

A STUDY OF THE TRADE ACTIVITIES OF THE TRADE GUILDS IN THE REGION OF INDIAN OCEAN (BETWEEN 10TH CENTURY TO 15TH CENTURY)

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Introduction

In the Process of Human Evolution and with the development of their value of quality, some changes were also occurred in their economy, with the fast increase of their complicated needs they developed a process for exchanging goods and services. With the development of that exchanging process they developed a maritime trade based on money in the Region of Indian Ocean is identified as a commercially specialized Region between 10th and 15th centuries in that maritime process. We can identified, the Indian Ocean as an epicenter for its trade activities and geographical conditions, having well controlled trading ports and the political movements have caused to develop this trade activities. But specially during the 10th Centaury the commercial trade activities increased in a new manner. The main reason for its incensement was the 'trade guilds'.

Trade guilds are the communities which have been established by the traders and controlled in a well managed procedure. The rate of trade guild was high, because they had

power to access to any center. As well as the political environment at that time did not effect for their activities. So the trade guilds have been able to spread their duties not only in the region of Indian Ocean but also internationally as well. So the objective of this study is to examine whether there was any new outcomes caused to develop regional and international trades in the region of Indian Ocean with the help of trade guilds?

The reason for choosing the specified two centuries (between 10th and 15th century) was, at the beginning of the 10th century Arab and muslim traders came from region of Indian Ocean along with their arrival the trade guilds gradually started to develop. At the beginning of the 15th century a major change took place in Europe, called as a "renaissance". It was a period of radical social and political upheaval in Europe. Along with the political changes Europeans started to colonize the developing countries. Due to the colonization process the trade activities around the region of Indian Ocean have developed with a new style.

Aim of the Study

- Identifying the importance of Region of Indian Ocean in the international trade.
- Identifying the importance of the region of Indian Ocean the 10th and 15th Centuries as a epicenter of commercial activities.
- Identifying the reasons of competitive commercial activities at the beginning of 10th Century.
- Identifying the structure and Process of trade guilds of the region during the period of studies.
- Investigating the contribution which was gained by trade guilds for creating a competitive commercial activities of regional trade as a fresh dynamism.
- Identifying how regional trade power affected in changing to a fresh dynamism until the trade power was gained by Europeans in the fifteenth century.

Methodology

This study was mainly based on Literary and Archaeological references. Specially I have referred secondary information among research studies done by modern Interlocutors. Furthermore, I collected information using Epigraphy, Coins, statues and other equipments that has Archaeological value in Sri Lanka as well as other countries in region of Indian Ocean. This study was done by examining above mentioned information and references.

Discussion

A large traffic of transport goods and trade occurred at the Indian Ocean in

the late centuries of first millennium AD. One main reason to this was trade guilds that had controlled all sorts of trade activities in the region. There was a control on exchange goods by them who were the market leaders and handled the distribution and spending money on commercial goods.

Though the term "trade guild" has been interpreted varyingly, it usually means the traders. In some instances it was introduced as a corporate body of traders. Certain establishments of trade guilds and their trade activities seemingly increased at South India, South-Eastern Asia and Sri Lanka ca. 10th century AD.

The trade guild has been subjected to broad studies regionally. The research works of the scholars as Y. Subbarayalu, K.A.N Sastri, A Appadorai, K.R venkatrama Ayyar, K.V Subremaniam Aiar, S Pathmanathan, Meeralbrehimaided to do further studies on trade guilds. Specially, Y. Subbarayalu recorded trade guild related terms as Inurruvar, Nanadesi, Valanjiya, Balanja, Nakhara, Nagara, Setti, Padinem-Vishayam, Gavare, Tennilangai-Valanjiyar, Padinem Bhumi, from 240 Epigraphs found from the countries of Indian Ocean Region.

These trade guilds were sub divided to many sub groups with the the sub activities they had done, such as,

- ❖ Group of big merchants
E.G Ainuruvar, Gavare, Nanadesi
- ❖ Chief / Landholders
E.G Arasu, Gamunda, cittirameli-periyandu

- ❖ Group of merchants dealing with Specific merchandise
E.G Dusigar, Senigaru, Vaniyar, Karaiyar
- ❖ Merchants - Cum- warriors
E.G Nattu- Chetti, Mummuridanda, Biravanigaru
- ❖ warrior who protect merchants
E.g Ankaru, Biraru, jayapalar, virakodiyar
- ❖ Organization of foreign merchants
E.g Anjuvannam, Ariyarparadesi
- ❖ Local shop- Keeper
E.G Avannakkarar, Samantha- Pandasali, Ulapasumbalikkaran
- ❖ Artisans Including jeweler
E.G Akkasale, Kumbarar, Gandhigaru, Balegararn

The main characteristic feature of the trade guilds is that they were bounded to special laws which were enacted by them. It became a causative factor to retain them for a time, successfully in the region as well as playing a role internationally. They were able to introduce new trends to the region of Indian Ocean by converting the market into a competitive level trade Network. The contemporary political background of the region was able to stimulate the situation. Specially, the emergence of states empires in South India and South East Asia (as Chola, Sri Vijaya,) was highly decisive. Along with the above facts, it's clear that the trade activities in the given time period was well managed by the trade guilds both in regional and international trade levels, since 10th century.

Conclusion

Within the period that this study focused on, the trade guilds has directly

influenced to enter into the region of Indian Ocean in the competitive commercial background. Also the region of Indian Ocean became a well known active commercial region due to the competition between those trade guilds. Not only that it can be identified clearly, the commercial activities have done in this region, had specific rules and regulations. Also it can be seen the commercial policy was well organized and well managed. As well as trade guilds had many skills such as knowledge of naval technology, and knowledge of many more advanced technologies. According to Emersant Tenant, "The orientals are lazy in trade activities". So his point of view has already rejected while considering the advanced technological skills of trade guilds.

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