

The Jaffna Economy during the Dutch Period (1658 – 17960): A Historical Perspective

Arunthavarajah, K.¹

Abstract

Generally, Europeans who took the all resources from eastern countries and enriched their motherland. Sri Lanka was not an exception for their activities. The Jaffna peninsula forms the Northern most part of Sri Lanka, was captured by the Dutch after the Portuguese. The economy and culture were badly affected by foreign rule. They were engaged in controlling the activities of the people. For example, they fully concentrated on how to get profit from agricultural sectors. This included paddy and tobacco cultivation, and Palmyra timber and aeronaut exports. The Dutch gained more profits by doing these. They also had full control of exports and imports. The essential items necessary for the Jaffna people too were imported by the Dutch and they got high profit. They collected tax (*thalai vari*) from the people. If the local people failed to settle the tax they could be severely punished. By these activities the economy of Jaffna people, their culture and life style were affected. The aim of this research is mainly to focus the economic condition of Jaffna and the economic policy of the Dutch during the period of their rule. It is also indented to show as to how the Jaffna people were attached by these policies. Researcher has used as primary sources for this article such as Dutch documents, archaeological and other historical materials. Researcher has also utilized secondary sources like relevant researches, other books, articles in the journal, magazines and internet based the primary sources. Finally, Researcher points out that the Jaffna economy was badly affected during the Dutch period than the other Europeans.

Key words: *Thalai vari, Agricultural society, Monopoly.*

¹ Senior Lecturer Gr. I, Dept of History, University of Jaffna.