



# The Portuguese in Malabar: A Social History of Luso Indians

*Charles Dias*

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## **The Portuguese in Malabar: A Social History of Luso Indians** Charles Dias

The 500-year-old community of Portuguese descendants in Malabar, now called Kerala, is composed of an interesting group of people whose history goes back to the beginnings of European interaction with northern India. This study concentrates on the Portuguese influence from the end of the 15th century to present times, exploring their commercial and religious interventions in Malabar and the resultant political polarization and social changes. In 1453, Constantinople was blockaded by Ottoman Turks, which prevented Europeans from trading with Asian countries and made it necessary for Europeans to find a new sea-route to India. Finally, two Portuguese navigators, Vasco da Gama, followed by Pedro Alvares Cabral, reached Calicut in 1498 and 1500, respectively, leading to the creation of the so-called Portuguese State of India in 1505. The policy of politics through marriages was introduced by Afonso de Albuquerque, who married Portuguese soldiers with Indian women, which resulted in a social group faithful to Portuguese trade centers; this mixed race, or mestices, eventually formed the Luso-Indian community in Malabar.

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