1.1 The Portuguese in India

⚓ Portugal: Pioneer of Sea Trade with India

Among the European nations, **Portugal was the first** to undertake a dynamic maritime campaign to establish a direct sea route to India, driven by the ambition to control the spice trade and bypass Arab and Venetian intermediaries.

> ### Prince Henry the Navigator

- **Prince Henry of Portugal**, known as *"The Navigator"*, played a pioneering role in ushering in the **Age of Discovery**.
- He established a **school of navigation** at **Sagres**, fostering maritime science, cartography, and the training of seamen.
- His vision laid the foundation for Portugal's oceanic expeditions to the East.

> ### Bartholomew Diaz and the Cape Route

- **Bartholomew Diaz**, under the patronage of **King John II**, sailed along the western coast of Africa in **1487 CE**.
- He was the **first European** to reach the **southern tip of Africa**, naming it the **"Cape of Storms"**.
- King John II later renamed it **"Cape of Good Hope"**, reflecting Portugal's optimism in discovering a sea route to India.

> ### Vasco da Gama: Opening the Sea Route to India

- In **1497–1498 CE**, **Vasco da Gama**, a seasoned Portuguese navigator, sailed past the Cape of Good Hope and reached **Calicut (Kozhikode)** on **May 27, 1498**.
- Guided by an **Indian pilot from Malindi**, he landed on the **Malabar Coast**, where he was received by **Zamorin**, the ruler of Calicut.
- This marked the **beginning of direct European maritime trade with India**.

Later Voyages:

- **Pedro Álvares Cabral - second Portuguese navigator (1500)** arrived with a fleet of 13 ships, but **conflicts erupted** with the Zamorin.
- **Vasco da Gama's second visit (1501)** led to the establishment of a **factory at Cannanore**.
- He returned for the third time in **1524**, this time as **Portuguese Viceroy**, but died in **Cochin** the same year.

> ### Francisco de Almeida (1505–1509) – The Naval Strategist

- Sent as the **first Governor of Portuguese India**, Almeida aimed to assert **Portuguese naval dominance** in the Indian Ocean.
- His **"Blue Water Policy"** emphasized **sea power** as a means to control trade.

- Fought a series of battles against a coalition of **Egyptians, Turks, and Gujarat**, culminating in the **Battle of Diu (1509)**, where he secured **Portuguese supremacy over Indian waters**.

➢ *Afonso de Albuquerque (1509–1515) – The Architect of Empire*

- Regarded as the **real founder of Portuguese power in India**.
- Captured **Goa (1510)** from the Sultan of Bijapur and made it the **headquarters of Portuguese India**.
- Extended control to **Ormuz (Persian Gulf)** in 1515.
- Encouraged **intermarriage with Indian women**, promoted religious tolerance, and tried to **abolish the practice of Sati**.
- Maintained **diplomatic relations with the Vijayanagara Empire**.

➢ *Nuno da Cunha (1529–1538) – Consolidation of Power*

- Shifted the Portuguese capital from **Cochin to Goa** in **1530**, cementing Goa's strategic importance.
- Acquired **Bassein (Vasai)** from **Bahadur Shah of Gujarat** (1534).
- Captured **Diu (1537)**, **Daman**, and **Salsette (1548)** — solidifying control over the **western coast**.

The Portuguese Impact on India

➢ *Political & Military Innovations*

- First Europeans to **conquer territory** from Indian rulers.
- Introduced **gunpowder-based warfare** and **fortified trading posts**.
- Their naval dominance disrupted **Arab maritime trade**.

➢ *Cultural & Religious Influence*

- Promoted **Catholic Christianity** via **Jesuit missionaries**.
- Encouraged **marriages** between Portuguese and Indian women, forming the **Eurasian community**.
- Missionaries like **Roberto de Nobili** wrote in **Tamil and Sanskrit**; known as the **father of Tamil prose**.
- **Henriques** introduced the **Tamil printing press**.

➢ *Conflicts and Religious Tensions*

- Clashed with **Muslim traders** on the **Pearl Fishery Coast** in the 1530s.
- The **Parava community** in Tamil Nadu sought Portuguese protection, resulting in **mass conversions** to Christianity.
- **St. Francis Xavier**, co-founder of the **Society of Jesus**, arrived in **1542** and evangelized along the **Coromandel Coast**, from **Goa to Thoothukudi**.

➢ *Contributions to Printing and Knowledge*

- First **printing press in India** was established at **Goa (1556)**.
- A **scientific text on Indian medicinal plants** was printed in Goa in **1563**.

➢ *Agricultural Introductions*

- Introduced **tobacco cultivation** to India.

Decline of Portuguese Power

➢ *Reasons for Decline:*

1. **Weak successors** after Albuquerque.
2. **Forcible conversions** and **destruction of temples** alienated locals.
3. Alienated **Muslims** and other Indian powers.
4. Relied on **piracy** and **cartaz system** (trade pass extortion).
5. **Religious intolerance** created hostility.
6. The **fall of Vijayanagara Empire (1565)** removed a major ally.
7. Portugal's **union with Spain (1580)** distracted from Asian affairs.
8. Rise of **Dutch, English, and French** competitors.

Legacy and Significance

- Controlled key trading posts: **Goa, Daman, Diu, Bassein, Salsette, Hooghly, San Thome**.
- Cultural imprints visible in **architecture, cuisine, religion**, and **language** (loanwords in Konkani, Tamil, etc.).
- **Mylapore the Portuguese 'Black Town'** and **San Thome** was a notable Portuguese center in **Madras**.
- Their decline began by the **17th century**, and by **1739**, Portuguese influence was limited to **Goa, Daman, and Diu**.

Recent Developments and Anniversaries

- **2023** commemorated **525 years** since Vasco da Gama's arrival in India.
- India's Ministry of Culture has included **European-built monuments** such as **Portuguese forts in Goa** and **French heritage structures in Puducherry** under the **Adarsh Smarak Scheme** for heritage conservation.
- Discussions are ongoing regarding the nomination of **Spice Routes** as a **UNESCO World Heritage cultural route**, emphasizing India's maritime legacy.
- The **Indian Navy** also conducts historical commemorations around the **Indian Ocean maritime history**, including the arrival of Europeans.

1.2 The Dutch in India

The Dutch East India Company and Its Arrival

Following the Portuguese, the **Dutch** were the next European power to make significant inroads into India. They were driven primarily by the desire to dominate the lucrative **spice trade** in Southeast Asia and establish commercial supremacy in the East.

- In **1602**, the **United East India Company of the Netherlands** (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie – VOC*) was founded.
- It was granted a **charter by the Dutch government**, conferring rights to trade, wage war, and build settlements in Asia.

First Settlements and Trade Expansion

- The **first Dutch factory** in India was established at **Masulipatnam (Andhra Pradesh)** in **1605 CE**.
- Over the next decades, they set up trading posts and factories at:
  - **Pulicat (1610)** – their **initial headquarters** on the Coromandel Coast
  - **Surat, Chinsura, Kasimbazar, Patna, Balasore, Nagapattinam, Cochin**
- The Dutch **captured Amboyna (1605)** and established dominance in the **Spice Islands (modern-day Indonesia)**.
- They seized **Nagapattinam** from the Portuguese and made it their **new South Indian stronghold** in **1690**.

> *Major Commodities Traded by the Dutch*

- **Silk, cotton, indigo, rice, opium**
- Dominated trade in **black pepper, cloves, nutmeg, and mace**
- **Diamonds and spices** were exported from **Pulicat** to European markets

The Amboyna Massacre (1623): A Turning Point

- The **Amboyna Massacre (1623)** was a watershed moment in Dutch-English relations.
- **Dutch authorities at Amboyna (Indonesia)** accused English traders of conspiracy and **executed 10 Englishmen and 9 Javanese**.
- This event deepened the **rivalry between the Dutch and the English**, ultimately pushing the English to focus on their interests in **India**, especially on the **Coromandel and Bengal coasts**.

Decline of Dutch Power in India

By the mid-18th century, the Dutch lost much of their influence due to:
- Strong **British military and political expansion**

- **Limited territorial ambitions** of the Dutch, focused more on **spice trade**
- Defeat in the **Battle of Bedara (1759)**, which marked the beginning of the Dutch withdrawal
- Loss of major settlements including **Chinsura and Nagapattinam**
- By **1795**, the Dutch presence in India was virtually eliminated.

The Dutch in Tamil Nadu: Regional Legacy

➢ *Dutch Cemetery, Pulicat*

- The Dutch ousted the Portuguese from **Pulicat** in **1610**.
- Established the **Castle Geldria**, remnants of which are still visible.
- **Pulicat** became the **headquarters of Dutch Coromandel operations**.

➢ *Dutch Forts and Settlements in Tamil Nadu:*

- **Nagapattinam**
- **Punnakayal**
- **Porto Novo**
- **Cuddalore (Tiruppathiripuliyur)**
- **Devanampattinam**

These forts served as commercial and military hubs.

➢ *Dutch Involvement in the Slave Trade*

A less-discussed but significant aspect of Dutch operations in Tamil Nadu was their **involvement in the slave trade**, particularly during periods of **famine, war, and political instability**.

- Slaves were captured from:
  - **Bengal**
  - Coastal Tamil Nadu settlements like **Tengapattinam**, **Karaikal**, **Adiramapattinam**, **Tondi**, and **Kayalpattinam**
- Brokers in **Madras** facilitated the **slave trade**.
- **1646**: Over **2,118 individuals** were captured as slaves during the Bijapur army's invasion of Thanjavur.

➢ *Academic Source:*

- According to **Wil O. Dijk**, Leiden University scholar:
- "From **June 1621 to November 1665**, VOC ships transported **26,885 slaves** from and within the Bay of Bengal, out of which **1,379 died** in transit." She further noted that the **collapse of the Vijayanagara Empire** and **famine under Nayak rulers** in Thanjavur, Senji, and Madurai, spurred the increase in slave exports.

Dutch Footprint in India

While the Dutch did not seek extensive political control like the British, their presence left a **significant economic and cultural legacy** in South India, especially:
- In trade and infrastructure (forts, warehouses, ports)
- The **Dutch cemetery** and **forts in Pulicat** are enduring reminders
- Their **decline** illustrates the shifting balance of power from **commercial dominance** to **political imperialism**, paving the way for **British colonial rule**

Recent Commemorations & Events (2024–2025)

➢ _1. Pulicat Day 2025 – 14th Annual Celebration_

In early 2025, the 14th annual **Pulicat Day** was celebrated, highlighting the town's rich maritime history and its significance during the Dutch colonial period. The event featured cultural programs, heritage walks, and exhibitions, emphasizing Pulicat's role as a major port and its diverse cultural legacy.

➢ _2. V.O. Chidambaranar's 153rd Birth Anniversary_

On **September 5, 2024**, tributes were paid across Tamil Nadu to honor the 153rd birth anniversary of **V.O. Chidambaranar**, a prominent freedom fighter and maritime pioneer. Events included garlanding ceremonies, public speeches, and cultural programs in cities like Coimbatore and Chennai.

➢ _3. VOC Endowment Lecture at AMET University_

AMET University in Chennai organized the **VOC Endowment Lecture** on **April 24, 2025**, commemorating V.O. Chidambaranar's contributions. The event featured lectures, a national conference on maritime entrepreneurship, and a science exhibition, aiming to inspire future generations about India's maritime heritage.

Legacy of the Dutch East India Company (VOC)

The **Dutch East India Company (VOC)**, established in 1602, played a significant role in India's maritime trade, especially along the Coromandel Coast. Pulicat served as the VOC's capital in the region, and its legacy includes forts, cemeteries, and other colonial structures that stand to this day.

1.3 The English

Background & Formation

- **1580**: Francis Drake's circumnavigation and the **1588** defeat of the Spanish Armada inspired English maritime ambitions.
- **1600 (Dec 31)**: Queen **Elizabeth I** granted a **charter** to a group of London merchants, forming the **English East India Company** — officially named *"The Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies."*
- The charter gave them exclusive trading rights with the East for **15 years** (later extended).

Early Ventures

- **1608**: First English ship arrived at **Surat**, but Portuguese opposition blocked trade.
- **1609**: Captain **William Hawkins** met Mughal Emperor **Jahangir** but failed to secure firm trading rights.

Breakthrough at Surat

- **1612**: Captain **Thomas Best** defeated the Portuguese at the **Battle of Swally (near Surat)**.
- This naval victory impressed Jahangir, who allowed the Company to establish a **factory at Surat** (1613).

Diplomatic Gains

- **1615–1619**: Sir **Thomas Roe**, ambassador of King **James I**, stayed at Jahangir's court.
    - Secured **trade privileges**.
    - Permitted factories in **Agra**, **Ahmadabad**, and **Broach**.

Expansion of Trade Settlements

➢ *South India:*
- **1611**: Began trading at **Masulipatnam**.
- **1639**: **Francis Day** obtained permission to build a fortified settlement at **Madras (Fort St. George)**.
- **1668**: **Bombay**, received as dowry by King Charles II from Portugal, was handed over to the Company.

➢ *Eastern India:*
- **1651**: Factory at **Hooghly (Bengal)** allowed by Mughal governor **Shah Shuja**.
- **1690**: **Job Charnock** settled at **Sutanuti**, laying the foundation of **Calcutta** (Fort William established in 1700).

Royal Farmans & Privileges

- *Golden Farman (1632) by Sultan of Golconda:*
  - Free trade in ports for a fixed annual fee.
- *Farrukhsiyar's Farmans (1717):*
  - Customs-free trade in **Bengal**, **Surat**, and **Madras**.
  - Issuance of **dastaks (passes)** for goods movement.
  - Considered the **"Magna Carta"** of the Company.

Formation of a United Company

- **1708**: Two rival English companies merged to form the **United East India Company** (1708–1873), marking the start of political expansion.
- Ruled India till **1947**

1.3.1 The British Impact on India

(Detailed discussion is dealt on the following chapters)

Legacy and Significance

- *1. Political and Administrative Legacy*
  - **Centralized administration**: Introduced the **Indian Civil Services (ICS)**.
  - Creation of **modern legal system** and **bureaucratic governance**.
  - **Doctrine of Lapse**, **Subsidiary Alliances**, and **British paramountcy** unified Indian princely states under colonial rule.
- *2. Economic Impact*
  - India was turned into a **colonial economy**: raw material supplier & market for British goods.
  - **Drain of Wealth**: Severe impact on indigenous industries and agriculture.
  - Infrastructure (railways, telegraphs, postal system) developed mainly to serve British interests.
- *3. Education and Social Reform*
  - Introduction of **Western education** (English-medium, liberal arts, science).
  - Promotion of **rational thought**, legal reform, and the rise of a **modern intelligentsia**.
  - Produced early Indian reformers (e.g., **Raja Ram Mohan Roy**, **Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar**).
- *4. Cultural and Social Impact*

- Legal codification affected **social customs** (e.g., abolition of **Sati**, child marriage reforms).
- British patronage of **archaeology, history, and surveys** contributed to rediscovery of India's ancient past (e.g., **ASI** establishment in 1861).
- Imposed **racial superiority** attitudes and created **class divisions** through education and jobs.

➢ *5. Nationalism and Resistance*

- Oppression also led to the rise of **Indian nationalism**.
- Events like the **1857 Revolt**, **Partition of Bengal (1905)**, and **Jallianwala Bagh (1919)** galvanized anti-British sentiment.
- Formation of **Indian National Congress (1885)** and eventual independence movement.

Enduring Institutions and Infrastructure

- **Indian Railways**: Initiated in 1853, crucial for commerce and mobility.
- **Judicial System**: British laws formed the basis for **Indian Penal Code (IPC)**, still in use today (with amendments).
- **Educational Institutions**: Universities in **Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras** (1857) laid the foundation for India's higher education.

Recent Developments, Commemorations & Anniversaries

➢ *Commemorations*

- **75 Years of Indian Independence (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav)** – 2022 marked extensive celebrations and reflections on colonial legacy.
- **Jallianwala Bagh Memorial Renovation (2021)** – sparked debate over preservation vs. sanitization of British atrocities.
- Annual observances of:
  - **1857 Revolt** as India's first war of independence.
  - **Quit India Movement (1942)** Day on **August 8**.
  - **Martyrs' Days** commemorating British-era victims (e.g., Bhagat Singh, Lala Lajpat Rai).

➢ *Museum and Education Projects*

- **Partition Museum** in Amritsar (est. 2017): focuses on impact of British withdrawal and Partition.
- **British-Era Colonial Monuments** now preserved with a balanced approach – not glorified, but used for heritage education.

➢ *Renaming and De-Colonization Efforts*

- Streets, institutions, and cities being renamed to remove colonial symbols (e.g., **Rajpath renamed Kartavya Path**).
- Shift in history curriculum to **highlight Indian voices** during colonial resistance.

➢ *Diplomatic Reflections*

- British leaders (e.g., PM David Cameron in 2013) acknowledged colonial-era injustices like Jallianwala Bagh.
- Growing emphasis on **reparations discourse**, especially in academic and political circles (notably by **Shashi Tharoor**).