

Regionwise details of licence-holders as on 31 March 1974 are furnished below :

Area				Manufacturer's licences	Seller's licences	Repairer's licences
Pondicherry	..	..	..	3	9	9
Karaikal	..	..	..	—	3	5
Mahe	..	..	..	—	—	—
Yanam	..	..	..	—	—	—

The Office of the Controller of Weights and Measures was formed in November 1959 with responsibility to deal with all matters connected with Weights and Measures and Excise. It was originally placed under the administrative control of the Finance Department. In May 1967, the administrative control of the Office of the Controller of Weights and Measures was transferred from the Finance Department to the Revenue and Development Department.

XIV. Associations and organs of trade news

Chambre de Commerce : The growth of industry and trade led to the establishment of a **Chambre Consultative de Commerce** in Pondicherry by the **arrêté** of 13 February 1849.⁵⁴ It was first conceived only as a consultative body to advise the Government. The **arrêté** of 21 February 1849 determined the number of European and Indian members of the **Chambre de Commerce**.⁵⁵

In the beginning, the members of this body met in the reading-room of the Public Library to discuss their problems. From time to time the Chamber was called upon to offer its views on problems affecting commerce and industry and to suggest ways and means to improve the climate for its growth. However, very little is known of the activities of the Chamber since then upto 1852. The Chamber came to the limelight again in 1852, under a different nomenclature viz., '**Commission agricole et commerciale**'. This '**Commission**' constituted by the **arrêté** of 7 September 1852 had the

'**Receveur du Domaine**' (an official of **Service des Contributions**) as its president.⁵⁶ Subsequently, another association with representatives of commerce and agriculture was constituted by the **arrêté** of 19 June 1856 in the manner of those in the French colonies in America.⁵⁷

The **Chef du Service des Ponts et Chaussées** and the **Juge de Paix** performing the functions of the Mayor and the **Chef de la Pharmacie** were its permanent members. The new **arrêté** stipulated that this Chamber should be consulted whenever changes were sought to be made in laws affecting agriculture and commerce. The Chamber was responsible for holding competitions and awarding prizes for participation in exhibitions, the collection of agricultural and commercial statistics, tendering advice on the establishment of agricultural schools, etc.

Everything in the industrial sphere went on well until about the sixties when the policy of free trade started gaining ground all over the world. Certain French colonies like Senegal voted for the free entry of all goods into their country, irrespective of their origin. The Chamber of Pondicherry which was opposed to this policy had to find a way out to overcome the situation. The main difficulty was that the net cost of the '**toiles bleues**' of Pondicherry was higher than those produced in Belgium and England. Although textile goods imported from Belgium were subjected to taxes, they turned out to be cheaper than the Indian cloth. It was about this time that a modern weaving mill came to be established as an adjunct to the spinning mill with a view to reducing the cost of manufactured cloth.

The **arrêté** of 1 September 1864 reconstituted the Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce into the Chamber of Commerce. Under the new dispensation, it was not merely a consultative body but gained some measure of autonomy.⁵⁸ The Chamber had to keep itself in touch with the outside world and particularly with similar bodies in Madras, Calcutta, Bombay, St. David, Port Louis, Marseille, Bordeaux, Nantes, Saint-Malot and Le Havre. The Chamber also published the "**Prix-Courant**", a small tract giving information about coins in use, rate of customs duties, prices of goods, movement of ships, etc.

The Chamber then fought for the entry of '**toiles bleues**' and other products of Pondicherry into Senegal, a cause it had espoused since then relentlessly. In 1873, following differences of opinion between the Chamber and an important business firm, all its members submitted their resignation.

This paved the way for introducing some changes in its constitution. Another reorganisation took place in June 1879.⁵⁹ The *arrêté* of 20 May 1907 brought in further constitutional changes and vested the Chamber with civil status.⁶⁰ The Chamber consisted of fifteen members, nine Europeans and six Indians, all domiciled citizens of Pondicherry. The other establishments were represented in the Chamber by one or more nominated members (*membres correspondants*) depending upon the importance of the establishment concerned.

The decree of 6 July 1934 promulgated in Pondicherry by the local *arrêté* of 31 July 1934 was the last in the series which dealt with the working of the Chamber.⁶¹

At the time of merger the governing body of the Chamber consisted of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and nine members besides the Director of *Banque de l'Indochine* and '*Agent des Messageries Maritimes*'. These two members are no longer represented in the Chamber. The term of governing members, one third of whom are elected every two years, is fixed for six years.

Elections to the governing body of the chamber used to be held under the supervision of the Mayor of Pondicherry Municipality. With the passage of the Pondicherry Municipalities Act, 1973 and the abolition of the office of Mayor, no one else had been declared competent to conduct the election. Membership in the Chamber was open only to those who were liable to pay *patentes*. Following the abolition of *patente* under the Pondicherry Patente (Abolition) Act, 1970 with effect from 15 August 1970, the question of qualification for membership in the Chamber has also become uncertain.

The Chamber was almost a semi-autonomous body and wielded considerable power and influence during the French days. But with the establishment of the Directorate of Agriculture, Industries etc., after merger the scope of activities of the Chamber stood considerably reduced. The Chamber now functions mainly as a liaison agency between those who represent trade, industry and commerce and the Government.

During the French period, the Chamber used to receive a small portion of the *patente* collection, the port-tax (*droit de quais*) and boat-tax (*droit de chelignes*) from the Government for carrying on its functions. In due course

this source of income dried up under the changed circumstances. With the prior approval of the Government, the Chamber could also raise loans with a view to meeting certain items of capital expenditure. It now subsists almost entirely on the income derived by way of rent from its building and godowns.

Other Trade Associations : The Shroff Merchants Association was formed on 29 September 1953 for the purpose of safeguarding the interests of the community engaged in the trade. The Association also avows to inculcate the principles of honesty in business. As part of this effort, the Association had opened a Weighing Centre for the public to weigh the jewels and give bills specifying the exact weight. Highly sensitive scales are used by this weighing centre.

The following are some of the important trade associations in the Territory :

1. The Muttialpet Nelli Thotty Rice Merchants Association, 2, St. Simonpet, Muttialupettai.
2. The Pondicherry Nelliemandi Vyabarigal Sangam, Paddy mandi, Jawaharlal Nehru Street, Pondicherry.
3. The Pondicherry Toddy and Pattai Sellers Association, 111, Ambalathadayar Madam Street, Pondicherry.
4. The Pondicherry State Chemists and Druggists Association, 80-82, Jawaharlal Nehru Street, Pondicherry.
5. The Pondicherry Confectionary Owners Association, 11, Upstairs, Kamatchiamman Koil Street, Pondicherry.
6. The Pondicherry Tempo Auto-Rickshaw Owners Association, 63, Bharathi Street, Pondicherry.
7. The Pondicherry Liquor Bar Owners Association, 102 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Pondicherry.
8. The Pondicherry Territory Bakery Owners Association, 14, Diagamudaliar Street, Pondicherry.
9. The Pondicherry Territory Chit Fund Association, 51, Ambalathadayar Madam Street, Pondicherry.

10. The Pondicherry Liquor Merchants Association, 53, Jawaharlal Nehru Street, Pondicherry.
11. The Pondicherry Small Industries Association, C/o Chamber of Commerce, Pondicherry.
12. The Pondicherry Territory Printers Association, 48/B, Ambalathadayar Madam Street, Pondicherry.
13. The Pondicherry Pawn brokers Association, 72, Bharathi Street, Pondicherry.
14. The Pondicherry Rice Mill Owners Association, 22, Kalatheeswaran Koil Street, Pondicherry.

Besides those mentioned above, there are several other associations representing handloom weavers, manufacturers, etc. in the Territory. But one particular characteristic of many of these associations is that they are most of the time in a state of dormancy but wake up to some kind of activity only when they are faced with some problem affecting their interest.

Organs of Trade News : The Bulletin of the **Chambre de Commerce** sponsored by the Pondicherry Chamber of Commerce first appeared as a quarterly journal from 1966, both in Tamil and English dealing chiefly with problems faced by the business as well as the industrial community of Pondicherry. It started appearing once a year since 1971 and it ceased to appear after two years.

The Directorate of Industries brings out a quarterly journal 'Pondicherry Industries News' for the benefit of small-scale industrialists, exporters and traders in the Territory since January, 1972.

The Bureau of Statistics, apart from furnishing the weekly retail prices of about 60 essential commodities to the Central Statistical Organization and to the Planning Commission and the weekly retail prices of about 34 essential commodities to the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, New Delhi, also publishes the weekly price statistics in the Gazette in the form of a Statistical Supplement every month.

Daily wholesale prices of paddy, rice, sugar, coconut, ground-nut kernels, ground-nut oil and gingelly oil prevailing in the Pondicherry market are collected and sent to the District Statistical Officer, Tiruchchirapalli, by telegram to be included in the daily News Bulletin of the Rural Programme broadcast by All India Radio, Tiruchchirapalli.

The weekly market review on variations in wholesale prices of paddy, rice, coconut, ground-nut and vegetable oils and total arrivals of paddy and rice every week is prepared and despatched every Friday to the District Statistical Officer, Tiruchchirapalli, for inclusion in the weekly bulletin on prices broadcast from Tiruchchirapalli station every Monday.

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