting three-volume report Buchanan gave detailed descriptions of existing customs and religion along with several maps and charts. He made an effort to note exact socio-economic conditions of that time for the future reference. Though Buchanan's journey began and ended at the British stronghold of Madras, it also crisscrossed the whole of
Mysore including a long trip from south to north through the western coastal regions of Malabar and Canara. Although his account covers the British period, his study is very informative in reconstructing the history of Portuguese period as well.

- Imperial Gazetteers of India is another valuable source of information for the study of southern Canara regions (especially Gazetteers of the South Canara Districts). It is important that Portuguese records which are considered to be not only a source of information for the commercial activities but also an essential basis for the reconstructing partnership with the Indian merchants and commerce under their protection.

- The Logbook of the East of India from Goa to Diu, narrating the Voyages which Viceroy Dom Gracia do Noronha made 1538 to 1539 published by the Tipografia Commercial Portugal, Porto, 1843, deals with contemporary events and conditions of the port towns especially territories between Goa and Diu. There are information about the Honnavar and Basur port which also helps in establishing and reconstructing certain aspects related to port cities.

- The Periplus Maris Erythraei, translated by Lionel Casson is the single most important source of information for the early maritime trade in these waters (i.e., the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and the western Indian Ocean). It is a unique and precious manual for the traders who sailed from the Red Sea ports of Roman Egypt to various ports along the coast of eastern Africa, southern Arabia, and western India to buy and sell the goods. This study devoted to Rome's merchants and their trade with the East provides an improved and important text of the Periplus, along with a lucid and reliable translation.

- Dames Mansel Longworth: “The Book of Duarte Barbosa” is one of the earliest records of a Portuguese official who used his great ability of observation in narrating events and experiences and made his work as a masterpiece to understand the history of 16th Century. It is very informative and gives a clear picture of
political environment prevailing when Portuguese entered in the Indian Ocean. Through Barbosa’s letters, trade design of Portuguese can be easily assessed.

- An Italian travellers Pietro Della Valle’s “Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India: from the old English translation of 1664” translated by G. Havers in two volumes supply very valuable information about the Keladi kingdom and contains fascinating ethnographic details, particularly on religious beliefs. He visited the court of Venkatappanayaka-I and noted down very minutely everything that he observed and noticed.

- “Travels in Asia and Africa” by Abraham Parson an English sailor who visited Canara in 1775 gave a vivid description of the Honnavar port and its river connectivity. Though this is a later century record, like Buchanan account, this is also helpful in situating prevailing trade in the Canara region.

**Study of Secondary sources:**

**Books:**

1. “The Cambridge Economic History of India Volume 1: c.1200-c.1750” edited by Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib gives a general survey of the Indian Subcontinent. This major collaborative works of history aim at tracing the changes in the economy of India from the 13th century to the present century. It is published in two volumes, but Vol 1 is very useful to my study.

2. M N Pearson’s work “Coastal Western India: Studies from Portuguese Records” gives details description of local governance and various parameters for designing the policy in the light of changing society. Neo-colonial attitudes and other associated issues of society like corruption, the scope for fraud and exploitation are taken up. Besides, effective administration and institutional reforms were also discussed in details, and this is very helpful in analysing the role of people in organizing the changed society.

3. The classic study of Sanjay Subramanyam in ”The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History” gives an overview of Portuguese trade and
their empire in the in Asia. It is very helpful in deriving overall expansion plan of Portuguese in Asian water and how they implemented it. Maritime challenges, Economic changes and crisis are nicely explained. Even the 16th-century crisis is also discussed in detail by the author which helps greatly in analysing the existing politico-economic situation.

4. The general insight of the trade in the Indian Ocean is very well reflected in the K. N Chaudhuri’s “Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750” this book helps in building basic concepts of maritime trade. Factors responsible for the development of trade in Asian water, how monsoon wind affected the trading scenarios. Cultural exchanges are very nicely captured which provides ample knowledge of trade in this region. Detailed study of modern capitalism made the research work easy and useful in forming basic concept.

5. Gururaj Bhatt book "studies in Tuluva History and Culture" is one of the authentic books on the history of coastal Canara. It gives complete knowledge of the political, historical and economic life of people of this region. This book gives not only a deep knowledge of the administrative machinery working that time but also the linguistic background of its people. Religion too covered in details which help in my research to find out the role of the temple in controlling the economic and social life of the people. There is no other research book which gives such an authentic and detailed information about this region and social structure from pre-historic times to modern period. Apart from historical background and details of the Tuluva origin, this book deals with economic activities such as agrarian and other associated taxes and also a detailed preview of growing trade and commerce in Tulunadu.

6. Details of South Canara and its early history is covered by imminent author K. V. Ramesh in his work “A History of South Canara: from the earliest times to the fall of Vijayanagar” this book is a good source of information relating to socio-politico aspects of the region. Political ups and downs are vividly captured and discussed along with the changes caused every time due to change in power. Author being member of the epigraphical department, his work mainly based on the information derived from the stone and copper plate inscriptions found in South Canara. This book covers the
history of South Canara, and the author has given his full effort to trace out the chronological order of ruling authority.

7. A collective work on coastal history and impacts of ecology on society is compiled by modern historian Yogesh Sharma in “Coastal Histories: Society and Ecology in Pre-Modern India”. Most of the research paper of this book made good effort to bring to light environmental and ecological aspects impacting coastal society.

8. Excellent contributory work of B. A. Saletore “Karnataka’s Trans-Oceanic Contacts” is one of the wonderful attempts to put intra-Asian trade links of the west coast of Karnataka. It is one of the original work where an effort was made to focus exclusively on Karnataka coast. Through his work, not only the importance of west coast has been realized but also has also helped in bringing coastal Karnataka as a part of more focused and larger study area.

9. K.G. Vasanth Madhava’s “Political History of Canara 1565 – 1763”, a study mainly based on inscription is one of the dependable and reliable sources of information relating to Canara region. This pious effort to decipher original inscription and to derive information from it is left no question on its authenticity. This study gives a good description of kelady’s role in shaping the coastal economy. How they brought certain fundamental changes in the existing society and economy. Their governance strategy in controlling agrarian production.

10. B. S. Shastry’s “Goa – Canara Portuguese Relations 1498- 1763” focusses on changes in the political, industrial, economic, social and cultural history of Canara after coming of Portuguese in this region. Sources mainly derived from Portuguese records and letters.

Journals:

1. Articles published in “Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society” are a useful source of information relating to the coastal Karnataka. Researched articles related to coastal Canara are frequently found in this journal. This regional based Journal has helped tremendously in gathering data related to Portuguese and other colonial powers in the coastal region.

2. Articles published in “Indian Ocean Archaeology” are a primary source of navigational aspects of the maritime trade. Early Shipbuilding techniques and trading vessels in the
Indian Ocean are available in detailed. Most of the articles relating to Sea trade and imports and exports statics are available.

1.10 Chapter Scheme

1 Introduction
2 Maritime trading activities in coastal Canara
   - Geographical background and historical background
   - Trading Scenario of early western coastal region
   - Trade in Pre-Colonial Canara
   - Important Sea ports of Canara
3 Evolution and development of Honnavar and Basrur as port cities under Portuguese
   - Physical environment and early history
   - Pre-existing forms and structures
   - Process of urban transformation
   - Reasons for growth and development
   - Two cities as seen through travellers eyes/ Historical significance
   - Portuguese in Honnavar and Basrur
4 Trading activities in ports of Honnavar and Basrur
   - Articles of exchange
   - Mechanism for mobilization and marketing of surplus
   - Importance of neighbouring trade centres
   - River system and strategic position of the ports in estuaries
   - Haigunda and its significant place in the economic and political history of Honnavar
   - Effect of interaction with Portuguese
5 Temples and Forts as governing unit in the port towns
   - Law and practices
   - Present socio-economic state
   - Communities culture and importance of subaltern culture
- Role of Nakhareswhwara temple as distributive centre and agrarian centre in Basrur
- Importance of coastal forts

6 Disintegration of Honnavar and Basrur
- Environmental factors
- Political factors
- Economic factors
- Local and indigenous factors
- The region –being the reason for political and economic contests
- International factors
- Piracy
- Emergence of new trade centres

7 Conclusion

The first chapter discusses the main objectives of the research, research questions, methodology use for the study, limitation of the study, the scope of the study along with historiography. This chapter tries to explain the essence of whole research. It also gives the blueprint for the investigation and core of the problem to study.

The second chapter discusses the geographical background and climate of the Coastal Canara region. It also looks into in details about the various trading groups who had dominated the trade in this region. The trading scenario in pre-colonial period and related aspects will be looked in detail. This chapter tries to analyse the maritime trade and its development. It also attempts to see Renaissance as the background of all the developments – Scientific discoveries and geographical discoveries as a reason for overseas exploration and expansion. It is necessary to highlight the fact that coming of Portuguese to India was also an outcome of Renaissance. It also proposes to study International trade and the initial traders and trade patterns. Various shipbuilding technologies and wind system especially monsoon and associated dangers are also important and significant when it comes to Asian trading networks and their navigational techniques.
Coming of Europeans to the Asian waters brought changes to the traditional Asian trading setup and techniques. It also tries to look into trading activities in pre-colonial Canara to understand the medieval scenario of the region. It is equally important to trace the history of the region, important rulers, and their political and socio-economic structures to understand the trade operations. Hence a thorough study of regional history is needed to comprehend local and intra-local trade in the light of Indo Asian trade which provides further help in analysing Indo-European trade. It also discusses important port cities of Canara. This extensive field of inquiry also focuses upon the study of littoral societies or the coastal regions. Impacts of the ocean upon the land, the role of migrations and cross-cultural processes. Particular characteristics which different Coastal societies have shared give them particular identity and ambience to associate with and also differentiate them from the vast subcontinent as well. Such interesting theme of inquiry along with coastal territories and its history create an interesting platform for inquiry. It examines some themes about coastal ecology, merchant communities, coastal ports, vessels and boats, fishing communities, social life, etc.

The third chapter is devoted to finding answers to the questions related to the rise and development of two ports in the pre-Portuguese period. It also attempts to see the time and period of emergence of these places as a port, its earliest references, and its geographical descriptions. It tries to identify the extent the emergence of the new port affected the existing economic and political life of Canara and Malabar. It is necessary to highlight the reactions of various political powers to the emerging port and its initial trade activities. It also proposes to study the initial traders, the various countries with which it had a commercial relationship as well as the nature and pattern of settlement in the city that developed around this port. It is necessary to examine the factors that accounted for the rise and growth of these two ports to a prominent position. The river system and strategic position of the ports in estuaries which ensure not only plentiful irrigation but also the movement of goods easily from one port to other. It is also felt important to examine the type and specific quality of the soil that affected the productivity and supply of rice and spices which were very specific to this place. This particular variety of rice and pepper had much demand in the Middle East and amongst Europeans are also discussed in detail.
The fourth chapter seeks answers to the questions on the nature of the trade in Honnavar and Basrur during the Portuguese period. It examines the essential commodities of exchange from these two port cities together with the mechanism for mobilization and marketing of surplus. It highlights the role of the agrarian economy and agrarian setting in boosting rice trade from the port of Basrur and pepper trade from Honnavar. The position of Indian merchants and their role in overseas and overland trade. This study confined to Portuguese period of Honnavar and Basrur though even then the pattern of trade fluctuated with upward and downward trends depending on local conditions and native factors, an assessment of which would be impossible without taking the entire corners of social dimensions and economic aspects together into account. The indigenous co-operation was never unconditional and static, the changes of which have long term repercussions that affected the entire Portuguese phase.

It also tries to see the principal pepper-producers and important land routes that connected the hinterland with the port cities. It looks into important hinterlands that supplied spices and other commodities to the ports. It traces the chief riverine-routes that were used to penetrate into the hinterland and the major markets and trading centres which were located in the hinterland. It also examines the land and its relationship with the long distance trade, necessary conditions and circumstances for the rise and growth of port cities and urbanisation. Discussions are also mentioned on the bond between land and sea, location of sea ports, transport cost as a key factor and role of great rivers as waterways.

The fifth chapter proposes to dwell on an attempt to examine India’s Maritime trade history and the relevance of governing authority in controlling trading activities. It identifies fort and temple that acted as coordinating and controlling agencies of the ports. It also tries to see the main players in organizing trade as important and dominant groups of society; this also gives an indication whether the religious authority or the political authority had supported and controlled commerce in this region. The answer to the question raised earlier as to the way these ports came under Portuguese resulted with the after-effects of the interaction, the nature of the Portuguese commercial and bureaucratic system, its strengths and weaknesses, etc. are dealt adequately on the basis of authentic records and field work.
In concluding chapter, the actual reasons for the disintegration is identified. A multidimensional analysis considering environmental, economic, political and international aspects have been considered to the extent of these factors responsible for closing down commercial activities in these two ports. Sources have indicated frequent warfare, and unfavourable economic conditions discouraged traders from undertaking any new venture. Hence their importance as a highway of commerce continued to decline with the colonial advent and constant warfare amongst the local rulers and feudatories. Thus the hypothesis of this study that was taken up has authentically proved through the analysis based on the original records, interviews with local scholars and primarily the data collected through the field work.

1.11 Outcome of the study

Two most well-connected ports of coastal Karnataka, Basrur and Honnavar once occupied a nodal position in inland, coastal and transoceanic network from the early Christian era, saw both rise and fall together. It is evident from the study that because of river connectivity and proximity to Sea the entire region thrived in trade and commerce. To look at each port individually, Basrur was more affected by environmental factors than anything else whereas political factor was responsible for the weakening of Honnavar which was marred by the destructive raids of Shivaji, and the Maratha rulers. It almost ruined the trade, and its repercussion was so big that it brought depression in this region which ultimately led to the closing of its several factories.

Traveller’s records have confirmed that colonial factors too affected the traders of these ports. An indirect way of extraction which was designed by Portuguese discouraged the movement of native vessels. Excise control hit hard to traditional native merchant groups, and they became less significant in the second half of sixteenth century, and by the end of the seventeenth century, they eventually lost their total control. In general, most of the sources point towards the factor which was common for the decline of both the ports was greatly political. The town started showing its early signs of deterioration in late 17th century.