



HISTORICAL ENQUIRY OF COLACHEL

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ABSTRACT

Travancore was the princely state existed in South India. It was called by different name in different period, it is popular being Venad, Vanchidesam and Tiruadidesam. Venad is originally known as Vanavanad which means the abode of the Dedvas. This was later simplified into Venad. Vanchi Desam means either the land of treasure or the land Baboons. In Malayalam the name of Travancore was interpreted by 'Thiruvithamkure' and in Sankrit 'Srivardhanapuri'.



KEY WORDS: Colachel, Battle of Colachel, Marthanda Varma, The Dutch, De Lannoy, Trade relations, The Dutch East India Company.

INTRODUCTION

Marthanda Varma inherited the throne of Travancore formerly known as *Venad*, from King Ramavarma, his uncle. During the period of Marthanda Varma the war held in Colachel is significance than the others. This war raises the war power of the king. In 1740, the Dutch Governor says to Marthanda Varma, that he was going to capture Travancore to his control. It internal idea is that Dutch are thinking to make colony in Travancore. In the beginning, and the war came to end of August 7, 1741. The war was the important turning point of Marthanda Varma and Travancore State.

NEED FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

Colachel is sea port town from the ancient past, served as an important commercial centre for the Cheras, Pandyas and even the Dutch. It is surrounded by small villege lioke Kottipadu, on the south, Puthutheru on the east, Velliyakulam on the North and Kalimar on the West. The importance of Colachel is due to the existence of port. In this context, it is possible to bring in to light the

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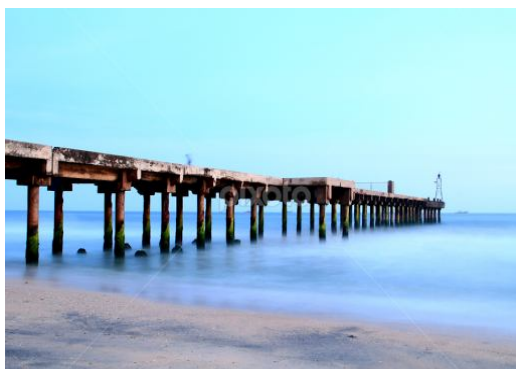
1. To analyse the Historical importance of forts of Colachel.
2. To sketch the Battle of Colachel
3. To interpret the impact of Battle of Colachel .
4. To study the present conditions of Colechel

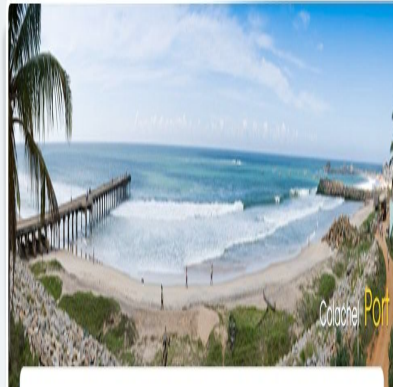
METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in the present study is analytical, descriptive and interpretative reflection. In the preparation of the present study the following sources including both *primary* and *secondary* sources. Primary sources are planned to collect by conduct field visits. Published literary works were used to understand historical background. The information given in the present study primarily depends on the observations of the researcher from the field. Maps, plan and photographs are used to supplement the textual information. Observational method also adopted to identify the details of sculpture and paintings with their distinguishing features. Analytical method is used to study the earlier research works done on the subject and to incorporate necessary details in the **present work**.

HISTORY OF COLACHEL

Colachel is sea port town from the ancient past, served as an important commercial centre for the **Cheras, Pandyas** and even the **Dutch**. It is surrounded by small village like Kottilpadu, on the south, Puthutheru on the east, Velliyakulam on the North and Kalimar on the West. The importance of Colachel is due to the existence of port.





BATTLE OF COLACHEL

The Battle Colachel was fought on August 10th, 1741 between the forces of the Indian Kingdom of Travancore and Dutch East India Company. It was the first major defeat of a military force by one from South Asia. The Dutch never recovered from the defeat and no longer posed a large colonial threat to India, assisting the British East India Company's eventual rise to dominance on the subcontinent. During the early half of the 18th century the Dutch sway over the Malabar Coast. They possessed a number of factories like salt, dying, and printing along the Malabar Coast, Cochin and Anjengo.

Encouraged by their successful establishments of factories the internal squabbles in Travancore, the Dutch East India Company entered into political intrigues with the kingdoms enemies to the Maharaja, with the object of maintaining the balance of power and there by perpetuating their commercial supremacy. In 1739, a war began between Elayadathu Swarupam and Travancore in which the Dutch sided with the former and the Dutch Governor even extended asylum to the Rani of Elayadathu Swarupam.

In 1741 Van Imhalf reinstated Elayadathu Swarupam against the will of Marthandavarma. Hence the forces of Travancore drove away the Dutch and the Kayamkulam forces and recaptured Elayadathu Swarupam. Then they tried to capture the Dutch out-post in Travancore. The possessions of the Dutch were attacked. Their store-house and factories were looted. Thus the Dutch were humiliated. Finally the Dutch returned to Cochin, and waited for an opportunity.

The victory of Marthanda Varma gave a rude shock to the Dutch, whose survival in Malabar was under great threat. Under these pressing circumstances, the Dutch entered into another war with Travancore. Growing indignant at the aggressive policy of Marthanda Varma, Van Imhalf sent forth a well-equipped, fourth grade army of Ceylon. On reaching Colachel, the Dutch army heavily

bombarded Colachel and landed at Colachel on 10th February 1741 and continued to attack Travancore from the South.

Their selection of time and venue for war was most opportune, for Marthanda Varma was concentrating his entire forces in the far north for dealing with his enemies. The Dutch took positions at Thengapattanam, Kadiyappattanam, Midalam and other places in South Travancore and began to harass the inhabitants. At Colachel they continued firing from the sea for two or three days hence the Maharaja sent 2000 soldiers of the coastal villages to prevent further landing of the Dutch forces.

A large Dutch force from Cochin landed at Colachel. The sudden move of the Dutch compelled Marthanda Varma to seek French assistance from Mahe. As the French were involved in the contest for supremacy with the English East India Company, they readily response to the request of the Maharaja. They prevented the English from shipping any goods from the port of Colachel, and gaver orders to Dutch ships to seize all enemy vessels that were found in any port in Travancore. The English at Anjengo could not do anything to counteract the Dutch activities.

The whole country was under the control of Dutch. The Dutch further planned to attack **Padmanabhapuram**, the capital of Travancore. On hearing this news of the Dutch design in the south, Marthandavarma, who was engaged in a battle against Edayaduthu Swarupam, an ally of the Dutch in central Travancore, hurried to Padmanabhapuram. He worshipped at the **Adikesava Temple at Thiruvattar** and offered **500 panams** to the temple and also put his sword at the feet of the God and prayed for his success in his battle against the Dutch.



PADMANABHAPURAM PALACE

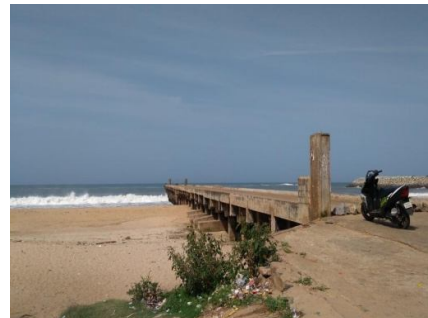
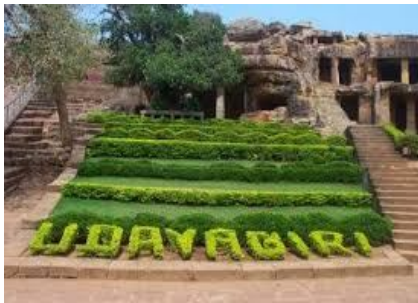


HEADQUARTERS OF TRAVANCORE

In the meantime Ramayyan Dalawa (Prime Minister of the state) came from the north with a large reinforcement of infantry and cavalry and encamped at Nagercoil and Eraniel. On May 27, 1741, Marthanda Varma advanced upon the Dutch forces at Colachel. It was one of the most severe battle recorded in the history of the Travancore State. It is said that in order to win over the enemy the soldiers of Travancore adopted cunning methods. They created manlike figures using plantain trees, palmyra leaves and coconut leaves and installed them along the coast at Colachel.

They also the sea shore. The Dutch under Delannoy were watching the activities of the enemy of the coast through the binocular and they mistook the Palmyra trees for artillery and the men like figures and fired the force and wasted their ammunition. The Travancore army fired a red hot ball which fell into the enemy's huge stocks of food materials. On August 7, 1741. Their supplies were cut off. The Travancore army attacked the Dutch mercilessly. The Dutch were left with no option but to surrender. They lost a large number of soldiers, arms and ammunition. The Travancore army captured twenty four soldiers as prisoners and seized 389 Muskets and a large number of

cannons and sword from the Dutch. In order to celebrate their victory, a Pillar of Victory was erected at Colachel.



Udayagiri fort to reside, Captain De Lannoy

Impact of Battle of Colachel

Takeover of the black pepper trade by the state of Travancore

In 1753 the Dutch signed the Treaty of Mavelikara with the Raja

Captain De Lannoy, who joined the service of the chief of Travancore Army. Marthanda Varma was promoted as the senior Admiral(Valiya Kappithan) and modernized the Travancore Army.

Marthanda Varma was granted the Udayagiri fort to reside, Captain De Lannoy

CONCLUSION

Colachel attained importance from very period of Travancore history because it played an important role the history of south Travancore. Colachel also remaine one of the important places in the present Kanyakumari District. Colachel enjoys a Mediterranean climate with the rest of the district.

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