

Tobacco Cultivation during European Period - A Historical Prospect Focused on Jaffna Peninsula

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Jaffna Peninsula is situated in the Northern part of Sri Lanka. This Peninsula had been under control of the colonialism of Portuguese in AD 1505. In this context, Dutch and British followed Portuguese and colonized Jaffna Peninsula. While the main purpose of the Europeans' arrival had been for the economy, they gave the second place to religion. They had not only utilised the economic resources of the natives, but also tried to gain extra income by cultivating the crops of their countries. In such situation, Portuguese introduced tobacco cultivation during European colonial period, particular in AD 1636. Yet, tobacco was not cultivated like other crops at estates such as tea, rubber and coffee which were brought during the European colonial period. However, they did not fail to use tobacco as an exporting media for the achievement of economy during the period of Europeans in Jaffna Peninsula. Particularly, there was abundance of response in Thiruvankoor for Jaffna tobacco since they were dried and soaked in salt water. Hence, the trade of tobacco had started to flourish between Jaffna and Thiruvankoor during the Europeans reign. Although tobacco had been exported in the periods of Portuguese and Dutch, no one can reject that the tobacco cultivation and export had reached its peak especially during the British period in the latter part of AD.18th century. The primary purpose of this study completely approached historically, clearly explains the importance of Jaffna tobacco cultivation achieved only for the Europeans income. In this study, the principal and secondary statuses of sources have been used considering the obligation of the study. Generally speaking, nevertheless the tobacco cultivation was introduced by Portuguese, it has reached its peak growth only during the English ruling. Further, no one can underestimate the importance of tobacco in Jaffna farmers' cultivation among their secondary crops even after the Europeans left Jaffna Peninsula three centuries ago.

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