

## UNIT 89 – UPSC - Dutch Factory at Pulicat

India's History : Medieval India : The Dutch open a factory at Pulicat - 1609

### Dutch East India Company - VOC



On March 20, 1602, the representatives of the provinces of the Dutch republic, granted a the Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie or VOC) a monopoly on the trade in the East Indies. Its purpose was not only trade; the Compagnie also had to fight the enemies of the Republic and prevent other European nations to enter the East India trade. During its history of 200 years, the VOC became the largest company of its kind, trading spices like nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon and pepper, and other consumer products like tea, silk and chinese porcelain.



Pulicat was strategically located for the distribution of gunpowder, as its excellent shipping facilities enabled the Dutch to keep most of the VOC's major establishments in the East (such as Batavia, Malacca, and Ceylon) well stocked. The Dutch began manufacturing gunpowder there at least as early as the 1620s, if not earlier. Almost from the presumed start, they predicted that they would be able to meet the Company's needs throughout the East Indies. In fact, so many of the VOC establishments came to depend on Pulicat's gunpowder that Batavia (the Company's headquarters in the East) once complained to its governor in Coromandel that, even though they were far from wasteful, they would nonetheless have been hard pressed to supply the homeward-bound ships as well as the Moluccas, Amboina, Banda, and Taiwan with gunpowder had it not been for the fleet that had arrived from the Netherlands.



The period which witnessed the decay of the Hindu powers of Tamilaham and the anarchy arising in the struggle for mastery between the Mohammedans and the Maharattas favored the growth of European colonies which were anxious to share in the fabulous wealth of the Indies, after the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope by the Portuguese in 1498. During the whole of the 16th Century the Portuguese busied themselves in erecting and consolidating the acquisitions they made on both the coasts. The Portuguese were fortunate in the time of their arrival. The Hindu ruler, Zamorin, owed his prosperity to his ports position as an entry point, and he was prepared to welcome the Portuguese. The Portuguese gained most from their participation in the carrying trade of the Indian Ocean, particularly on the Coromandal coast.

