

**COMPANIES, MERCHANTS AND  
MUGHAL OFFICIALS AT SURAT IN  
THE 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY**

*Dissertation Submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the award of the Degree of*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**BY**

**ASHUTOSH KUMAR**

**CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI – 110067  
INDIA  
2001**



जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI-110067

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled 'COMPANIES, MERCHANTS AND MUGHAL OFFICIALS AT SURAT IN THE 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY' submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this university or any other University and is my original work.

**ASHUTOSH KUMAR**

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before examiners for evaluation.

  
**PROP. DILBAGH SINGH**

(Chairperson)

  
**Dr. YOGESH SHARMA**

(Supervisor)

## **Acknowledgement**

I deeply express my gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Yogesh Sharma, who not only guided me in my research but has continuously enlightened me with his wise advises. I am also thankful to Rajesh Kumar, Rahul Srivastava and Deepti Gupta for their cooperation. I expresses my special thanks to Mr. Suraj Kumar Tanti who sat with me overnight on computer to finalise the dissertation.

**New Delhi, 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2001.**

**Ashutosh Kumar**

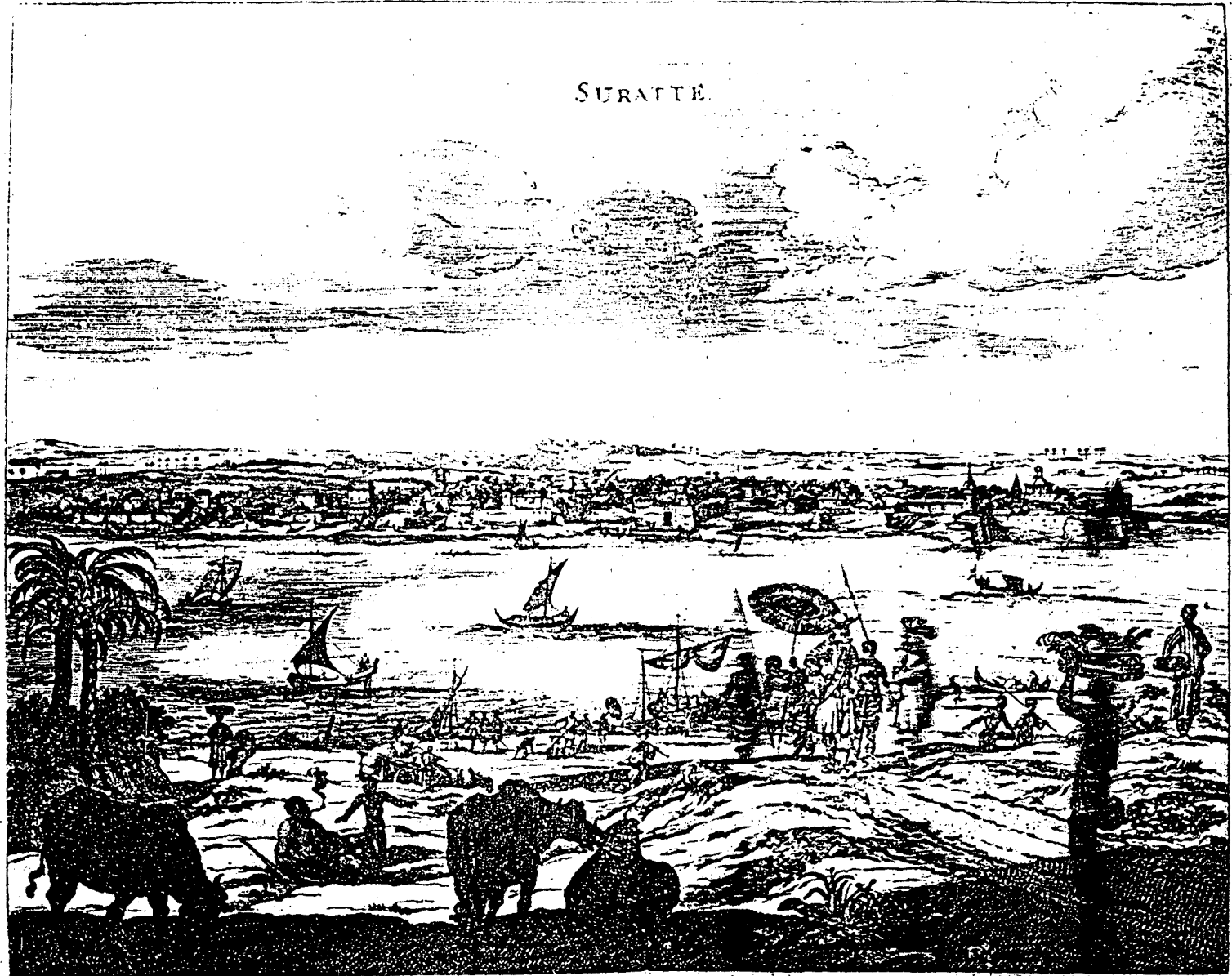
**To my mother, who died in 1999**

It is said that Sikandar, son of Bahlol, King of Dihli repeatedly used to say that “the pivot of King of Dihli rests of Wheat and Jawâr, while the foundation of the King of Gujarat is on corals and pearls because there are eighty-four ports under the King of Gujarat, God knows the best.” -*Mirat-i-Ahmadi* of Muhammad Ali Khan, tr. M.F. Lokhandawala, Baroda, 1965, p-8.

“I can only say that very few cities in the world can compare with Surat in the magnitude of commercial transactions and the inflow of gold and silver into the city ..... whatever comes into Surat remains within the country. It is like miniature Babylon with men of almost every nationality thronging the streets in their national costumes and speaking diverse languages.”-Francois Martin- India in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, social, economic and political (Memoirs of Francois Martin), translated and annotated by Lotika Vardarajan, p-1002.

## INDEX

	Page No
Introduction	1-6
Chapter I : Bandar Mubarak	7-26
Chapter II : Port-City Administration	27-54
Chapter III : Merchant Communities of Surat: Muslims, Armenians, Bohras and Parsis	55-78
Chapter IV : Banias of Surat and their Organisational Methods	79-100
Chapter V : Mughal State, Surat Merchants and European Companies	101-123
Appendix : Surat Governors from 1608- 1677	124-128
Bibliography :	129-140



VIEW OF SURAT. c. 1670  
From *Baldaeus' Voyage*, 1672

## INTRODUCTION

The focus of this dissertation is look into various aspects of Surat from the Merchant's and mercantile perspectives, during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century Surat appears to be ever growing and thriving port despite so many problems, confusion, disturbances and dislocations. In fact, the mercantile ethos of Surat during the century was so strong that despite multitudes of problems and most importantly the repeated menace of the Marathas the port city retained its premier position till at least 1720's. The harmonious mercantile atmosphere (trading rivalry between the individual merchants apart), existence of various communities of merchants (Muslims, Hindus, Jain, Parsis) and also settlements of foreign merchants such as Armenian, the Dutch, the English, the French as well as temporary visits of some of the merchants from other parts of world made Surat a real cosmopolitan city during the seventeenth century. Francois Martin has aptly remarked that "It is a miniature Bayblon with men of almost every nationality thronging the streets in their national costumes and speaking diverse tongues". (Martin, 1002).

Among the Seventeenth century the past had trading network with Red Sea, Persian Gulf, Eastern Coast of Africa, South-east Asian ports and as far as China and Japan. The



Dutch spice trade in South-east Asia was closely tied to the textiles of Surat. Surat was an insatiable ground for silver, pear, bullion, coral and others goods which were brought by European or Surat merchants from abroad. The balance of payment was heavily in favour of the port city.

The nature of the port-city of Surat during the 17<sup>th</sup> century was that of an international emporium. It was not producing centre of any commodity of worth, neither was it a big market of consumption in itself. The goods produced and purchased at all the places in the hinterland of the Mughal e.g. indigo from Bayana near Agra and Sarkined, silk<sup>1</sup> cloth from Ahmedabad, while and stained calicos from Bhroach, etc., were brought to Surat for their export to different parts of the world. Similarly, the goods which were brought from outside and had market in India were transported overland to different cities. Not only this, goods from different parts of the world were also brought to Surat for transactions. Thevenot says that besides the stuffs and cloths made in the Indies, all the important commodities of Europe as also those of China were sold in its market..... in

---

<sup>1</sup> M.S. Commissariat, pp. 296-298. In fact, the raw silk was brought from Kamimbazar (Bengal) to Ahmedabad, where it was woven and then sent to Surat.

general all those articles which foreign merchants buy for being sold into all parts of the world.<sup>2</sup>

The richness of the merchants of Surat and the versatile Banias attracted the attention of almost all the foreign travellers. Careri says that some of the merchants of Surat are so rich that they can load any great ship out of one of their warehouses. Financial worth of Virji Vora was estimated to be worth eight millions. There were a number of others like him, e.g. Haji Zahid Beg, Bhimji Parekh, Abdul Ghafur, etc. Francois Martin says that there was no dearth of loan at Surat. He remarks that there is no other place in the world where loans could be had so easily.<sup>3</sup>

Because of its importance as a mercantile port city it enjoyed a unique arrangement in the whole Mughal administrative set up. Its *Mutasaddi* (the port officer, who was called as Surat Governor by the Europeans) and other officials were appointed directly from the Court and they were responsible to the Mughal emperor and not to the Viceroy of Gujarat.

The first chapter discusses the factors which led to the rise of Surat as a premier port during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The reasons

---

<sup>2</sup> M.S. Commisariat, Studies in the History of Gujarat, 1987 (Reprint), pp. 95-96.

<sup>3</sup> Francois Martin, p-1002.

behind the decline of Cambay have also been discussed. It has been shown that it was not that rise of Surat which cause the decline of Cambay, rather it was other way round. Also, rise of Surat did not eclipsed other ports of Gujarat. But an important development was that all the major ports and cities of Gujarat became subordinated to Surat port. Goods produced at Cambay, Ahmedabad, Bhroach, Navasari, and others were brought to Surat for export.

The second chapter deals with the unique arrangement of administration of Surat Sarkar into the whole Mughal administrative set-up. Unlike the other port officers which were appointed by the Governor of the Subah, in which the port was, Mutasaddis of Surat, whom the Europeans called the Surat Governors, and other officials were directly appointed by the Court. They were also directly responsible to the emperor and not to the Viceroy of Gujarat province. The dyarchy administration at Surat was particularly important. The Governor and the Quiladar were supposed to be check on each other. This mechanism specially helped the Mughals to retain the control over the city in times of civil wars. Role of various important officials at Surat has also been discussed in the light of merchants perspective.

The third chapter is devoted to the details of four merchant communities of Surat viz. the Muslims, the Armenians, the Bohras and the Parsis. The trading network and other aspects of individual merchants of every community have been discussed.

The fourth chapter is an attempt to understand the Surat Banias' organisational methods during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It has also been pointed out that though their methods of protest were peaceful, these were most of the time successful. It has also been shown that unlike Ahmedabad, there existed no all-merchant organisation. There was no individual leader either to represent the whole multitudes of banias or even their respective communities. Infact, evidences show that mercantile ethos of Surat believed in no single leadership. However, we find many instances of merchants of Surat forming united front against their grievances. However, an important feature of such organisation was that it was very short-lived. Mutual jealousies and rivalries acted as a force of negation in sustaining their organisational protests.

The fifth chapter deals with some aspects of the Mughal-merchant-European Company relations. The Mughal's <sup>et</sup> prospective of the merchants and mercantile affairs have been discussed. Some aspects of the Mughal-Company relations have

been seen through a different angle. It has been shown that while the merchants viewed the European Companies' tendencies to monopolise trading in the Indian Ocean as crucial to them, the Mughals had different notions. The Mughals did not view the European Companies to be powers which should be reined but which could be used for the benefit of the state. Nature of the Surat merchants had also been discussed. They failed to respond to the use of force by the Europeans. Although they traded extensively, they remained 'peddlers in their mind'.

## CHAPTER I

### BANDAR MUBARAK

Gujarat has been the region of merchants' activities and centre of export and import trade since the pre-historic times. During Harappa phase, Lothal with a huge dockyard was the port par excellence for trading with the contemporary civilisations of West Asia. During the ancient times Bhrigukachha or Bhroach was the most important port with Ujjain (Ozene) as an important emporium of its hinterland. The silk brought from as far as China was re-exported to the West through this port.<sup>1</sup> By the time of the Sultanate, Cambay emerged as a premier port, though Bhroach continued to remain as a port of some importance. Annexation of Gujarat by Alauddin Khilji definitely provided the port of Cambay with a greater hinterland of north India. Under the Sultans of Gujarat, the port was so important that the Portuguese preferred to call the province of Gujarat as "Kingdom of Cambay"<sup>2</sup>. Surat which replaced Cambay by the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century remained a port *par excellence* till the second quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when it

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Periplus Maris Erythraei', in The Classical Accounts of India (ed. R. C. Majumdar), Calcutta, 1960, pp-302-4.

<sup>2</sup> M. S. Commissariat -Mandelslo's Travels in Western India, 1638-39, OUP, 1931, P-6.

was eventually replaced by Bombay<sup>3</sup>. Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Surat appears to be ever thriving and always growing. In fact, the height of eminence, prosperity and popularity which Surat enjoyed during the 17<sup>th</sup> century was not achieved by any other port earlier.

### **Decline of Cambay and Rise of Surat**

Geographical factors seem to be the most important factor in the decline of Cambay as a premier port. Because of its situation at the end of the Gulf (of Cambay) and presence of large sand banks, large ships could not reach upto the port directly. This had been a continuous problem and large ships usually anchored either at Gandhar or Gogha and from these goods were transported in smaller boats (called *tawris*) to Cambay. This natural barrier was noticed as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century by the Ibn Battuta<sup>4</sup>. The *Ain-i-Akbari* says that all the large ships anchored at Gogha and goods were trans-shipped to and from Cambay in smaller boats<sup>5</sup>. The process of silting perhaps further affected the port. Accounts of a number of 17<sup>th</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> For a classic account of the decline of Surat, see Asin Dasgupta – Indian Merchants and Decline of Surat, Wiesbaden, 1979, Reprint 1994, especially Chapter 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Rihla* (tr. Mehadi Hasan), Baroda, 1953, p-190. Cf. Cambridge Economic History of India, vol. I, (eds. T. Roychoudhury and Irfan Habib) p-152.

<sup>5</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, (ed. Blochman), Calcutta, 1876, p-486.

century travellers conform this. Thevenot who visited Cambay in 1666 says that the sea was already *half a League* away from the town, through formerly it came upto it and this had greatly reduced the trade of the place because large ships keep miles away out in the sea<sup>6</sup>. The silting had advanced *with time* and damaged the anchoring viability of the port further. Careri, who visited Gujarat in 1695 says that "... the vessels anchor *twelve miles* from it (Cambay) and cannot come upto the city but with flood. For this reason, the ships often do not go up...."<sup>7</sup>

The rushing tide or bore at Gulf of Cambay was also not normal, its speed being so much that, says P. Della Valle (1623), it surpassed the "swiftest race-horse" in the world. This abnormal tide was in "sharp contrast to usual tides at other places" where both the rising and falling of the sea, in the flux and reflux, is done gently in full six hours"<sup>8</sup>. This factor was also observed by Thevenot. He writes, "The tides are so swift to the north of the Gulf of Cambay, that a man on horse-back at full speed cannot keep pace with the first wave. And this violence of

---

<sup>6</sup> S. N. Sen (ed.) – Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri, National Archives of India, New Delhi, 1949, p-17.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p-164.

<sup>8</sup> The Travels of P. Della Valle. Ed. by E. Grey, (Hakluyt Society, 1892, vol-I, pp-103-04.



the sea is one reason also why great ships go but seldom thither".<sup>9</sup>

Diu had the potential to emerge as the leading port of Gujarat during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. and. It was a natural port and well suited for the anchorage of large ships as well as it enjoyed the political patronage also. However, its serious disadvantage was that it had limited hinterland access which was not sufficient to provide the increasing demand of goods. Despite this the port acquired considerable importance in the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This was particularly due to the personal effort of its governor, Malik Ayaz (1500-22). M.N. Pearson has given detailed account of his efforts to raise Diu as premier port of Gujarat<sup>10</sup>. But <sup>with</sup> its capture by the Portuguese in 1536, all hopes of this port emerging as a great entrepot of Gujarat vanished. The port became more a base for the Portuguese to extort tribute. However, it remained as port of some importance during the 17<sup>th</sup> century also. Thevenot (1666) describes it as the second best (first being Surat) in 'all parts of

---

<sup>9</sup> S. N. Sen —*op.cit.*, p-18.

<sup>10</sup> M. N. Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat*, Berkeley, 1976, pp-67-73.

Mogulistan'. The city of Surat, according to him, was 'as big as Surat, but not near so populous'<sup>11</sup>.

Rander was another port which could succeed Cambay or Diu. But it could not survive the sack and burning of the town by the Portuguese in 1530. After this incident, the port rapidly declined. Although the Dutch had established a factory here in early 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was abandoned later. Mandelslo who visited Surat in 1638 describes Rander as " a ruined city where the Dutch had a warehouse".<sup>12</sup> It seems that by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it has become a rural area, for *Mirat* (Supplement) describes the city by saying that "formerly it was town."<sup>13</sup>

Surat was brought up as a port of some importance from obscurity in early 16<sup>th</sup> century by its governor Malik Gopi<sup>14</sup>. He

---

<sup>11</sup> S. N. Sen (ed.), *op.cit.*, p-8, 17. Thomas Herbert, who visited Gujarat in 1627, describes Cambay as the second best city of Gujarat, first and third being Ahmedabad and Surat respectively. Mandelslo (1638) also describes the city as larger than Surat in extent. See M. S. Commissariat, History of Gujarat, II, p-345 (Herbert), 357 (Mandelslo)/

<sup>12</sup> M. S. Commissariat – History of Gujarat, vol-II, p-350.

<sup>13</sup> *Mirat-z-Ahmadi*, Supplement (tr. Nawab and Seddin) Baroda, 1928, p.188.

<sup>14</sup> For the efforts of Malik Gopi, see K.S. Mashew-"Indo-Portuguese Trade and Gujarat Nobility in 16<sup>th</sup> century: A case study of Malik Gopi", IHC, 1987, pp. 357-63. Malik Gopi constructed a huge tank which supplied water to the city throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. The European Travellers frequently refer to this as Gopi Talao. However, this tank has totally dried up by the third quarter of the seventeenth century, as it is evident from the detailed description by John Fryer. See John Fryer, *A New Account of Eastern India and Persia Being Nine Years' Travels, 1672-81*, ed. W. Crooke, 3-vols., London, 1912. Vol-I, p-61. By the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> cent and its bricks were used for the construction of the city wall *Alampanah* in 1716. M.S. Commissariat, *op.cit* pp. 391-392.

made great efforts to make it as a leading port vis-à-vis Diu. However after his death, the port saw a period of many ups and downs throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Portuguese were a great source of disturbance in its infancy. It was burnt in 1530 along with Rander by the Portuguese Captain, Antonio da Silveira. The governor of Surat, Khwaja Safar, built the city fort on the Tapi river to thwart any attack by the Portuguese. The fort successfully defended the city from the Portuguese attack in 1560-61.

The integration of the port with the Mughal Empire after annexation of the Gujarat Subah by Akbar in 1573 contributed to its rise in more than one way<sup>15</sup>. Apart from the physical security, the port was connected with the huge hinterland market. It was because of this that the European Company merchants could travel as far as Agra and Patna and purchase goods and bring them to Surat for export. The annexation of Khandesh in 1601 to the Mughal empire further contributed to enhancement of the importance of the port. This was because now it opened an alternative route to Agra through Burhanpur, Malwa and Gwalior. This route has been described as “safer,

---

<sup>15</sup> However, as pointed out by Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subramanyam there is need of caution in generalising the Mughal factor, according to them ‘neither Goa nor Masulipatanam was there within the Mughal empire during their years of prosperity’. See Alam and Subramanyam (ed.) - *The Mughal State*, 1998, Introduction, p-13.

speedier and cheaper.”<sup>16</sup> The other route which ran from Surat to Agra through Bhroach, Cambay, Ahmedabad and Ajmer has been described as difficult because of intervening desert, the interference of chiefs through whose territories one had to pass, and the highway robbers. Pietro Della Valle (1623), on his way from Cambay to Ahmedabad, saw a large number of “beggars” who were armed with bows and arrows. These ruffians, he says, often robbed travellers whom they met alone or unarmed.<sup>17</sup> Mandelslo faced the attack of Koli robbers on his way from Baroda to Bhroach and Thevenot describes a village named Dabka as a nest of robbers in the Bhroach district.<sup>18</sup> Francois Martin also observed this. He writes that all the inhabitants of the countryside of Bhroach are thieves. Even the children are taught in the art of brigandage from the very early age. He further says that the peasants right up to Agra have the same characteristics. Also, the road between Baroda and Ahmadabad was infested with *Garasia* robbers.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Shireen Moosvi – “Gujarat Ports and their Hinterland: The Economic Relationship” in Indu Banga (ed.) *Ports and Their Hinterlands in India*, Manohar Pub., 1992, footnote no. 15, p-125.

<sup>17</sup> M.S. Commissariat, *History of Gujarat*, vol. II, p 335.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p-357, 367.

<sup>19</sup> Francois Martin, Lotika Vardarajan, *op.cit.*, pp. 861, 863-66.

Geography of Surat was also an important factor. River Tapi, on which mouth Surat was situated, discharged small silt and hence, unlike Cambay, it was not a great threat to the port.<sup>20</sup> The discovery of the Swally hole by an Englishman named Henry Hamilton provided an added advantage to Surat<sup>21</sup>. We know from the brief account of Surat given by Father Manuel Godinho that deep hollows were excavated in the channel of the Tapi river so that the smaller ships could anchor safely at Surat.<sup>22</sup>

Surat was the port of embarkation for the people going to Mecca for Hajj. Because of this reason, the city is also sometimes designated as Bab-al-Hajj or "Gate of pilgrimage"<sup>23</sup>. The Mughals arranged special ships for this annually. Repeated references of the merchants preferring to load their goods on this ship of the Mughal are found in the English and other records. This was because of the special treatment, which such ships received in Persia. Another reason was that the Portuguese or the English did usually not disturb such ships on high sea.

---

<sup>20</sup> Asin Dasgupta *op.cit*, p-3.

<sup>21</sup> See, William Hawkins, in *Early Travels in India* (ed. W. Foster), London, 1927, p-96.

<sup>22</sup> L.M. Moraes – "Surat in 1663, as described by Father Godinho" in Satis Chandra (ed.) – *Essays in Medieval Indian Economic History*, 1987, pp.140-49, pp. 141-42.

<sup>23</sup> M.S. Commissariat, *History of Gujarat*, *op.cit*, p-164.

The coming of the Dutch and English, who brought a heavy demand for type of coarse (chiefly coarse textile) clothes produced in hinterland of Surat in Gujarat, because the fine cloth of Coromandal did not have much demand in the South-east Asian markets, also was a major factor in the rise of Surat. The English and the Dutch purchased textiles at Surat and carried it to the South-east Asian markets to barter these for spices, which were taken to Europe. Two English officials at Achin, George Robinson and Richard Allen, wrote a letter dated 28 February, 1622 to the Surat factory that "Goods urgently needed from Surat, as pepper is plentiful."<sup>24</sup> However, this overwhelming demand for the Gujarati coarse cloth was associated with the painful memory of the decline in the Gujarati shipping to South-east Asia, for the English and the Dutch monopolised this during the first quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. By the 1620's, the shipping to the Red Sea was also monopolised by the English.<sup>25</sup> The lament of the Gujarati shipping merchants is reflected in the account of Pelseart, who visited Surat in 1627. It is worth quoting-

---

<sup>24</sup> EFI, 1622-23, p.28.

<sup>25</sup> For details, see P. N. Chakrabarti – Decay of Mughal India's Red Sea Trade Monopoly (1619-1627) in I.H.C., 1979, pp

“All merchants, from whatever country they come, complain most bitterly. Portuguese, Muslims and Hindus all concur in putting the blame for this state of things entirely on the English and on us [Dutch], saying that we are the scourges of the sea and their prosperity. Often enough, if we notice any shortcoming, and blame them, or threaten them, for it, the leading merchants tell us they heartily wish we had never come to their country. They point to the number of ships that used to sail from Surat alone – every year four or five of the king’s great ships, each of 400 or 500 last (two for Achin, two for Ormuz, two for Bantam, Macassar and those parts), besides smaller ships owned by individual merchants, coming and going in large numbers. Nowadays the total is very small.”<sup>26</sup>

It is important to note that the establishment of the three great Muslim empires in the Western Indian Ocean during the 16<sup>th</sup> century – Mughal, Safavid and Ottoman – enhanced the trading linkages in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf and Red

---

<sup>26</sup>

Moreland and Geyl (tr.), *Jahangir’s India*, Cambridge, 1925, p-40.

Sea and hence contributed to the rise of Surat.<sup>27</sup> The Mughals had good relation with the Safavid and Ottoman empires, which was maintained through exchanges of diplomats, eminent artists and other cultural personalities. The goods of Surat had ready market in Persia and the profit was also great.<sup>28</sup> The Surat merchants were already trading with this region when the English arrived in India. When the English tried to establish monopoly of the Red Sea trade, the merchants of Surat stopped selling goods to them and organised a “general boycott” in 1619.<sup>29</sup>

Yet another important factor which sustained Surat to remain a premier port during the 17<sup>th</sup> century was its mercantile ethos. The port city was full of merchants, brokers and shroffs. They were very experts in mercantile dealings. *Dubhasis* (the interpreters) were easily available to help the European merchants to strike a deal. Many brokers of Surat had working knowledge of one or two European languages. English factory

---

<sup>27</sup> Asin Dasgupta, *op.cit.*, p-3-5.

<sup>28</sup> The English Ship *Lion* returned to Surat in October 1619 and made nearly 100 percent profit. This incredible profit induced Kerridge, the then President of the English factory at Surat, to resolve to prosecute this trade, though he was earlier against this. See, *England's Quest*, p-290. Cf. P. N. Chakrabarti- *Decay of Mughal India's Red Sea Trade Monopoly (1619-27)* IHC, 19, footnote no. 26, p-....

<sup>29</sup> EFI, 1618-21, p-XIV. A letter says “The Surat merchants oppose the trade ‘as very prejudiciall into them forbade all induced.’ To prevent it they forbade all dealing with the English the commodities suitable for the Red Sea.” *Ibid.*, p-50.



records speak of a person named Dhanji who worked as Company's linguist in 1620's.<sup>30</sup> Ovington also refers to a *bania* who could roughly speak English.<sup>31</sup> He also says that the brokers were allowed 3% charge for their care and trouble.<sup>32</sup> The *Hundi* network was fully developed and merchants of Surat had their agents not only in the major cities of the Mugal empire, but abroad also. Mandelslo, who visited Surat in 1638-39 says that, "The banya shroffs had their correspondents to all parts of Asia, as also at Constantinople in Europe."<sup>33</sup> The European companies frequently used this facility to transfer their money from one city to another. Sometimes the Mugal also used this facility for the same purpose.

The presence of a number of rich merchants and superfluous money at Surat also was an important factor, which kept the European merchants tied to this port. Viji Vora, Hari Vaishya, Haji Zahid Beg and Abdul Gafur, were some of the merchant princes of Surat. Careri, who visited Surat in 1695 remarks about the richness of the city merchants in these words. "These are such rich merchants, that they can load any great ship out of one of their warehouses."<sup>34</sup> Thavenot estimates

---

<sup>30</sup> EFI, 1624-29, p-228.

<sup>31</sup> Ovington, A.G. Rawlinson (ed.), p. 192.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 233.

<sup>33</sup> Mandelslo, op. cit., p.

<sup>34</sup> Careri, S.N. Sen (ed.), op. cit., p. 163.

the financial worth of Virji Vora to be worth eight million.<sup>35</sup> About the superfluous of money at Surat, Francois Martin, writes "Amidst all this confusion, there is no place in the world where it is easier to secure a loan ..... They are never chary of advancing loans to men of commercial ability no matter how impecunious they may be in appearance."<sup>36</sup> He makes an interesting remark about the enormous money found at the port. He says that the Mughal nobles at court have their changers or agents here (Surat) who deploy the wealth of their masters of the most advantage.<sup>37</sup> This remarks of Martin indicates that the nobility indulged in certain amount of speculative activity even if they were personally not involved in this.

### **Surat as Entrepot**

An important point about Surat was that, unlike Cambay and Bhroach, it was neither a large producing centre nor itself a great market for the goods brought here. Its eminence lied in its integration with other ports of Gujarat and hinterland markets in India. It developed as a great emporium where the goods from its hinterland in Gujarat and as far as Agra and Patna were brought for sell and export by the Surat merchants and agents of the

---

<sup>35</sup> Thevenot, S.N. Sen, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>36</sup> F. Martin, Lotika Vardarajan, op.cit., pp. 1002-03.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 1003.

European companies. Careri, who visited Surat in 1695, says that goods produced at Ahmedabad and Bhroach were transported to Surat for final transaction. He explains the large hinterland access of Surat in a poetic manner. He writes:

“I purposely omit to mention particularly so many countries (parts of India), which like Rivers to the sea convey all their wealth to suratte, because of the good vent they find for it there; this being a matter well known to the Europeans.”<sup>38</sup>

Surat was also a transit port for the goods brought from various parts of the world. European travellers of 17<sup>th</sup> century vividly describe this. Thevenot says that apart from the stuffs and clothes made in the Indies, all the important commodities of Europe as also those of China were sold in its markets. Among various commodities, he especially enumerates musk, amber, incense, manna, salammoniac, quick silver, lac, indigo and the ‘root renas for dying red’, and in general all those articles which foreign merchants buy for being sold in all parts of the world.<sup>39</sup> Description of Surat given by Ovington and Francois Martin also

---

<sup>38</sup> Careri in S. N. Sen (ed.) *op.cit.*, p-164.

<sup>39</sup> ‘M. Jean De Thevenot’s Account of Surat’, in M. S. Commissariat - Studies in the History of Gujarat, 1987 (Reprint, PP 79-96, p-95.

conforms to this.<sup>40</sup> The international importance of the port is also reflected in the remark of Father Godinho, who says that, "You can find at Surat Spaniards, Frenchmen, Germans, Englishmen, Hollanders, Flemings, men from Dankerk, Italians, Hungarians, Poles, Swedes, Turks, Arabs, Persians, Tartars, Georgians, Scythians, Chinese, Malabarians, Bengalee, Ceylonese, Armenians, with other infinite variety of barbaric and strange nationalities."<sup>41</sup>

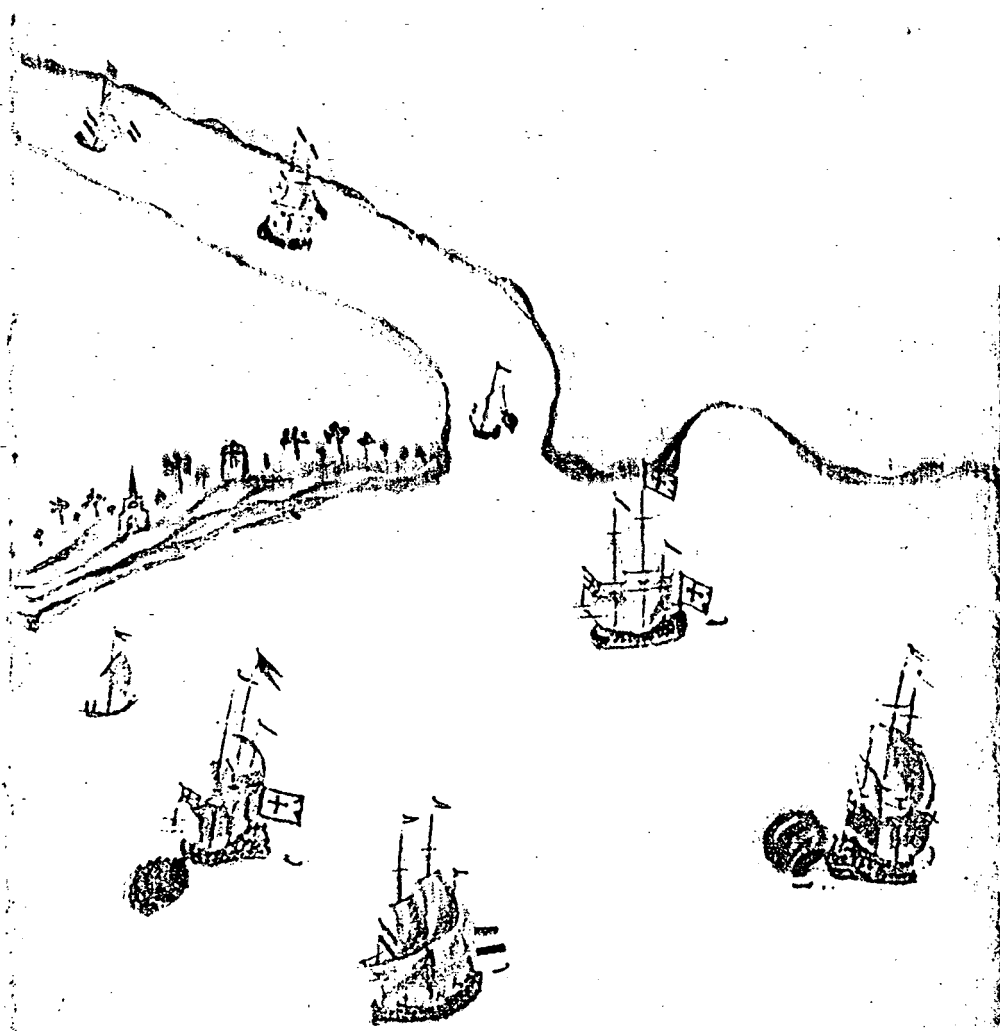
TH-9553



---

<sup>40</sup> Ovington says "Surat is reckoned the most famed emporium of the Indian Empire,. And not only from Europe, but also from China, Persia, Arabia and other remote parts of India, ships unload abundance of all kinds of goods...." *A voyage to Surat in the Year 1689*, A. G. Rawlinson (ed.), London, 1929, p- 131. Francios Martin, while leaving Surat in 1684 to take charge as the Chief of the French factory at Pondicherry remarks, "I can only say that very few cities in the world can compare with Surat in the magnitude of commercial transactions.... It is the miniature Babylon with men of almost every nationality thronging the streets in their costumes and speaking diverse language." See *India in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, social, economic and political (Memoires of Francois Martin)* tr. By Lotika Vardarajan, Manohar publications, 1984, vol-II, part I, p-1002.

<sup>41</sup> Father Godinho, in Satis Chandra, (ed.) op.cit., p-142.



SWALLY PORT

'The Maner of the Citey of Surat with Swallow (? Hole and the) factoryes and the River as the(y) Liye in the East Indies (in the latitude) of 21 degrees north.'

*Reduced from the original in the Journal (1655-1703) of Edward Barlowe, seaman*

## Swally Port

Unlike Cambay, Surat was not a port. Its port where the ships anchored was situated about 10 miles away in the coast of the Swally village. The port was naturally fitted for anchorage of large ships. Here a fleet could ride and anchor much more safely than among the shifting shoals of Tapi or Tapi river. The custom-house or *Alfadica*, as it is called in the English factory records, was located here. The goods were uploaded or downloaded here, and after paying custom duty, were carried to Surat through road.

Although Swally was a village, but during trading season,<sup>42</sup> it gave the appearance of a 'country fair', says Thomas Herbert. He writes that all the Banya merchants pitched their booths or straw huts in large numbers all along the sea-front. Hence all important merchants and European companies had separate booths for their warehouse, stables and other adjuncts.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> The trading season at the coast was from October to April and no work was possible from May to September due to wind and tempests. Mandelslo says "But from May to September, there is no staying on those coasts, by reason of winds and tempests, accompany'd by extraordinary thunder and lightening which reign there during all that time." Mandelslo's Travels in Western India (1638-39), M. S. Commissariat, O.U.P., 1931, p-9.

<sup>43</sup> M. S. Commissariat, History of Gujarat, *op.cit.*, chapter XXX, p-346.

The Swally port was also a centre for the small Banyas to sell large variety of goods in small market or *bazar*. Herbert says that they sold calicos, china (a type of cloth), satins, porcelain, escritiores or cabinets of mother-of-pearl, ebony, ivory, agates, carnelian, etc; also rice, sugar, plantains, and arrak.<sup>44</sup> John Fryer who arrived at Swally from Bombay in 1674 also describes the city as thriving with smaller merchants. He writes "As soon as you have set your foot on shore, they (Banyas) crowd in their service, interposing between you and all civil respect, as if you had no other business but to be gulled; ... enduring servility foul words, affronts and injuries for a future hope of gain; expert in all the studied arts of thriving and insinuation. ... These generally are the poorer sorts, and set on by the richer to trade with the seamen for the meanest things they bring."<sup>45</sup>

Unlike the roads between Baroda and Bhroach, which was infested by Rasbbouters (Rajput)<sup>46</sup> robbers (as Mandelslo says), the road between Swally and Surat was safe. Thomas Roe describes the road to be safest in the Mughal Empire. He writes, "The road of Swally and the port of Surat (i.e. between Swally

---

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> J. Fryer, *op.cit.*, vol-I, PP 211-12.

<sup>46</sup> Though referred to as Rajputs, the bandits were probably Kolis. See, Commissariat, History of Gujarat, *op.cit.*, p-357.

and Surat) are the fittest for you in all the Mughal territory ... the road at Swally during the season is as safe as pond."<sup>47</sup>

Surat could also be reached from Swally port by river in a small boat.<sup>48</sup> But this travel through the sea-coast, despite being shorter, was not preferred by the travellers due to fear of the Malabari pirates.<sup>49</sup> However, night travel through this route was considered safer.<sup>50</sup>

### **City Walls**

The city of Surat had a very poor defence wall before the attack of Shivaji in 1664. Thomas Herbert, who visited the city in 1627, says that the town was enclosed by a mud wall.<sup>51</sup> After Shivaji's first sack of Surat in 1664, Aurangzeb ordered building of a strong wall of ten feet thick and ten feet high. Thevenot says that the city had hitherto only dilapidated mud walls, but he

---

<sup>47</sup> W. Foster (ed.) – The Embssy of Sir Thomas Roe, Nedeln, Leichtenstein, 1967, vol-I, p-345.

<sup>48</sup> Mandelslo, unlike other travellers, proceeded from Swally by a small boat to Surat. See Commissariat, History of Gujarat, *op.cit.*, chapter XXXI, p-349.

<sup>49</sup> Thevenot while returning from Cambay to Surat, was told that it would take no more than 24 hours. But he dicided to go overland due to fear of the Malabari pirates. See Commissariat, History of Gujarat, *op.cit.*, Chapter-XXXII, p-369.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* p-369, Thevenot says that the vessels sailed generally by night for fear of the Malabar pirates (in the day time).

<sup>51</sup> See Commissariat- History of Gujarat, *op.cit.*, chapter –XXX, p-345.



saw the walls, ordered by Aurangzeb, being constructed.<sup>52</sup> This wall called *Sheherpanah* or “The Safety of the City”, took fifteen years to be completed. John Fryer who visited the city first time in 1674, saw it still under construction and its damaged part (by Shivaji’s second sack of Surat in 1670) being repaired. He says that seven hundred men had been assigned at this period for (construction of) the walls. With European gunners at every gate, which were six in number besides 36 bastions with half a dozen great guns apiece and spiked timber being piled upon the top to repel the seakers. However, when he returned to the city in January 1679, he saw it completed.<sup>53</sup>

However, this wall was not strong enough to defend. The comments by Francois Martin and Careri bear testimony to the fact that this wall was very weak. While Martin describes it as “*a very badly constructed wall*”, Careri Says it a “*Weak wall*”<sup>54</sup> It was due to this reason and the increasing Maratha menace to the city that, in 1717, Farrukhsiyar ordered, Haider Quli Khan, the then Governor of Surat, construction of a new line of fortification which enclosed both the city and the extensive

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. chapter –XXXII, p-361.

<sup>53</sup> John Fryer, William Croode (ed.), vol-I, p-248, vol-III, PP 161-62.

<sup>54</sup> F. Martin, Lotika Vardarajan (ed.), *op.cit.*, p-1004; Careri, S. N. Sen (ed.) *op.cit.*, p-163.

be known as *Alampanah* or the “Safety of the World”.<sup>55</sup> This was also referred to as “outer wall”, the earlier one (*Sheherpanah*) being now called the “inner wall”.

### **City Gates**

There were three chief gates of the city of Surat. Of these, according to Thomas Herbert, one led to Variav and Cambay, another to Burhanpur and the third to Navasari and hence to Gandevi, Bulsar and Daman.<sup>56</sup> Mandelslo also describes the three gates of the city in similar way.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> M. S. Commissariat, *History of Gujarat*, *op.cit.*, PP 391-92. The construction of this fortification is recorded in a beautiful inscription in the Persian verse, carved in relief on a long slab of white marble, which was found by R. D. Banerji of Archaeological Survey of India in 1921, in the ‘Mughal Sarai’ building at Surat, and which is now located in the National Museum of Mumbai (earlier the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay). See, paper entitled *Two Persian Inscriptions from Surat* by C. R. Singhal in *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1925-26, PP 12-13. Cf. Commissariat, *op.cit.*, footnote no. 25, p-391. *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* clearly says that the foundation of the *Alampanah* was laid by Haider Quli Khan in 1716 and the ceremony was performed by Syed ‘Aqil Khan. *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, tr. M. F. Lokhandawala, *op.cit.*, p-373.

<sup>56</sup> Commissariat, *History of Gujarat*, *op.cit.*, chapter XXX, PP 345-46.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter-XXXI, p-350.

## CHAPTER II

### PORT-CITY ADMINISTRATION

After Akbar annexed Gujarat in 1573, it was divided into sixteen Sarkars (administrative units) – ten as revenue paying and the other six as tribute paying.<sup>1</sup> Surat was one of the revenue paying Sarkars and consisted of twenty-nine Paraganas, including the port-city which constituted a separate Paragana<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> The ten revenue paying Sarkars were- Ahmedabad Sarkar, Pattan Sarkar, Baroda Sarkar, Broach Sarkar [this Sarkaar was under the Mutasaddi of Surat, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Khatima* or Supplement, tr. Nawab and Sedden, 1928, Baroda, p-175], Champaner Sarkar, Nanded Sarkar, Ghodhara Sarkaar, Sorath Sarkar, Islam Nagar or Nawab Nagar Saarkar, and Surat Sarkar. The six tribute paying (Peshkashi) Sarkars were- Dongarpur Sarkar, Bansballa Sarkar,, Sulaimannagar Sarkar, South Sarkar, Sirohi Sarkar and Ramnagaar Sarkar. By the royal orders of Akbar these six Sarkars were allowed to be retained by those who were in possession of them under the Sultans of Gujarat (See *Ibid*, p. 162-93). The holders of the tribute paying Sarkars – Girasia Rajputs, Kolis, Kathis, Jats, Jhadedas, Bakhirs, Koraisis, Rathors, Ahirs and Makwanas –were called Zamindars and not Jagirdars. They were required to pay tribute to the Nazims and maintain a fixed Contigent and serve whenever required. (*Ibid*. pp-189-90). During the time of Akbar, the Zamindar of Ramnagar was ordered to attend with 1000 cavalry (*Ibid*. p-193). Sometimes, the Zamindar of a Sarkar enjoyed the mansab rank also and in this case his Zamindari was converted into his Jagir. For example, Akbar granted to Bahadur Khan Babi the Sarkar of Sirohi as his Jagir on condition of waiting with 2,000 soldiers on the Nazims (*Ibid*. p-191). Also during the reign of Aurangzeb, Rawal Ram Singh enjoyed a mansab of 1000 zat and 1000 Sawar and held Dongarpur Sarkar as his Jagir (*Ibid*. p-190).

<sup>2</sup> The twenty-nine Paraganas of Surat Sarkar were – the Surat city with its Mint and Corn Market, etc; Paragana Chorasi; Paragana Rander; Paragana Haroli; Paragana Blasar; Paragana Chikhli; Paragana Marpara; Paragana Bardoli and Momra; Paragana Gandevi; ParaganaBalesar; Paragana Malur; Paragana Khandka; Paragana Sahrat; Paragana Balvara; Paragana Anawal; ParaganaVahmuri; Paragana Lohari; ParaganaBansar; Paragana Sirbhom; Paragana Kharod; Paragana Mosar (its Thanadari or policing was under the Mutasaddi of Surat); Paragana Mahuwa; Paragana Biyadra; Paragana Kus; Paragana Barjot; Paragana Talari; Paragana Kamrej; Paragana Navsari; and Paragana Talsir. (*Mirat*, supplement, op. cit., pp-188-89). Later Surat Sarkar was also known as Surat Athawishi i.e. Surat of 28 Parganas. See M.S. Commissariat- *History of Gujarat*, 2 vols, vol-II (1573-1758), Orient longman, first Pub. September 1957, p-5.

Important ports under Surat Sarkar were Port Sohab, Baras Jalab, Parahul, Balsar, Navsari, Haloni, Gandevi, Chikhli, Sirbhawan and Hira<sup>3</sup>. The revenue-paying Sarkar of Broach and tribute-paying Sarkar of Ramnagar were under the Mutasaddi of Surat. The Zamindar of Ramnagar paid tribute to the Surat Mutasaddi<sup>4</sup>. Sometimes the Mutasaddi of Surat enjoyed control over the port of Cambay also. E.g. Muqarrab Khan during the reign of Jahangir.<sup>5</sup>

Owing to mercantile and financial importance, the city of Surat had the distinction of being treated as a separate administration, despite it nominally being a part of the Gujarat Subah. Its Mutasaddi or Governor (as the Europeans called him) and other officials were appointed by the Mughal emperor. Surat Mutasaddi was no way responsible to the Nazim at Ahmedabad and reported directly to the Emperor<sup>6</sup>. The financial importance of the Port-city is reflected in the magnitude of the revenue which it yielded to the imperial exchequer. According to the Ain-i-Akbari<sup>7</sup>, which shows the economic condition of the Mughal

---

<sup>3</sup> Mirat, Supplement, p-201.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. for Broach, p-175, 201, for Ramnagar, p-201.

<sup>5</sup> M.S. Commissariat, op. cit., p-5.

<sup>6</sup> Mirat-i-Ahmadi, tr. M.F. Lokhandawala, Baroda, 1965, p-19.

<sup>7</sup> Ain-i-Akbar. Tr. H.C. Beveridge, Delhi, 1972, vol-II, p- 261-62.

empire by the close of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the revenue of the port was 55,30,145dams or Rs 1,38,253.62 (One rupee=40dams) which rose to 1,50,00,000 dams or Rs 3,75,000 by the early 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>8</sup>. Foreign travellers also give an account of the income of the Surat port from customs, though these are not supported by statistical data. According to M. De Thevernot, who visited Surat in 1666, the income from the Swally port alone was twelve lakh rupees<sup>9</sup>.

Apart from separate administrative arrangement, another important feature of Surat Sarkar was that its revenue and sometimes control also was assigned to a member of the royal family for his/her personal expenditure. During the reign of Jahangir, it was assigned to Prince Parvez and after his death to Prince Khurram (later Mughal emperor Shahjahan). From a letter of Thomas Roe to the Surat factory in 1616, we know that the port was under the control of Prince Khurram and even the emperor Jahangir did not wish to interfere<sup>10</sup>. During the reign of

---

<sup>8</sup> Mirat, Supplement, op.cit. , p-188. One rupee is equal to 40 dams, see Mirat-i-Ahmadi, op.cit., pp-12-13.

<sup>9</sup> S.N. Sen (ed.)- Indian Travels of Thevenot and Carari, National Archives of India, new Delhi, 1949, p-38. To quote him-" Soualy had nothing lessened the customs which yielded the King yearly twelve lakhs of rupees."

<sup>10</sup> When Roe requested the Mughal emperor Jahangir to grant him a letter granting concessions for the officials at Surat, the reply of the emperor was, to quote him, "he had entrusted that place (Surat) to his son (Prince Khurram) and did not meddle." See Letters Received by the East India Company, William Foster (ed.), vol-IV, 1616, p-204.

Shahjahan, it was granted as 'inam' to the Queen in 1644<sup>11</sup>, but later granted to the Princess Jahanara Begum (eldest daughter of Shahjahan) for the expenditure of pan (betel) during the reign of Aurangazeb.<sup>12</sup>

## THE DYARCHY

The Mughal control over Surat was exercised through a dyarchic form of government with power being vested with two officials, independent of each other.<sup>13</sup> One was the Mutasaddi or the Governor, the other was the Qiladar or the Fort Commander. The two authorities were supposed to keep a check on each other. Both the authorities were appointed by the imperial court, former under the seal of the Diwan-i-Ala with 300 troopers (100 personal + 200 contingent)<sup>14</sup> and the latter under the seal of the

---

<sup>11</sup> *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, op.cit,p-193.

<sup>12</sup> Manucci – *Storia do Mogor*, tr.William Irvine, 4 Vols, Calcutta, 1965, Vol-I, p-63. Princess Jahanara built a pleasure-resort outside the city for the people of surat. This resort was called the Princess Garden or the "Begum Wadi" by Thevenot. See M. S. Commissariat, op.cit., p-364. After more than a century, the Dutch sea-captain and traveller J. S. Stavorinus (1775) described the Garden of Begum Sahib "in a deplorable state of decay." See, Stavorinus, *Voyages to the East Indies*, tr. S. H. Wilcocke, vol-III, p-177.

<sup>13</sup> Asin Dasgupta has given an account of officials at Surat who acted as check on the Surat Mutasaddi. See Asin Dasgupta- *Indian Merchants and Decline of Surat, e.1700-1750*, 1979. Reprint 1994, pp-24-25. He has supplemented the *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* with the Dutch sources (mainly the Dagh Register). He writes that besides the Qiladar, the Diwan, the Waqianavis (public recorder of the events), the Harkara (who sent confidential reports to the emperor) and also to the agents of the principal merchants of Surat at the Mughal Court.

<sup>14</sup> *Mirat*, Supplement, op.cit., p-188. However, an English letter of 1663, mentioning the coming of the new Governor of Surat, named Inayat Khan, says that he had 2,000 Sawar. "His quality is 2000 horse pays." See, *EFI*, 1661-64, p-203. John Fryer says that he has in his pay an army of 1500 men and 200 horse. (to be continued on the next page)

Commander of Artillery with 250 cavalry, besides his personal mansab and contingent.<sup>15</sup>

This diarchic form of government especially proved crucial during the period of civil wars or rebellion of a prince. For example, in 1627, when Prince Khurram rebelled against his father Jahangir the city of Surat was easily captured by his men but the officials at Surat successfully resisted the surrender of the castle.<sup>16</sup> In 1657, when Prince Murad, the then Governor of Gujarat Subah, during the 'war of succession' sent his man Shahbaz Khan to plunder the city. The city was quickly occupied but the Qiladar (Sayid Tayyib) did not relent till part of the fort was destroyed by an explosion of a mine which was said to have been prepared by a Dutch man who had deserted his (Prince Murad) service. This explosion left only one garrison to defend the fort. The Qiladar feared of the second explosion and hence surrendered. All the treasures, public and private, was captured.<sup>17</sup> Because of the richness of the treasure at the Surat Castle, it quickly attracted the attention of the rebellious prince.

---

See W.C. Crooke (ed.) *A New Account of East India and Persia- being Nine Years Travels (1672-81)* by John Fryer (Nedeln/Liechtenstein), 1967, 3 vols., vol-I, p-242.

<sup>15</sup> Mirat, Supplement, op.cit., p- 187.

<sup>16</sup> See *EFI*, 1624-29, pp-205-7.

<sup>17</sup> M.S. Commissariat, op.cit., p-135; also see *EFI*, 165-60, p-123-24.

The reason behind the rich treasure at the Surat Castle was perhaps that the revenue of the Surat Sarkar kept here was seldom sent to the Court, as Thevenot says that “..... the Revenues of the king that are collected in the province are kept here (Surat Castle), which are never sent to Court but by express Orders.”<sup>18</sup>

The Governor lived a life of pomp, while the Qiladar remained secluded from the public life. This is clear from the accounts of them given by Fryer and Ovington. Describing the morning *darbar* of the Surat *Mutasaddi*, Fryer says “For all the Governor comes to his seat attended every morning with 300 foot with fire-arms, three elephants in their clothing ..... forty horses mounted, four and twenty banners of state; besides a large retinue of the *Cazy*'s, who is always present to assist him in law points. Moreover, he has loud trumpets ..... with thundering kettle-drum.”<sup>19</sup> About the *Qiladar*, Ovington writes, “The Governor of the Castle (*Qiladar*) is appointed by the Mogul and his authority seldom stretches beyond space of three years, in all which time he is a real prisoner under the appearance of a high commander, and under a severe and strict engagement never to

---

<sup>18</sup> See “Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri.” S.N. Sen (ed.) op.cit., p-22.

<sup>19</sup> Fryer op.cit., p-242..



pass without the walls of his Castle .....”<sup>20</sup> Manucci also says that “ These Governors may not leave the fortress during their term of office, nor allow any stranger to enter .....”<sup>21</sup> Thevenot is more direct to comment on the dyarchic form of the Surat administration. He writes, “There are two Governors or Nabad [Nabab?] at Surat, who have no dependence on each other, and give an account of their actions only to the king. The one commands the Castle, and the other the Town; and they encroach not upon one another’s rights and duties.”<sup>22</sup>

{ Apart from the Mutasaddi and the Qiladar, there were a host of other officials who were also appointed by the Mughal Court or the Head Office. Mirat (supplement) enumerates twenty-nine officials. These officials were: the Artillery Comander; Grand Bakhshi; Chief Judge; Mir-i-Saman; Port Master; Sadrs; Qazis; Bakhshis; reporters; peons; Muhtasibs; Superintendent of Arab and Iriqi horses, which are imported in ships; Superintendent of Cattle market; Court Daroga, Amin of the Treasury and of expenditure; Superintendents of the Civil Court; of Public Works; of Magazines; of Mint; of Salt; of Customs; of Endowments; of

---

<sup>20</sup> J.Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat*, ed. H.G. Rawlinsen, London, 1929, p- 130-31.

<sup>21</sup> Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, op.cit., vol-II, p-419.

<sup>22</sup> Thevenot, op.cit., p-27.

Provisions; of Jewellery and Fancy Markets; of Rent Collections; of Hospitals; of the Langar Khanas; of Corn Markets; and for the annual presents for the Harims of Mecca and Medina.<sup>23</sup> B.G. Gokhale has classified these twenty-nine officials into seven categories.<sup>24</sup>

### **IMPORTANT OFFICIALS**

From one mercantile perspective, among all the authorities at Surat, the Mutasaddi, the Shah Bandar (the Post-Master or the Customer), the Mint-Master, the Kotwal and the Qazi were most important.

#### **Mutasaddi**

Because of special importance of the Surat port, its Mutasaddi was usually a close confidant of the Mughal Emperor. In most of the cases, the holder of this office was either himself a great merchant or had large stake in shipping and trading. Sometimes farming of this office is also noticed during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. For example, in 1621, Ishaq Beg got this port on promise of increasing the collection of revenue by 2,00,000

---

<sup>23</sup> *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* (Supplement), op.cit., p-188.

<sup>24</sup> B.G. Gokhale –“ Surat in the 17<sup>th</sup> century: A study in Urban History of pre-modern India.” Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1978, p-61.

mahmudis.<sup>25</sup> Also, in 1632 Mir Musa had to pay a sum of £10,000 to retain his position.<sup>26</sup> The Governor of Surat not only profited greatly from his investment in the trade and extortion from the local as well as European merchants, but also took a share in the imperial purchasing. An interesting example for the latter is provided in case of Rustam Zamir, the Mutasaddi of Surat from 1669-70. He allied with the English Company and agreed to manipulate the purchasing price of lead for the King from Rs 5 to Rs 6 per maund on condition that he would take half of the increase amount i.e. Rs ½ per maund. To quote the letter “ Your late President and Councell had often considered and debated of a way to raise the price of your lead, but could never bring it about till this Governor, Rustum Zamire (Rustam Zmir), ....., came from Agra to take charge of Surat; who, after severall private overtures, came to this agreement that he would use his interest to prevaile with the King to pay a rupee in a maund more then the usual price of 5 rupees, provided he might have halfe the advantage.”<sup>27</sup> Some of the Governors of Surat have been reported to be very rich. Mandelslo says that he was creditably informed that Azam Khan (Governor of Surat, 1636-

---

<sup>25</sup> EFI,1618-21, p-XXXIV.

<sup>26</sup> EFI, 1630-33, p-193.

<sup>27</sup> EFI, 1668-69, p-198-99.

42) was worth fifty million crowns.<sup>28</sup> Ghiyasuddin Khan, another Governor of Surat (1664-68, 1672-77) was also said to have amassed about 100 lakhs of rupees by various improper means.<sup>29</sup>

Two important offices were under the control and direct patronage of the Mutasaddi. He appointed the Daroga of the Furza or Superintendent of the Imperial customs and the Daroga of the Mint at Surat, with imperial approbation. The office of the Daroga of the Kushki (the Superintendent of excise) was also at his disposal. He usually appointed to these offices, members of his own family. This, according to Asin Dasgupta, was the base of governor's power and it was considerable in view of the crucial importance to the citizens of customs and mint<sup>30</sup>. However, we have evidences that sometimes the new Governor replaced all the important officials of the port with his own favourites. For example, Inayat Khan who was appointed as the new Governor of Surat in June 1663 turned out all the old officials and filled it with his own men. A letter of the Dutch, dated 8 August, 1663, says that " The new Governor has made a bad start. Almost all

---

<sup>28</sup> M.S. Commissariat, op.cit., vol. II, p-353.

<sup>29</sup> *EFL*, (N.S.), vol. I, p-284.

<sup>30</sup> Asin Dasgupta- *Indian Merchants and Decline of Surat*, op.cit., p-25.

the old officials have been turned out and their places filled by his favourites.”<sup>31</sup> Another Dutch letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> September says that the above Governor had appointed his son as the head of the customhouse, who was a great source of irritation for the Dutch at Surat.<sup>32</sup>

### **Shah Bandar**

*Shah Bandar* or the “Customer” was the Chief Officer of the Customhouse (which is often called in the English factories as *Alfandica*), at Swally. Most often the office was held either by a member of the Governor’s family (as we saw in case of Inayat Khan above) or his favourite. Some of the Governors of Surat themselves were earlier *Shah Bandars* of the port. He has been called the “King of the port” by Fryer<sup>33</sup>. His chief duty was the

---

<sup>31</sup> Batavia Dagh Register, 1663, p-590, cited in *EFI*, 1661-64, p-205.

<sup>32</sup> Batavia Dagh Register, 1663, p-679, cited in *EFI*, 1661-64, p-203, 206. The Dutch letter says – “The merchants have suffered many affronts from the new Governor’s son, who had been made head of the custom house and arrogated to himself so much authority that one would have thought he was in his father’s place. Our people and the English had many disputes with him, and the position became so unbearable that the Directeur was obliged to complain to the Governor.” (p-206)

<sup>33</sup> See M. S. Commissariat – op.cit. Chapter XXXIII Dr John Fryer’s Account of Surat, 1674-75, pp- 371-380, p-375.

assessment and collection of the custom dues on the merchandise goods of export and import and bullion<sup>34</sup>.

Accounts of the travellers and the European Company merchants bear testimony to the strict and lengthy search which was conducted at the customhouse. It attracted the notice and comment by almost all the travellers who visited the port. Neither any goods nor even a person could pass the port without clearance from the customhouse. Thevenot, who landed at Swally on 10 January, 1666 in the ship *Hopewell* writes that he had to spend the night in the river i.e. on the ship itself, as no one could enter the town until the custom inspection had been carried out<sup>35</sup>. Pietro Della Valle, who visited Surat in 1623 says that "The customhouse is known to be rigorous in Surat."<sup>36</sup> Thevenot gives perhaps the best details about the proceedings of checking at the customhouse. To quote him-

"He (the passenger) must take off his cap or turban, his girdle, shoes, stockings and all the rest of his clothes, if the searchers think of it. They feel his

---

<sup>34</sup> However, custom was also collected on cash money. Thevenot says that he paid customs for his money. Thevenot – S. N. Sen (ed.) – op.cit., p-4.

<sup>35</sup> See M. S. Commissariat – op.cit., Chapter XXXII, "M. Jean De Thevenot in Gujarat" pp-359-370 p-360.

<sup>36</sup> E. Grey (ed.). the travels of Pietro Vella Valla in India, New York, 1892, vol-I, p- 23.

body all over and handle every the least inch of stuff about him with all exactness; if they perceive anything hard in it they rip it up and all that can be done is to suffer patiently. The search is long and takes up about a quarter of an hour for every person severally.”<sup>37</sup>

The search and clearance of merchandise was more lengthy and could take even months. Thevenot says that “ for men may wait sometimes a month before they can get out their baggage, and especially they who here merchants’ goods ..... ”<sup>38</sup> This delay was perhaps to extract some money by the customer for himself, Fryer says that the Shah Bandar deliberately make the merchants move from pillar to port (making merchants dance attendance) “till a right understanding be created betwixt the Shah Bandar and them.”<sup>39</sup>

The rate of custom-duty collected at the Mughal ports in Gujarat was not uniform. While at Ahmedabad no duties or

---

<sup>37</sup> M. S. Commissariat, *op.cit.*, p-360. Fryer also gives similar account. He says “As soon as the merchandise is landed at Surat it had to be taken to the custom house, which adjoins the fort. The officers are very strict and search persons with great care.” Fryer, *op.cit.*, vol-5, p-7.

<sup>38</sup> S. W. Sen (ed.) *op.cit.*, p-4.

<sup>39</sup> W. C. Crooke (ed.) *op.cit.*, vol-I, pp-247-248.

customs was collected on the export and import of goods<sup>40</sup>, at Broach two percent custom was paid<sup>41</sup>. The rate at Surat vacillated between two and a half and five percent. Foreign travellers noticed different rates at different times at Surat. Mandelslo, who visited Surat in 1638, says that the duty to be three and a half percent *ad valorem* for goods and two percent for bullion.<sup>42</sup> Thevenot says that the custom duty collected for the merchandise was four percent for the Christians (Europeans) and five percent for the Banyas<sup>43</sup>. The customs for the bullion, according to him, was two and a half percent<sup>44</sup>. Tavernier says that while private individuals paid four to five percent duty, the English and the Dutch paid less. However, he further goes on to

---

<sup>40</sup> M. S. Commissariat – *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India* (1638-39). OUP, 1931, p-28. He writes “ we are told that merchants had to pay no duties or customs at Ahmedabad on the export and import of goods, though it was usual to pay the *Kotwal* fifteen pence per Wagon by way of a present.”

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, pp-14-15. To quote “There was a Mogul guard or garrison posted in the fort, partly because of its military importance and also to collect the customs duty of two percent upon all commodities that entered this port.”

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, p-9. To quote him “ The duty was three and a half percent *ad valorem* on all commodities except on gold and silver whether in coins or in bars, which paid 2 percent only.”

<sup>43</sup> S. N. Sen (ed.) – *op.cit.*, p-4. To quote him, “..... at custom house they pay four in hundred if they be Christians and five in hundred if they be Banyans.”

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p-3. To quote him “It may (custom officials) find gold and silver, they take two and a half percent and give back the rest.” Ovington also says the same percentage for bullion. To quote him “All strange coins, whether imported or exported, pays to the Mughal officers, two and a half percent .....” see H. G. Rawlinson (ed.), *op.cit.*, p- 132.



say that if the cost of deputation and presents to the Mughal Court were taken into account, they end up paying the same as the private traders<sup>45</sup>. By 1664, the English were paying a custom of two and a half percent, which was reduced by half a percent as a reward for their successful resistance to Shivaji's invasion in 1664<sup>46</sup>. However, this was raised to three and a half percent when in addition one and a half percent Jaziya was reimposed by Aurangzeb in 1679 and it was commuted with the custom.

Apart from the regular custom of 2½%, the European companies also paid one percent to the Shah Bandar on all incoming and outgoing goods as commission for custom services. This was collected by the brokers and the English factors doubted its authenticity. But on enquiry, they found<sup>that</sup> it was collected in the name of the *Shah Bandar* and duly accounted by the officials. To quote the letter of the English factor –

“In the prosecution of affairs here we have discovered a main abuse continued by our brokers ever since

---

<sup>45</sup> Tavernier – Travels in India, op.cit., vol-I, p-7ff.

<sup>46</sup> FEI, 1661-64, pp- 313-14. Although the letter claims that the reduction was half of the customs (we should pay but ½ customes), it was actually half percent. See footnote – 2, on p-314. The *harb-ut hukm* of Aurangzeb issued by Jafar Khan, the Imperial Dewan on 14 March, 1664 clearly states this. The English translation of this is quoted in Farhat Hasan –Mughal Fiscal System in Surat and the English East India Company, *Modern Asian Studies*, 27, 4, 1993, pp-711-18, p-713.

our setting, who unknown to us have taken one percent (if not more) of the buyer for all the goods we sell and as much of us, as if they had no other salary. The latter henceforth we will abridge them; the past allowed by composition is without remedy. In this examination we had in question our customers and find the inhabitants do pay 2½ p.c. custom and no other duty; the Porting (als) and all other strangers besides the said custom do pay one p.c. extorted, which they call the customer's brokerage. We were long doubtful whether it were paid the lord of the place or eaten by the officers, but find it is duly accounted by the Customer....."<sup>47</sup>

The English Company frequently complain of overrating of the goods to exhaust greater customs.<sup>48</sup> The *Shah Bandar* also acted like a merchant and often used his office to corner goods for himself at lower price, though covertly, at the cost of the European and local merchants. A letter of the English factory says, "...this five months privately underhand hath hindered the sale of ours and the Dutches' goods, will buy them himself (*Shah*

---

<sup>47</sup> Letters Received, vol. IV, p-331.

<sup>48</sup> Letters Received, vol-II, p-80-81; EFI, 1642-46, pp-149-50.

*Bandar*) at his own price, and retail it at his pleasure. He expreseth not this, yet his actions declare his intents, and all men fear to meddle with our commodities...”<sup>49</sup>

### **Daroga of the Mint**

The office of the mint-master was very important and specially for a premier port like Surat where there was continuous inflow of foreign currencies and bullion. Though officially the mint at Surat was under the charge of a Daroga, the Mutassadi was ultimately responsible for the purity of the coin. It was usually farmed out to some of the leading *shroffs* of the city who set up their equipments separately within the enclosure of the mint and the would-be customers dealt with them individually. Important merchants of the city had their storage within the mint where they usually transported their bullion directly from the customers for minting into coins.<sup>50</sup> Fryer described the royal mint of Surat as “a large town of offices within itself where all the brokers or Shrofts went to have their silver and gold assayed.”<sup>51</sup> The mint converted these foreign currencies or bullion into the local currency. This was important

---

<sup>49</sup> Letters Received, vol-III, p-351.

<sup>50</sup> Asin Dasgupta – *Decline of Merchants*, op.cit., pp. 46-47, footnote no.3.

<sup>51</sup> Fryer, William Crooke, (ed.), vol-I, pp- 247-48.

because only the country coins were accepted in the purchase of the goods. Thevenot writes “whenever a stranger enters the Empire, he is made to change the silver he hath, whether *Piastres* (a Spanish coin) or *Abbasis* into the money of the country, and at the same time they are melted down, and the silver refined for coining of *Roupies*.”<sup>52</sup> The imperial mint was quite large and had a capacity to turn a huge amounts of bullion in coins. In 1672, it minted about Rs. 30,000 a day only for the English.<sup>53</sup> The closure of the mint severely affected the business activities of the foreign merchants. In 1670, when the Surat mint was frequently closed owing to the fear of Shivaji’s attack, the English had difficulty in payment because creditors were not ready to accept bullion. To quote the letter, “The Surat *tanksall* (mint) was also constantly closed owing to frequent alarms (of Shivaji’s attack). In these circumstances an attempt to get the company’s creditors to accept payment in bullion naturally failed.”<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Thevenot, S. N. Sen (ed.), op.cit., p-26.

<sup>53</sup> Ruby Maloni, *European Merchant Capital and the Indian Ecomony*, Introduction, p-7.

<sup>54</sup> *EFL*, (NS), 1670, p- 200.

The mint charged a fixed percentage (5%) for turning metal into local coins. According to Manucci, the annual income of the Surat mint was about Rs. 11,00,000.<sup>55</sup>

### **Kotwal**

The Kotwal was the police official who looked after the law and order of the city. He received his Sanad from the master of the Ordnance. During the reign of Aurangzeb, the person to this office was appointed by him.<sup>56</sup> He had large number of roles-enlisting the persons going and coming in the city, fixing the pieces in the market, checking fraudulent in commercial dealings, to ensure that no forbidden taxes are collected, arranging celebration of Naoroz festival, enforcing prohibition on selling, purchasing and drinking of wine, etc.<sup>57</sup> The *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* says that Akbar made it a rule that *Kotwal* is responsible for the lost or plundered goods in his vicinity. To quote Mirat-“ Whatever articles are lost in that locality or plundered , they should be found out along with thieves, or else, he (Kotwal) should come out of that responsibility and give a

---

<sup>55</sup> Manucci, op.cit., vol-II, p-392.

<sup>56</sup> Mirat, supplement, op.cit., p-153.

<sup>57</sup> For details of the duties of Kotwal, see Ain-i-Akbar, tr. Col. Jerret, vol-II, pp-43-45. Also, Mirat-i-Ahmadi, tr. M. F. Lokhandawala, op.cit., pp-144-45.

reply.”<sup>58</sup> This responsibility of Kotwal was there during the 17<sup>th</sup> century also, for Manucci says that “ it is the practice that whoever is in authority (of Kotwal) has to pay for the loss by robbery.”<sup>59</sup>

He was *ex-officio* entitled to keep fifty horsemen<sup>60</sup>. He had large number of people to serve under him to look after various purposes. He himself appointed some of the persons for specific purposes. Ain says that “ He should appoint persons of respectable character to supply the public watercourses, and prohibit women from riding on horseback.”<sup>61</sup> From Manucci’s accounts we know that the Kotwal used *halalkhors (alarcor)* for the purposes of spying.<sup>62</sup>

The night-long tight security maintained by the Kotwal has drawn attention of many travellers. Ovington writes that “..... he [Kotwal] is obliged to ride the streets for prevention of disorder, thrice in night at 9, 12 and 3 o’clock, till 5 in the morning, at

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p- 145.

<sup>59</sup> Manucci, op.cit., p-395.

<sup>60</sup> Mirat, Supplement, op.cit., p-153.

<sup>61</sup> Ain op.cit., vol-II, p-45.

<sup>62</sup> Manucci, op.cit., vol-II, pp- 395-96. ‘Halalkhor’ literally means “men who live on what is well earned”. They were the low caste people who did menial jobs. This has been noticed by other travellers also. e.g. Fryer, vol-I, p-32; Ovington, p-223.

which hours the drums beat, and a large, long copper trumpet sounds aloud.”<sup>63</sup> Fryer calls him the “Governor of night” and details his night duty as follows:

“..... for after the keys are carried to the Governor, it is the Catwals business with a guard of nearly two hundred men, to scower the streets and brothels of idle companions; to take an account of all people late out, to discover fire and house breaks, and to carry all lewd persons to prison, which is solely committed to his charge: so that all night long he is heard by his drums and trumpets, shouting and hallowing of his crew in their precambulation through all parts of the city, with lights and flamebeaus .....”<sup>64</sup>

The office of Kotwal was with multiple jobs and vast powers. He was the third most powerful authority in the town after the Governor and the Qazi. According to the Ain, the person holding the office should be vigorous, experienced, active, deliberate, patient, astute and humane<sup>65</sup>. However, the picture of Kotwal we get in the travellers accounts show that he did not

---

<sup>63</sup> Ovington, op.cit., p-137.

<sup>64</sup> Fryer, op.cit., p-246.

<sup>65</sup> Ain, op.cit., vol-II, p-43.

have any of such qualities. He has been described in these accounts as a person frequently resorting to force against the common people and the merchants also. The story of Khwaja Minas, whom the English Factory refers as "Cojah Minaz, an able and well reputed Armenian merchant",<sup>66</sup> is given by Thevenot. The story goes like this that the said merchant found 2,400 sequins missing from his house. He suspected the hands of his two slaves who had disappeared since then and there was no trace of them. The complaint reached to the Governor who instructed the *Kotwal* to find out the money somehow because if the emperor was informed of the loss, worse results would follow. The *Kotwal* became fearful and sought permission from the Governor to imprison the said merchant for the purposes of questioning whether the money was actually stolen. The merchant was aware of the torturous method used by *Kotwal* and hence as soon as he came to know of this, he withdrew his complain preferring to lose his money silently. "This", says the traveller, "is the usuall procedure of *Kotwal*."<sup>67</sup>

Another similar incident is recorded in the Dagh Register of 19 May, 1692, cited by Asin Dasgupta. In this case, some

---

<sup>66</sup> EFI, 1661-64, p- 207.

<sup>67</sup> M. S. Commissariat, op.cit., p-362.



precious stones were stolen from the house of Girdhardas, a jewel broker of Surat. Among his neighbour, he expressed his opinion that this theft could not have happened without an alliance with the Kotwal. When the Kotwal came to know of this charge, he furiously came to the house of the broker and tied Girdhardas and his brothers to a tree and had them whipped till they admitted that the whole story was fabricated. After this the jewel broker was brought before the Qazi and had his statement registered.<sup>68</sup>

The Kotwal in some cases also collected undue money from the merchants to allow the passage of goods. Mandelslo, while in Ahmedabad notes that although the merchants had to pay no duties or customs here, on export or import of goods, though it was usual to pay the Kotwal fifteen pence per wagon by way of a present.<sup>69</sup>

### **Qazi**

The Qazi for the provinces or the towns were appointed by the Sadr-us-Sudur. The city Qazi was entitled to 20 horses

---

<sup>68</sup> Asin Dasgupta, *Indian Merchants and Decline of Surat*, op.cit. p-28.

<sup>69</sup> Mandelslo, op.cit. p-28.

besides his personal mansab and emoluments.<sup>70</sup> His basic duty was the dispensation of justice, after thorough investigation. Ain says that the Qazi must not be content with witnesses and oaths, but hold diligent investigation of first importance. Further, it says that he should take into account all the circumstances and deal each case separately.<sup>71</sup> He should be impartial in his judgement and protect the oppressor from the oppressed.<sup>72</sup> Another official to carryout the findings of the Qazi was Mir Adl.

The Qazi dispensed justice in criminal cases only, because civil cases came under the jurisdiction of the Governor. However, the Qazi was consulted by the Governor in civil case too<sup>73</sup>. However, Capital punishment was the royal privilege and the convicted person could not be executed without royal permission. Thevenot says-

“nevertheless neither civil nor criminal judge can put any one to death. The King reserves that power to

---

<sup>70</sup> Mirat, Supplement, op.cit., p-149.

<sup>71</sup> Ain, op.cit., vol-II, pp-42-43.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p-43. It says “ By impartiality and knowledge of Character, he should distinguish the oppressed from the oppressor, and boldly and equitably take action on his conclusions”.

<sup>73</sup> Ovington, op.cit., p-137. He says that “the Qaziwas a person skilled in the municipal laws, acts as judge and is consulted in matters relating to the civil customs of the Empire”.

himself, and therefore when any man deserves death, a courier is despatched to know his pleasure, and they fail not to put his Orders in execution, as soon as the courier is come back."<sup>74</sup>

The Muslims and the Hindus appearing before the Qazi had to take oath by touching the Quran and a cow respectively. Punishment for offences were severe. Flogging and amputation of hands and legs were normal feature. Fryer notes the flogging of an Armenian in public for selling wine. In another incident, a goldsmith was paraded throughout the city on an ass after shaving his head and beard and finally his hand was cut off. His offence was that he had coined some copper rupees.<sup>75</sup>

It seems that the Mughal emperor and the Qazi in pronouncing judgements in cases of theft and robbery were guided by motives of giving exemplary punishments so that no one could dare to repeat such crimes in future. Two instances of such punishment are given here. Broecke narrates that in 1622, five men were beheaded and their woman companion was buried upto her navel and left to groan. The charges against them was

---

<sup>74</sup> Thevenot, S. N. Sen (ed.), op.cit., p-27. Ovington also observed this. See, Ovington, op.cit., p-138.

<sup>75</sup> Fryer, op.cit., ? vol-I, p-244.

of theft.<sup>76</sup> In another incident, as narrated by Fryer, a gang of fifteen notorious robbers who infested the roads in the district, looted the passengers and killed them, were sentenced to be hanged by the express orders of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. This was despite the efforts to the Banyas, who proffered money for their redemption. One member of the gang was only fifteen fourteen years old. The notoriety of the gang can be guessed from the fact that its youngest member when ready to be tied up for being hanged boasted that though he was not fourteen years of age, he had killed his quota of fifteen men.<sup>77</sup> There exemplary punishments were perhaps the reason behind Surat remaininig peaceful during the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to Asin Dasgupta, the town (Surat) was free of medieval thugs and modern muggers.<sup>78</sup>

The Qazi's zealous service to Islam sometimes created panic among the *baniyas* of Surat. The oft-cited incident of

---

<sup>76</sup> Broecke, op.cit., vol-II, pp- 274-75. Cited in B.G. Gokhale, op.cit., p-

<sup>77</sup> For details of this episode, see Fryer, op.cit., pp- 240-45.

<sup>78</sup> Asin Dasgupta – Indian Merchants and Decline of Surat, op.cit., footnote 1, p-28. He writes- from reading the dag register for the five years for which they have beeb preserved, three years in the 1690's and two years in he 1730's, I have the feeling that given the occasional murder in a sudden affray and stray house – breaking, Surat was a peaceful town to govern in “ normal times”. The town was free form medieval thugs and modern muggers. Peter Mundy also mentions about the exemplary ectiontaken by the Mughals against the thieves and robbers. He says that their whole families were captured. The adult male members were executed and their females and children sold in the slave market. See, The Travels of Peter

1669 is worth mentioning here. The incident was triggered by conversion of a nephew of Tulsidas Parekh (an old shroft of the English Company) and afterwards forcible conversion of a Persian writer. The latter committed suicide.<sup>79</sup> In panic, about 8000 Banias of Surat migrated en masse under the leadership of Bhimji Parekh (the Chief broker of the English Company at Surat) to Bhroach, after a humble refusal by Gerald Aungier, the then President of the Bombay Presidency, for an asylum in Bombay.<sup>80</sup> Consequently the business at Surat gradually worsened. The increasing anxiety of the English is reflected in a letter which says

“Ever since the flight of Banias, the trade of Surat hath suffered great obstruction; and tis the opinion of many wise men that it will prove of fatall consequence, to the utter ruine of it..... For most of the shroffs and moneyed men doe thinke of calling [in?] their stocks and (according to the custom of this country) burying the greatest part under ground; so

---

<sup>79</sup> It is interesting to note that in the writer's case the ground for circumcision was that he had eaten part of a watermelon which the Qazi had eaten. See EFI, 1668-69, p-191. "...for no other reason but that five years back he had eaten part of a watermelon which the Cozzy had eaten of ...".

<sup>80</sup> For details of the whole issue of conversion and migration, see EFI, 1668-69, pp- 191-92.

that the bulke of trade, which is maintained and carried chiefly on Credit, must necessarily fall.”<sup>81</sup>

This case was considered very seriously at the court also, for an English letter says that the matter “ hath so distracted both the court and this town that, untill that affair be settled, we can not expect that the King or his courtiers will consider any matters of lesser concerne.”<sup>82</sup> They returned to Surat after three months when the Mughal emperor himself assured them of their religion.<sup>83</sup>

The registering deeds and declarations of various kinds, contracts, etc. were countersigned and sealed by the Qazi. The Surat merchants were fond of this because the paper thus ‘sealed’ acquired legal validity and could be used for claims in future times.<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p-197.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p-199.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p-205.

<sup>84</sup> Asin Dasgupta – Indian merchants and Decline of Surat, op.cit., footnote 2, p- 27.

## CHAPTER III

### MERCHANT COMMUNITIES OF SURAT:

#### MUSLIMS, ARMENIAN, BOHRAS AND PARSIS

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Surat exhibited all the features of a cosmopolitan city where not only the permanent merchant communities lived but also a considerable number of merchants from other countries. Among the latter were Persians, Arabians, Turks, Europeans and Armenians.<sup>1</sup> The original inhabitants of mercantile-port-city were the Muslims, Baniyas (a term used by the Europeans for all the merchants of Hindu and Jain communities) and Parsis. During the trading season, i.e. from October to April, the port was visited by merchants of a number of countries from south-east Asia, China, Europe, Persia, Arabia, and the eastern coast of Africa. In all these countries, the goods produced in the immediate and distant hinterland of Surat and brought to the port city, were in great demand. During this period Surat became the most thriving port of the whole Mughal

---

<sup>1</sup> Mandelslo says that apart from the Dutch and English who were so very rich and settled in large numbers, other foreign residents at Surat were the Arabs, Persians, Armenians, Turks and Jews. M.S. Commissariat (ed.) – Mandelslo's Travels in Western India (1638-39), O.U.P., 1931, p-10. Among these the Arabs were the earliest to settle at the coastal towns of Gujarat. From the description given by the *Periplus* we know that the Arabs were conducting regular trade between Bhroach and the market towns of Muza (modern Mokha). See the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, tr. W.H. Schott, London, 1912.

Empire. The population of the city swung up rapidly and not only the city but its suburbs were also full of people. However, during the dull season (i.e. from May to September) the population of Surat went normal. Thevenot observes this feature of Surat. He writes that "Surat is but of an indifferent bigness, and it is hard to tell exactly the number of inhabitants because the season render it unequal; there are a great many of all the year round; but in the time of the monsoon.....the town is so full of people that lodgings can hardly be had and the three suburbs are full".<sup>2</sup>

The Muslim community of Surat was very active in trade.  
We cannot agree with the observation of Mandelslo that the Muslims of Surat were not interested in the trading activities and rather preferred the service in the Mughal empire. He says "They had, however, an aversion to trade and business and preferred service to any honourable profession, for if they can but once get to be masters of a horse they court fortune no further and immediately lift themselves in the service of the Prince."<sup>3</sup> This observation of the traveller best reflects the interest of some of the youths who might have ambition to be in the military service.

---

<sup>2</sup> Thevenot, S.N. Sen (ed.) op.cit., p-21.

<sup>3</sup> Mandelslo, Ibid., p-9-10.



Another important point is that the trade in Gujarat was never considered to be a non-honourable profession. This was because of the centuries old tradition of the trade in the region. During the period of the Sultanate, a number of great traders were Muslims. The two Muslim Governors of Surat, during the sultanate – Malik Ayaz of Diu and Malik Gopi of Surat were themselves great merchants. Most of the *Mutasaddis* of Gujarat were themselves great merchants.

In 17<sup>th</sup> century, some of the important Muslim merchants of Surat were Mir Jaffar, Khwaja Nasim, Khwaja Daud, Khwaja Jalaluddin, Taj Khan, Tashrif Khan, Khwaja Nizam, Abdul Latif, Mirza Muazzam, Haji Kadir, Khan Sharif, Aga Jafar, Abdul Gafur and Pir Khan. Most of them were the local merchants of some importance trading in the hinterland and the coastal towns of Gujarat. But a few of these merchants had their bases not only in Gujarat ports but also had trading links with the West as well as the south-east Asia. For example, one merchant of Surat named Mirza Mahmud traded with Batavia and Bantam in south-east and also in with Maldiv Islands and with Basra in the Persian Gulf.<sup>4</sup> Mirza Muazzam signed an advance contract with the English to purchase the broadcloth in 1671 which was

---

<sup>4</sup> EFI, 1624-29, p-212.

effected in 1772.<sup>5</sup> He also purchased the goods in wholesale from the British the broadcloth when no buyer was there because of a rumour of Shivaji's attack on Surat. The English factory says, "This danger from Shivaji accentuated the Council's difficulty in the disposal of broadcloth. Mirza Muazzam was the only merchant to buy it wholesale, and that at a price considerably lower than what he had paid for the previous lot."<sup>6</sup> An important reason for this was that the Company had to pay to the creditors (to reduce the debt).

In 1673, despite the trade and communication being hampered because of the Anglo-Dutch war, he along with other merchants (Khwaza Minaz, Abdul Gafur, Haji Kadir) sent vessels to Persian ports Siam, Queda, and Achin.<sup>7</sup> In 1674, he purchased the ivory of the English at his own price.<sup>8</sup> In 1675, he has been described as dictating the price of the broadcloth for wholesale purchase, though the English did not agree and this resulted, contrary to their hopes, in further reduction in the price of broadcloth.<sup>9</sup> In 1677, he led a group of merchants to the

---

<sup>5</sup> EFI, (NS), vol.-I, p-209,222.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p-225.

<sup>7</sup> EFI, (NS), vol. -I, p-233.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p-235.

<sup>9</sup> EFI, (NS), vol.-I, p-250.

court of Aurangzeb against the oppression of the Governor, Ghiyasuddin Khan, who was consequently removed. The *English factory* says that the Governor had amassed about 100 lakhs of rupees by extortion from the inhabitants and defrauding the Emperor.<sup>10</sup>

Another important merchant at Surat was Aga Jafar. The details of his trading networks are not known. But in the English factory records he has been described as "a leading merchant of Surat." He was perhaps a very wealthy and influential merchant. The incident, which appears with his name, is worth mentioning. One of his attendants was killed by a drunken Dutch seaman. In response to this incident the Governor issued an order to all the Muslims of Surat to stop serving all the Europeans (English, Dutch and French). It created a furore and all the European Companies decided to close down their factories at Surat and went to Swally. The negotiations followed and the issue was solved amicably.<sup>11</sup>

Hazi Zahid Beg was one of the greatest merchants of Surat during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He was appointed as the Shah Bandar of Surat in 1629. He seems to be a great merchant by that time

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.,p-284.

<sup>11</sup>. -next page

because he had lent the English an amount of £ 6,000.<sup>12</sup> He had extensive trading networks not only in various parts of Hindustan and the coastal ports of Gujarat (Diu, Cambary, Bulsar, Gandevis, Chaul) Malabar coast (Dabhol) and the Konkan coast, but also in the south-east Asia. He owned a number of ships and two of his ships *Salamati* and *Mahmudi* plied between Aden and Basra. In 1660, Mathew Andrews privately hired *Mahmudi* and dispatched her to Achin with a freight, which included some goods of the English Company also.<sup>13</sup>

He continued to remain an eminent merchant of Surat till his death in 1669 when his business was taken over by his son Mirza Masum. He was one of the three eminent merchants (others two being Virji Vora and Haji Kasim) who alongwith the Governor was invited by Shivaji in 1664 to conclude for extortion money to be paid to save the city from the attack of the Marathas.<sup>14</sup> His (Haji Zahid Beg) house was very close to the English house. When the Marathas broke the house of Haji

---

<sup>11</sup> The issue also gives a glimpse of the ego clash between the headsay the English, Dutch and French companies at Surat.

<sup>12</sup> EFI, 1624-29, p-330.

<sup>13</sup> EFI, 1655-60, p-312. EFI, 1665-67, p-9-10.

<sup>14</sup> The English factory letter of 28 January, 1664 says "The next news was the rebell had sent two men and a letter, requiring the Governor, Hodger Zaed Beague (Aaji Zahid Beg), Virgee Vorah (Virji Vora) and Hodgee Cosum (Asji Kasim), the three eminent merchants and mmy'd men in the towne, to come  
(to be continued on next page)

Zahid Beg, the English were frightened. The letter says "By this time he had broken open Hodgee Zaeds house and had one nights plunder out of it; which being so very neare us, wee feared they would strengthen that place and afterward annoy us and by their multitudes force their way to undermine and blow up."<sup>15</sup>

Haji Zahid's house and warehouses were plundered by the Marathas. However, some of his warehouses were saved by the intervention of the English.<sup>16</sup> Even after being plundered by Shivaji, he remained an influential merchant. An English letter of November 1664, about ten months after Shivaji's sack, describes him along with Virji Vora as "the two great merchants of this town." In 1666 the British preferred to sell their goods brought from Batavia to him and not to Virji Vora, "who usually was their customer." This was because he (Haji Beg) had made known to the (Dutch) General of Batavia abuse the collusion of the Dutch officials and Virji Vora at Surat leading to the loss of the Dutch Company. He says that last year (1665) despite his

---

to him in person immediately and conclude with him ..." EFI, 1661-64, p-299 299.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., PP-299-300.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 300. Another English letter dated 26 November, 1664 also says that "Hodgee Zaied had fared very ill, had his (house) not jouned to ours; for when they had entered his house, they could not annoy us at pleasure,..... drue out a file or two of musketeers, cleared the house, shutt the doores within,  
(to be continued on next page)

bids being higher, goods were sold to Virji Vora.<sup>17</sup> In 1666, he is described along with Virji Vora as having thousands of maunds of quicksilver and vermillion which the English Company considered worth "sufficient to supply the whole country for many years." The English had to sell these goods at lower price. They wrote to the Company that "No more quicksilver or vermillion be supplied until asked for."<sup>18</sup> It seems Haji Zahid Beg had virtually established monopoly over the sale of these commodities in India. He died in early 1669. His son Mirza Masum took over his business and continued the fortune of his family. In 1669, he contracted with the English to purchase all the copper, quicksilver, vermillion, alum and tin either in hand or expected by the next ships."<sup>19</sup> No doubt, Haji Beg and his family had amassed a great wealth. However, it seems that his son Mirza Masum had not the stature and personality of his father, for the English factors do not speak about him as 'great' is 'eminent' merchant, a title which they frequently gave to important merchants.

---

and kept a guard of our owne there even after; by which Hodgee Zaied was preserved." Ibid. -313.

<sup>17</sup> EFI, 1665-67, p-148.

<sup>18</sup> EFI, 1667-69, p-24-25.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., P-184.

A number of Armenian merchants had settled in Surat. It seems they were quite considerable in number, for they had their own President and also had an Armenian Church<sup>20</sup> at Surat. Names of some Armenian merchants appear frequently in the English factory records. They are Khwaja Minas, Khwaja Karickos<sup>21</sup>, John Bell<sup>22</sup> and Jacob Callender.<sup>23</sup> Of these, Khwaja Minas was definitely the most important and influential merchant at Surat.

Khwaja Karikos (Cojoh Karickoes) as he claimed, was employed by the king of Persia "with a stock to buy some goods and procure some rarities."<sup>24</sup> He came at Surat in 1668 with a letter of recommendation from the King of Persia to the effect that he should be helped by the English, the French and the Dutch. He promised the English to use his influence for betterment of their relation with Persia. The English says about him that "...this person seeming to be very desirous and promising to use his utmost endeavours to beget a good

---

<sup>20</sup> EFI, 1661-64, p-297.

<sup>21</sup> EFI, 1668-69, PP-17, 19.

<sup>22</sup> EFI, 1661-64, p-328.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., EFI, 1665-67, p-8.

<sup>24</sup> For details about him, see, *Court Minutes*, 1664-67, PP-21, 405, 407, 3221. Cf, EFI, 1668-69, footnote no. 1, p-17.

understanding between the King of Persia and us (English)".<sup>25</sup> He was perhaps an entrepreneur who had obtained recommendation from the King of Persia because it was "easily available."<sup>26</sup> The English doubted this because, they observed that he "has served himself more than the kinge."<sup>27</sup> The details of his transactions are not known.

The most important and the merchant prince of the community was definitely Khwaja Minas. He has been described in an English letter of 1663 as "an able and well reputed Armenian merchant."<sup>28</sup> And another letter of 1665 says him to be the "President for the Armenians."<sup>29</sup> From the letter we can conclude that like the Banias, the Armenian merchants were also organized for their own welfare.

Khwaja Minas had considerable stake in the shipping business as well as in the trading of goods. His ship, *St. Michael*, sailed to Mokha and other ports in the region.<sup>30</sup> In 1665, he

---

<sup>25</sup> EFI, 1668-69, p-17. The English helped him because, they wanted a good understanding to be established "before the Portugalls grow too powerful there" Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p-29.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> EFI, 1661-64, p-207.

<sup>29</sup> EFI, 1665-67, p-61.

<sup>30</sup> B.G. Gokhale, Surat in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, op.cit., p- 126.



bought the English ship "*Hopewell*" for Rs. 14,000.<sup>31</sup> This ship plied from Persia to Surat and also to south-east Asia. Thevenot came to Surat in 1666 from Persia in this ship.<sup>32</sup> An English letter of 1669 mentions that his ship *Hopewell* went from Surat to Philippines last year (i.e. 1668) with a cargo of 15,000 (equivalent to £ 5,000). As we know from this letter that his brother (Khwaja Carricoos), who had himself travelled in Europe, was also extensively involved in trade separately. He (Khwaja Minas' brother) owned about one-third of the cargo of this ship. To quote the letter, "Cojah Carricoos brother, who was with you in England...is gon supracargo on the ship, and hath neer one-third of the stock in his own accompt."<sup>33</sup> His another ship was *Selimony*, which is mentioned as going from Surat to Persia along with the English ship *Return* in 1677.<sup>34</sup>

His trading network was very extensive. He had his own broker at Surat and his agents in the important cities such as, Ahmedabad, Agra, etc. He extensively purchased the broadcloth from the English and sold it into the hinterland cities. In 1663,

---

<sup>31</sup> EFI, 1665-67, p-8. However, Thevenot who arrived from Basra to Surat in this ship (*Hopewell*) says that it was sold for 16,000 rupees. See Thevenot (*Suite en Voyage*, ed. 1727, vol. iii, p-5594) Cf-Ibid. footnote no. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.; Thevenot, S.N.Sen (ed.), op.cit., p-1.

<sup>33</sup> EFI, 1667-69, p-195.

<sup>34</sup> EFI, (NS), vol. I, p-276.

he offered the best tender in comparison to Virji Vora and Chhota (Das) and purchased it at the rate of Rs.  $4\frac{5}{8}$  per yard.<sup>35</sup> In 1669, he made an advanced contract with the English to purchase all the ordinary broadcloth expected by the next fleet at Rs.  $4\frac{3}{4}$  per yard.<sup>36</sup> In 1670, again he purchased cloth on behalf of Virji Vora.<sup>37</sup> This shows that the merchants of Surat co-operated in the trading field and even purchased the goods on other's behalf.

Khwaja Minas had an strained relation with the English in 1670's. The trouble began in 1671, when the English forced him (by threatening "to seize all his shipping and estate wherever we could find it") to take broadcloth and coral as per an advanced deal, which he refused because of the fall in the price of the cloth. This deal caused him a loss of £ 4,000.<sup>38</sup> This led him to fall in the Company's debt. The English had consequently difficulties in procuring the debt from him. An interesting incident happened in 1674. Khwaja Minas denied the payment to the Company saying that "the debt was all due for interest, the recovery of which was not allowed by Muhammadan law."

---

<sup>35</sup> EFI, 1661-64, p-207.

<sup>36</sup> EFI, 1667-69, p-183-84.

<sup>37</sup> EFI, (NS), vol.-I, p-192.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p-209.

However, his argument was found false when the Company produced several bills written by the merchant himself before the Customer (Shah Bandar), Sayyid Mahmud. He gave to the Company an amount of Rs. 8,000 (Rs. 2,000 in cash himself and Rs. 6,000 in bills by his broker<sup>39</sup>). The Company had difficulty in recovering the debt later in 1676 and 1677 also. In 1676, part of the debt was recovered by A. Angier, the President of Surat Council of English, by countermanding an assistance at Bombay to an Armenian Vessel, in which Khwaja Minas was interested.<sup>40</sup> In 1677, an English Commander and other officials were put at the *Selimony* (Khwaja Minas' ship) and was consigned to Adams for receiving the freight money in part-payment of the debt.<sup>41</sup>

Khwaja Minas had to suffer at the hands of the local officials twice. In the first incident (given by Thevenot) described earlier, he had to lose his 2,400 *Sequins* in order to save himself from the *Kotwal's* third degree method, which the (Kotwal) used during the questioning.<sup>42</sup> The second experience was more bitter for the merchant. He is said to have reported to the king about

---

<sup>39</sup> E.F.I. (N.S.), Vol. I, p.- 239

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p-269.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p-276. In 1683, this ship went to Persia on which the French also loaded some porcelain. See F.Martin, Lotika Vardarajan (ed.), op.cit., p-901.

<sup>42</sup> See infra, p-48.

the tyranny of the Surat Governor, Ghiyasuddin Khan. For this, the Governor imprisoned and had him beaten very bitterly with slippers and staves. An English letter of 1672, writes "His (Ghiyasiddin Khan's) tyranny is exemplified by Gray's report that he had Khwaja Minas 'beaten him slippers and staves until they (constables) had almost killed him, for writing to king of injustice done him by the Government."<sup>43</sup> However, it is interesting to note that in 1676, the merchant was provided with protection by the Governor, of course, on the payment of heavy money, against the English threatening him to recover the debt.<sup>44</sup>

The Bohras were prominent merchants in Gujarat and had trading networks in Arabia, Persia and Hindustan since the sultanate period. Their traditional preacher was Mulla Muhammad Ali. The people of the Bohra community were not only Muslims but also converts from Brahmanas and Banias, who originally had the title of Vohra, which they retained even after conversion. There is no certainty about the derivation of the

<sup>43</sup> EFI, (NS), vol. I, p-227, 284. In fact, Ghiyasuddin Khan had been one of the Governors of Surat whose tyranny had been extensively recorded by the English factories. All the merchants of Surat were annoyed with the treatment of the Governor. His Governorship was been described as "insatiable tyranny". The letter records that he had reportedly amassed about Rs. 100 lakhs by extortion from the merchants of Surat and by defrauding the Emperor. He was removed from the office on the complain of a group of Surat merchants under the leadership of Mirza Muazzam to the Mughal Emperor Aurajzeb in 1677. Ibid., PP-283-84.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p-269

title 'Bohra'. Mirat-i-Ahmadi (supplement) gives two possible explanation of this. One, that it could be due to conversion of large number of Brahmanas and Banias into this community who retained their original surname 'Bohra' from the time of their preacher and hence the who community adopted this title. Two, probably their first religions guide was a person with the title 'Bohra' and hence the followers were named after him.

The Bohras were divided into the Shia and Sunni Bohras, also called "the small community" and "the big community" respectively. The Shia Bohras were further divided into seven sections - Dandia, Sulaimania, Alia, Zaidia, Hajumia, Islailia and Nazqria.<sup>45</sup>

✓ Mulla Abdul Ghafur was undoubtedly the most prominent merchant of the Bohra community. He belonged to the community of Ismaili Bohras. He was an inhabitant of Patan and came to Surat probably in mid 1660's. His rise to the great merchant of Surat was so spectacular that he became a part of the folk tales and local legends. According to a legend, he began his career by servicing in a mosque.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps after quitting this

---

<sup>45</sup> For details about the Bohras see *Mirat-i-Ahmadi (supplement)*, op.cit., pp-108-10. Also see Francois Maritn, Lotika Vardarajan (ed.), op.cit, vol.-II, part-I, p-951.

<sup>46</sup> B.G. Gokhle, *Surat in the 17<sup>th</sup> century*, op.cit., P-127.

job, he entered the trading world. During the 1670's he was a merchant of some importance. However, some other merchants were more rich and powerful than him. In 1671, he finds mention in the English factory record as the head of the merchant group who were deputed to talk to the European factors (the English, the French, and the Dutch) who had closed their business and left Surat and gone to Swally due to some altercation between the Dutch and a merchant of Surat named Agha Jafar, followed by the Governor's proclamation to the Muslims to boycott the Europeans.<sup>47</sup> Abdul Ghafur was chosen as the head of the group not because he was an eminent and richest merchant of Surat but due to Governor's favour. The letter says, "Then the eminent merchant of Surat took umbray at one of them, Abdul Ghafur, being favoured by the Governor as a negotiator, though many of them were more eminent and of better quality, and they had to be smoothed down."<sup>48</sup> However, he soon became one of the leading merchants of Surat. In 1672, he sent his two junks to Manilla.<sup>49</sup> In 1673, he is described as one of a few merchants of Surat who sent their vessels to Persian ports, Siam, Queda and Achin despite the fact that the Anglo-

---

<sup>47</sup> For whole episode See, EFI (NS), vol.-I, pp-210-14.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p-211.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p-226.

Dutch war had hampered trade and communication with Persia and the Far East.<sup>50</sup>

✓ Hamilton describes him as a Muslims merchant with twenty ships of 300 to 400 tons, his trading worth equal to what of the English East India Company and with huge stock. He writes "Abdul Ghafur, a Mahometan that I was acquainted with, drove a trade equal to the English East India Company, for I have known him fit out in a year, above twenty sail of ships between 300 and 400 tuns, and none of them had less of his own stock than 10,000 pounds, and some of them had 25,000; and after that foreign stock was sent away, he believed to have as much more of an inland stock for the following year's market".<sup>51</sup> Manucci also describes him as the most powerful merchant of Surat.<sup>52</sup> Some of his ships were *Karimi, Ahmadi, Fez Reson, Fatehi and Hussaini.*

It is more probable that his rise to prominence was facilitated by death of some of merchant princes of Surat by this time, such as Virji Vora and Haji Zahid Beg. Mirza Zahid Beg

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p-233.

<sup>51</sup> W. Foster (ed.), A New account of East India by Alexander Hamilton, London, 1930, 2 vols., vol.-I, PP 89-90, 234.

<sup>52</sup> Manucci – storia do Mogor, op.cit., vol.-III p-292, also see, vol.-IV, pp-133ff.

died in early 1669<sup>53</sup> and Virji Vora “may have retired by then (1670) because in this year English factory records his grandson Nanchand as purchasing tin and copper.....and possibly departed from the scene in 1675 when he could have been 80 years old.”<sup>54</sup> Another reason of his rise could be his understanding and excellent rapport with the local administration at Surat. In 1670, as mentioned earlier, he was chosen by the Governor to be the head of the negotiating team of the merchants with the Europeans.<sup>55</sup> Another important <sup>point</sup> to note is that Abdul Ghafur rose to prominence despite hostile attitude of Aurangzeb towards this community. Francois Martin, an employee of the French East India Company, writes in his *Memoirs* in April 1685, that “when the Emperor was informed that several of them belonged to Schismatic sects, he arrested all Bohras at court and issued instructions to the Governors of Ahmedabad, Surat and other places to arrest Bohras.....”.<sup>56</sup> We do not find any instance of Abdul Ghafur being arrested by the local authorities at Surat. This could not have been without an understanding or a cordial relationship between him and the

---

53      EFI, 1668-69, p-184.

54      B.G. Gokhale Surat in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, op. cit. p-145.

55      See. *infra*. p-70.

56      F. Martin, Lotika Vardarajan (ed.), op.cit., p-951.



local Governor. Later he developed his influence at the imperial court also.

Of all the merchants of Surat, Abdul Ghafur seems to have been the most influential and assertive. Because he owned large number of ships and plied even without the passes of the Europeans frequently and had disputes with the English and the Dutch about piracy. In 1686, Abdul Ghafur wrote to the Mughal court that the Englishmen were pirates and they had looted his ships. He also claimed that his seized ship was worth Rs. 7,00,000.<sup>57</sup> More troubles arose in 1690's and 1700's. He was at the forefront in complaining to the Mughal Emperor about the piracy of the Europeans on the high sea, which was causing considerable loss to the Surat merchants. He was also instrumental in getting the *Muchalka* signed in 1699 by the Europeans to compensate the merchants of Surat for piracies by Europeans in future.

Mulla Abdul Ghafur had his influence not only at the Mughal court, but also abroad at the court in Persia. The leader of the Mughal merchants of Surat, Mirza Muhammad Taki, who was himself very critical of Abdul Ghafur said, on his return from the Persia that "he (Ghafur) was a man of considerable

---

<sup>57</sup>. *Ibid*, p.-1073, footnote no. 116

stature, of great influence not only at the Mughal court and in Surat, but also at the court in persia.”<sup>58</sup>

Abdul Ghafur died in 1716. He was the greatest and richest merchant of the province and because of this he enjoyed the title of 'Umdat-ul-tujjar'. After his death, the Governor of Surat, Haider Quli Khan, confiscated his property, which was estimated to be Rs. 85 lakhs. However, when his son, Mulla Abdul Hai, approached to the Mughal emperor (Farrukhsiyar), he was not only restored of the property of his late father, but was also given a dress of honour, an elephant and the title of 'Muhammad Ali'.<sup>59</sup>

Another important community of merchants at Surat was the Parsis. They came to Gujarat during the 16<sup>th</sup> century and settled in and around areas of Surat. Francois Martin says that they “are the fire-worshipping community, many of whom had settled more than a hundred years ago at Surat and its adjacent districts.”<sup>60</sup> Rev. Henry Lord, who came to Surat as a chaplain to the English factory has also thrown considerable light on the

---

<sup>58</sup> Asin Dasgupta, *Decline of Surat*, op cit., see chapt. 2. pp-94-133, 132.

<sup>59</sup> M.S. Commissariat, *History of Gujarat*, vol.-II, p-391.

<sup>60</sup> F. Martin, Lotika Vardarajan (ed.), op.cit., p-889.

historicity of the coming of the Parsis in India. He says that the exodus of the Parsis from Persia took place due to their religious persecution by the Arabs who conquered their country after the death of their Emperor Yezdegard. They secretly moved to the town of Jask on the Persian Gulf and hired seven vessels and finally reached India. They arrived on the shore of St. John's (Sanjan), not very far from the port of Suwalli. They entered into a treaty with the 'Raja of Navsari' by which they were allowed to live in Gujarat with their own religion and customs. Some of them moved to Suwalli and had similar agreement with a Raja who resided at the little town of Variav near Surat. Yet another group migrated to Cambay. Thus according to Henry Lord, these three (Sanjan, Variav and Cambay) were the original Parsi settlements, from where they dispersed to other parts of Gujarat.

However it should be noted that the account given by this chaplain was perhaps based on the oral traditions handed down for about nine centuries. This account differs from that given by a Persian poem *Kissseh-i-Sanjan*, written in 1599 by a Parsi at Surat. To mention in passing that the traditional date for the arrival of the Parsis in India is AD. 716.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> See, M.S. Commissariat, History of Gujarat, vol. -II, PP-343-44 (for lord's description), also see footnote nos. 6 and 8, the latter footnote describes in brief about the Iranian linkages of the Indian Parsis. It is interesting to note that in one of the earliest replies, received in 1511, the Iranian "*Anjuman*"  
(to be continued on next page)

There were a number of Parsi merchants at Surat. Asa Vora was one who had extensive trading network. He transported his goods from Surat to Basra and other ports of the region. In 1650, his son Hira Vora was appointed by the English as broker.

Another Parsi merchant at Surat was Angibora. We come to know about this merchant in an interesting episode noted by Francois Martin in 1683. After the Dutch took possession of Bantam, the Dutch Council at Batavia directed its chief at Surat to approach the Governor to confiscate all property belonging to the King of Bantam at Surat. The Dutch Director at Surat gave the home of a person of Persian origin - Angibora. The Dutch said that he was an agent of the King and possessed huge sum of money entrusted to him by his master. This man was produced before the Governor, whereupon he admitted that although he previously traded for the King, but as for now he had nothing belonging to the King. The Governor was dissatisfied with his answer, not because he was genuinely interested to hand over the money recovered from the merchant to the Dutch,

---

writes that they were not aware of the existence of the Parsis in India, until they received in their midst the first representative, one Nariman Hoshang of Baroach, in 1478.

but because he saw in this affair an opportunity to make large money.<sup>62</sup>

The most prominent of the Parsi merchants at Surat was Rustamji Manekji. Born in 1635 in a priestly family, he showed a great entrepreneurship. He acted as broker to the European Companies and amassed huge wealth by his involvement in the shipping and trade along the western Indian coast. He became the broker to the Portuguese and the New English Company<sup>63</sup> after quitting the Dutch. The Portuguese trusted him very much and appointed him their 'Vakil' to deal with the Portuguese affairs with the local administration. He was also the Portuguese agent at Surat to issue passes to Indian ships.<sup>64</sup> He had undisputed control over the English factory at Surat in 1700's.

Rustamji Manekji was the most influential among the Parsis at Surat. He was the first Parsis to establish a foothold for his community in Surat by helping to build the Surat *Anjuman*,

---

<sup>62</sup> For details of this episode, see, *Ibid.*, PP-889-90.

<sup>63</sup> It was a new Company of the English merchants, other than the East India Company.

<sup>64</sup> For details of his career, see P. Pissurlencar, Portuguese records on Rustamji Manockji (Nova-Goa, 1936) PP-XIX-XXXIV; also see, H. Das- *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb* (Calcutta, 1956)-1699-1702 (Calcutta, 1956), p-210. Rustmji had accompanied the party of the English ambassador Sir William Norris to the court of Aurangzeb.

a priestly nucleus for the Parsi community.<sup>65</sup> He had also laid out a garden about a mile from the Surat city at a village called Phulpur. The garden has been described as “most pleasant.”<sup>66</sup> He died in 1721 and his son, Manakji Nawroji carried the family business further, though there were ups and downs due to rivalry with other merchant families (of Laldas Parekh and Jagannathdas Laldas).<sup>67</sup> The Parsi community was also involved in the carpentry and ship-building. They were very skillful in this art. F. Martin says that “some of the Parsi carpenters would distinguish themselves even in the most famous European workshops”.<sup>68</sup> Ovington<sup>also</sup> observed this. He writes –“they are very industrious and diligent and careful to train up their children to arts and labour. They are principal men at the loom in the country, and most of the silks and stuffs at Surat are made up by their hands”.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Asin Dasgupta, op.cit., p-81.

<sup>66</sup> See. Diodati's Diary, in K.A. 1528, 21 August, 1699, p-361. Cf. Asin Dasgupta, op.cit., p-32. Footnote no.4.

<sup>67</sup> Asin Dasgupta, op.cit., p-272.

<sup>68</sup> F. Martin –op.cit., p-1004. They were also expert weavers at Surat. Ovington observed this. He writes - “they are very industrious and diligent and careful to train up their children to arts and labour. They are principal men at the loom in the country, and most of the silks and stuffs at Surat are made by their hands.”

<sup>69</sup> Ovington H.G. Rawlinson (ed.) op.cit., p-216-22.

## CHAPTER IV

### BANIAS OF SURAT AND THEIR ORGANISATIONAL METHODS

The European travellers and the factory records categorically state about the Banias<sup>1</sup> as being the people, other than the Muslims or Europeans, involved in trading activities. The term applied in broad sense to the Hindu and Jain merchants.<sup>2</sup> *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* (supplement) gives detailed cost of eighty-four divisions of Banias.<sup>3</sup> The Hindus were more numerous than the Muslims or any other communities at Surat.<sup>4</sup> The Hindus and Muslims lived amicably in the society as

<sup>1</sup> In Arabic, they were called Baqqals.

<sup>2</sup> Enthoven – Tribes and Castes of Bombay, vol.-I, p-XVII. Cf. *Mirat* (supplement), op.cit., p-116.

<sup>3</sup> There were – 1. Shrimali, 2. Osva, 3. Vaghirsal, 4. Dhandu, 5. Pakarval, 6. Mehatval, 7. Harsura, 8. Suran, 9. Patival, 10. Bhalu, 11. Gndirval, 12. Dobisalval, 13. Khendernval, 14. Porval, 15. Disaval, 16. Gujar, 17. Mohedval, 18. Agaral, 19. Jaelval, 20. Mamaval, 21. Kathunival, 22. Korantaval, 23. Chatraval, 24. Soni, 25. Surtival, 26. Nagar, 27. Mandi, 28. Jhalora, 29. Lad, 30. Kapol, 31. Khadatia, 32. Vayada, 33. Vasora, 34. Bajaval, 35. Naghadara, 36. Karahda, 37. Bhabura, 38. Masuda, 39. Narsinghra, 40. Kaherval, 41. Panchamval, 42. Hanerval, 43. Sarkhandera, 44. Ves, 45. Rasemki, 46. Kambuval, 47. Jevdaval, 48. Bhogivda, 49. Ujhetval, 50. Banhvad, 51. Shigod, 52. Bhagur, 53. Walmel, 54. Tisuda, 55. Tilota, 56. Ashtwargi, 57. Latisakha, 58. Varthola, 59. Kachura, 60. Khechu, 61. Horbad, 62. Nima, 63. Padmavena, 64. Meheria, 65. Heheria, 66. Dhakval, 67. Mankuvar, 68. Goelval, 69. Mahurval, 70. Chitroda, 71. Kakaliya, 72. Bhareja, 73. Anandawara, 74. Nagora, 75. Sachora, 76. Bhogandval, 77. Madahda, 78. Bharamania, 79. Vagdia, 80. Manduria, 81. Purbal, 82. Sorathiapurvac, 83. Badhnora, and 84. Nibhava.

<sup>4</sup> See *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, Edward Grey (Hakluyt Society), 1892, 2 vols; vol. -I, p-30. Also see, '*Jahangir India*' of Pelseart, tr. Moreland and Geyl (Cambridge, 1925) p-78.

well as in their trading world. Writing in 1623, Pietro Della Valle says, "However, they (Hindus and Muslims) live all mix together, and peaceable, because the Grand Moghal, to whom Guzarat is subject to, although he be a Mahometan (but not as pure as they report), makes no difference in his Dominions between one sort and other and both in his court and his armies, and even amongst men of highest degree, they are of equal account and consideration."<sup>5</sup> A 16<sup>th</sup> century traveller, Duarte Barbosa says that the "vancias dwell among the moors with whom they carry on all their trade."<sup>6</sup> The profession of brokerage was the monopoly of the Bantias, and historical reason was perhaps more important for this. Hamilton also says that even the Muslims preferred Hindu brokers.<sup>7</sup> This was, in fact, due to the Bantias being expert in dealing in money matters. As Fryer says, "they (the bania families) were expert in all the studied art of thriving and insinuation and without these neither you nor the natives themselves shall do any Business."<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Della Valle, op.cit., p-30.

<sup>6</sup> The Book of Duarte Barbosa – An Account of the Countries on the Indian Ocean and their Inhabitants, tr. M.L. Dames, 2 vols, London, 1918, vol.-I, p-110-11.

<sup>7</sup> Hamilton, A New Account of the East Indies ed. W. Foster, vol. -I, p-97.

<sup>8</sup> John Fryer, op.cit., vol. -I, p-212.



The brokers were ubiquitous by their presence where there were economic transactions. John Fryer was surrounded by a large number of Banya brokers as soon as he landed at the Swally port. He writes that "As soon as you have set your foot on the <sup>shore</sup>, they crowd in their service, interposing between you and all civil respect, ... enduring servilely foul words, affronts and injuries for a future hope of gain..."<sup>9</sup> Asin Dasgupta, thus, has aptly remarked that "In short, wherever there was an economic transaction in the city, you would very likely find a broker to smooth your way and take his cut."<sup>10</sup>

The Banias of Surat traded independently. Most of them, except a few merchant prices like Virji Vora, also acted as Company's brokers. Some of the Banias were specialised in money changing and they were called as *shroff*. It should be noted that sometimes, as Bania was the broker of the Company, the *shroff* and himself a big merchant. They had their agents not only in cities of India but also abroad. Mandelso, who visited Gujarat in 1638-90, says that "The *banya shroffs* had their

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Asin Dasgupta, op.cit., p-85.

correspondents in all parts of Asia, as also at Constantinople in Europe.”<sup>11</sup> We shall discuss with some of the Banias of Surat.

The most outstanding figure among the Banias during the seventeenth century was undoubtedly Virji Vora, also called as Merchant Prince of Surat. The contention of Satis Chandra<sup>12</sup> that he was a Muslim Bohra has been refuted by K.H. Kamdar.<sup>13</sup> The latter's paper, based on the Gujarati materials at the Bombay Archives and Jain documents in Surat and Baroda, has conclusively proved that he was a Sthanakavasi Jain of the Lonkagachhiya group and also may have been a member of the Shrimali Oswal Powal caste grouping. Virji Vora was deeply involved in the religious affair of his community and was himself its lay leader (*Sandhapati Sanghari*). An English letter also clearly says of him as “Virji Vora an eminent Hindu merchant at Surat.”<sup>14</sup> Thevenot, also refers to him as a bania and not a Muslim. To quote him, “There are people vastly rich in Surat, and a ‘Bania’ a friend of mine, called Vargivora (Virji Vora) is reckoned to be worth at least eight millions.”<sup>15</sup> This comment of

---

<sup>11</sup> Mandelslo's Travels in Western India, Commissariat, O.U.P., 1931, p-28.

<sup>12</sup> See I ESHR, III, 4, p-327.

<sup>13</sup> K.H. Kamdar “Surat Bandarno Karodahipati Mahajan Virji Vora”, in Journal of Gujarat Research Society, XXX/4, October, 1968, p-276-79.

<sup>14</sup> EFI, 1665-60, p-16.

<sup>15</sup> Thevenot, S.N. Sen (ed.), op.cit., p-22.

the traveller also gives a glimpse into the financial worth of the merchant.

First mention of Virji Vora is found in 1619 when his broker named Haoka Parrache (Hak Parekh) was allowed by the English to see the English ship. From this time onwards till 1670, when we find last reference of him, the English factory records are full of various dealings with this merchant. He remained a giant merchant of Surat and virtually leader of all the Banias of Surat for about half a century.

He had his agents at all commercial centres of India. The English transmitted large amounts of money from Surat to Agra through *Hundis* provided by Virji Vora. He sent his agents at coastal ~~ports~~ of Malabar to purchase goods produced locally for him. He also sent his goods to Persian Gulf, Red Sea area and South-East Asia.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> See, EFI, 1624-45, p-253.

Virji Vora extensively dealt in various spices (e.g. pepper, cloves, nutnrey, and mace), bullion, vermillion, quicksilver, coral etc. Over pepper, he had established virtual monopoly. He sent his agent along the Malabar Coast to purchase pepper and cardamom and bring back to Surat for sale. An English letter (of 1643) writes, "I understand that Virji Vora yearly sends down his people to Calicut with cotton and opium by which he cloth (gain?) less than double his money to those people he buyeth his pepper off (and ) and afterwards disposeth of his pepper to us for double what it cost him....."<sup>17</sup> The English factors repeatedly complaint to their home authorities that they often found themselves unable to make any profit in those commodities in which Vora dealt.

In 1668, the English Company suffered loss in quicksilver and vermillion by selling these at reduced prices. This was primarily because Virji Vora and Haji Zahid Beg had these sufficient at Surat to supply the whole country for many years."<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> EFI, 1642-45m p-204.

<sup>18</sup> EFI, 1668-69, p-24.

In one incident we found him purchasing broad cloth from the English. This dealing was done by Kirwaja Minas, the Armenian merchant, on his behalf.<sup>19</sup>

In fact most important asset of Virji Vora was the ready cash he had with him even during the leanest period. An English factor at Surat writing to London, says that "The town is very empty of moneys; Virgee Vorah (Virji Vora) is the only master of it....."<sup>20</sup> The English were continuously under his debt, which continued to increase with time. In 1628, this amount was about Rs. 30, 000<sup>21</sup> and in 1669 the debt is reported to be about Rs. 4,00,000.<sup>22</sup> The sack of his house by Shivaji in January 1664 in which he lost so much money,<sup>23</sup> seems to have made little impact on his (Virji Vora) reputation in the mercantile world at Surat. An English letter of 26 November 1664, ten months after the Surat sack, says that "Hodjee Zaied Beugue (Haji Zahid Beg) and Virjee Vorah (Virji Vora), the two

---

<sup>19</sup> EFI, (NS), vol. -I, p-192.

<sup>20</sup> EFI, 1655-60, p-215.

<sup>21</sup> EFI, 1624-29, p-234.

<sup>22</sup> EFI, 1668-69, p-193. However, the total debt of all the shroffs of Surat was 6,00,000.

<sup>23</sup> Anthony Smith, English factor, who was captured by Shivaji and later released, says that the plunder of Shivaji included "Incredible quantity of money, they (Marathas) found at the house of the reputed richest marchant in the wourld (his name is Verge Vora, his estate having beene esteemed to bee 80 lacs of rupees). EFI, 1665-67, P-308. A Dutch official at Surat named Iversen gave an account of the loss of Virji Vora. He notes that the loss sustained by Virji Vora was estimated at six tons of gold. The Dutch *ton gouds* represented 1,00,000 gulden, and at this rate Virji Vora's loss would be about 50,000 *L*. Ibid. PP, 309-10.

great merchants of the this town, hould up their heads still and are for great bargaines....”<sup>24</sup>

Virji Vora had cordial relations with the local administration as well as the Mughal court. In a number of instances, <sup>he</sup> was a major person to mediate the issues between the English Company and the local governor. In September 1624, a peace agreement was reached between the English factory and the local administration. Virji Vora also signed the agreement.<sup>25</sup> In another incident, he along with other merchants of Surat and *Shah Bandar* negotiated a settlement between the English and Surat Governor. The dispute was related to price of some of the cannon which the English sold to the Mughal.<sup>26</sup>

The last mention of Virji Vora in the English factory records is found in 1670, when it is stated that Khwaja Minas bought the cloth on behalf of Virji Vora and Vora’s grandson, Nanchand bought tin and copper.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p-313. It should be remembered that the house and warehouses of Haji Zahid Beg escaped the plunder of Shivaji because of intervention by the English, for his house joined the English factory.

<sup>25</sup> EFI, 1624-29, PP, 27-30. Some historians have stated that he signed the document as Mahajan on behalf of the Hindu and Jain merchants. However, nowhere in the agreement has he been referred as signing the agreement on behalf of the banias, being himself their Mahajan or leader. This issue shall find discussion later.

<sup>26</sup> EFI, 1661-64, p-15.

<sup>27</sup> EFI, (NS), vol. -I, p-192.

Another important Bania broker-merchant of Surat was the Bora brothers who worked as French brokers in 1880's. This we know from the *Memoirs* of Francois Martin. Something needs to be said at first about these brothers. There remains no doubt after Martin clearly stating that these Bora brothers were Hindu.<sup>28</sup> We do not have any conclusive evidence to prove that whether there was any relation between Virji Vora and these two Bora brothers. While Gokhale presumes that he "deported from the scene in 1675 when he could have been 80 years old",<sup>29</sup>

Lotika Vardarajan says that the elder one of these was most likely Virj Vora.<sup>30</sup> Vardaraja had extensively cited to establish his argument. Establishing of the similarities in the trading network and the commodities is certainly worth convincing. But there arises some doubts in accepting her view. These are –

- 1) that if Virji Vora was 'quite old' by 1664, he would have become very old by 1670. This could have restricted his mobility. It was perhaps because of the good understanding between him and Haji Zahid Beg that the

---

<sup>28</sup> Lotika Varadarajan, op.cit., vol.-I, part i, p-387. This entry was dated March 1885.

<sup>29</sup> Gokhale, Surat in Seventeenth Century, p-145.

<sup>30</sup> Lotika Varadarajan, vol.-II, part i, op.cit., footnote no.47, PP-968-69; Also see her article – "The Brokers Boras and Virji Vora, Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, XIX/II, Leiden, 1976, PP-224-27.

latter purchased cloth from the English on former's behalf. It seems improbable logically to extend the life of a very old man by fifteen years and finding him active enough to trade and broker like young entrepreneur.

2) Virji Vora had never been a broker of any Company, – either the English or the Dutch. Most of the time both the companies sought financial help from him. Throughout his life we find him dictating his own terms to the companies. Thus it seems unconvincing that a person like Virji Vora, even if he remained alive in 1685, could have accept the position of brokership of the French, a Company which was inferior in financial worth and trading network in comparison with the Dutch or English.

3) The English factory records become completely silent about of Virji Vora after 1670. Had he been active in trade, it seems almost impossible that the English factors would have not written about him.

However, sudden disappearance of the reference of Bora brothers after 1685 even in the French records needs further research. In this regard more research on local Gujarati sources shall be helpful.



In 1684 the Bora brothers tried to get monopoly over the French trading affair at Surat by telling Francois Martin, the then President of the French establishment at Surat, to replace all the earlier courtiers of the Company by those of their choice. "They agreed to that they would accept all merchandise sent out by the Company, and also undertook," writes Martin, "to ensure that the trade of the Company did not suffer as a result of shortage of funds." The proposal of the Bora brothers was not put into effect despite a clear direction for this by the Company's Board at Paris. However the officials at Surat partially agreed to their demand and appointed one of their man as Company's courtier at Surat, in addition to previous courtiers, to purchase the merchandise required by the Company. This the Company did partly to fulfil the promises that the French had made to them so that they would continue to remain friendly towards the Company, and partly, because the company expected three ships by the next season and it was very much anxious to procure as much merchandise as to fill these (ships).

The last reference of the Bora brothers are found in September 1685 when the Company contracted for 6,000 maunds of pepper from Calicut.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., PP-921-24, 947-49, 950, 951, 968.

Some of the famous Bania broker-merchants of Surat, whose name appear in the English factory records, were Tapidas Parekh, Tulsidas and his sons Bhimji Parekh and Kalyan Parekh, Vitthal, Somji Chitta, Chhota Thakur, Thakursi, Tulsi Ganda, Lala Kisundas, Santokh Beeharaj, Piru Hingola, Piru Saddarung and Mohandas Parekh. From the account of Pieter Van Dam<sup>32</sup>, we know some of the brokers who served the Dutch during 1671-98. The names of these brokers were Manickchand Vora, Samersingh Vora, Jagivandas, Kissandas, Rukjidas, Bhagwandas, Govinddevi, Samdas, Gopalji and Jivji Virji.

Mercantile association or guilds at the cities of trading importance had been an important feature in India during the ancient times. They were variously called Shrenis, Sanghas, Pugas, Nigams. Its head was usually called Shresthin. The Shresthin was neither appointed by any political authority, nor was elected by his guild-members. He normally owed his position to the popular acknowledgement because of his economic prowess and social and community concern. In cities with several thriving <sup>craft</sup> crafts, each used to have their own guilds. They used to have a role in the local administration. They had their own rules and regulations called *Shrenidharma*, which even the

---

<sup>32</sup> Cited in B.G. Gokhale, op.cit., p-125.

Kings considered. These guilds or Shrenis played multitude of roles. During the early medieval period the traders associations – Nanadeshi and Manigramam were very rich and influential in South and West India. They even maintained their own army.

As far as Gujarat is concerned, this continued to work till 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D.<sup>33</sup> However, the issue of trade guilds during the medieval period did not attract the attention of scholars for long time. A major contribution in this direction was made in 1978 by Dwijendranath Tripathi and M.J. Mehta. After studying the local Gujarats sources and other records of late medieval and early modern period, they concluded that the institution of guild continued to flourish in Ahmedabad city upto the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The institution in this city was known as Nagarsheth.<sup>34</sup>

In case of Surat, there was no such institution of Nagarseth. Various merchant communities of Surat had their own associations such as – *Jamaat* of the Muslims, the *Anjuman* of the Parsis, the *Mahajan* or the Caste-Council of the Hindus and *Sanghavi* of the Jain merchants. But these were more effective in their respective social world and had little or no

---

<sup>33</sup> A.S. Altekar, A History of Important Towns and Cities in Gujarat and Kathiawad, Bombay 1926, PP. 52-53.

<sup>34</sup> For details, see D. Tripathi and M.J. Mehta – “The Nagarseth of Ahmedabad: The History of an urban Institution in a Gujarat City,” in *Indian History Congress*, 1978, PP-481-496.

intervention in the mercantile world. We do not find in Surat any all-merchant association of any merchant, howsoever rich he was, playing the role equivalent to Nagarseth for any period of time during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The suggestions by some historians that Virji Vora may be accepted as sort of Nagarseth of Surat<sup>35</sup> show serious misunderstanding of the merchants and mercantile world of Surat. In fact, as we shall see, Surat exhibited the features of a classic mercantile city. Where there was common threat to all the merchants of the city, they rose to protest, irrespective of their communities. There was no single accepted leader of the merchants. This can be sustained through various instances. In 1919, when the English tried to monopolise the Red Sea trade, all the merchants of Surat organised a 'general boycott' against them and stopped selling them all those commodities which were suited to the Red Sea trade. They threatened further measures if the English did not stop this (Red Sea) trade. The Surat Governor was supportive of their cause and imprisoned some of the merchants who supplied some goods to them (English). The letter says "The Surat merchants oppose the trade 'as very prejudicial unto them and not to be indured.' To prevent it they forbade all dealings with the English in

---

<sup>35</sup> B.G. Gokhale, op.cit., p-137.

commodities suitable for the Red Sea, and imprisoned a couple of merchants who ventured to supply the.”<sup>36</sup>

The factory record does not mention any leader of this protest organised against the English. But this clearly shows that the merchants definitely had a loose organisation of themselves and the defaulters of the common decision were easily detected and punished.

In another incident of 1624<sup>37</sup>, an agreement was signed between the local administration and the English to ameliorate the grievances of the latter. This agreement was signed by twenty-one personalities of Surat.<sup>38</sup> Of these only three persons (Governor Saif Khan, Qazi Mahmud Qasim and Qiladar Jam Quli Beg) were officials. Most of the other persons were important merchants of Sulrat. Virji Vora were also one among the signatories. Nowhere in the record, it is said, as has been interpreted by some historians,<sup>39</sup> that Virji Vora signed the document as a person being ‘*Mahajan*’ of Surat Banias.

---

<sup>36</sup> EFI, 1618-21, PP-XIV, 56.

<sup>37</sup> For details of the whole agreement, see, EFI, 1624-29, PP-27-30.

<sup>38</sup> The twenty-one signatories were – Saif Khan (the Governor), the Qazi Mahmud Qasim, Jam Quli Beg (the Qiladar), Ishaq Beg, Ali Hasan, Nazmudin, Ali Quli Sadr, Ali Quli Mahmud, Mahmud Sufi, Raza, Jalaluddin Mahmud, Mahmud Salih Tabrizi, Nazirudddin, Mahmud Ali Ispahani, Ali Mashadi, Saadat Yar, Mutawalli Mahmud, Mahmud Ibrahim, Haji Abdul Nabi, Hari Vaishya And Virji Vora. EFI, 1624-29, p-30.

<sup>39</sup> B. G. Gokhale, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

Furthermore, another prominent Banya named Hari Vaishya was also one among the signatories. It seems that the leading merchants of Surat were cumulatively responsible for the effectivity of the agreement. No one was the leader or *Mahajan* of all the merchants.

It seems that some eminent merchants of Surat were appointed by Governor to deal with the merchants' issues. In March 1654, an English vessel *Supply* was captured and looted by the Dutch. The merchants of Surat demanded compensation on the ground that this ship was insured but the English denied this. The issue reached to the Governor of Surat, who referred this to a *group of four Banyas*.<sup>40</sup> This further indicate that no all-merchant organisation existed to resolve the merchants' issue. A committee of merchants were appointed by the Governor on *ad hoc* basis to deal with a particular matter.

Another incident is that of 1664, when Shivaji reached upto Gandevi, he sent his two men with a letter at Surat in which he required that the Governor, Haji Zahid Beg, Virji Vora and Haji Kasim should come to meet him for an agreement to save the city. The English letter says about these three as

---

<sup>40</sup> EFI, 1651-54, PP- XV-XVI, 224, 251, EFI, 1655-60, p-10.

“eminent merchants and mony’d men in the town”<sup>41</sup> and does not refer to them as representative either of their communities (Bania and Muslims) or of the whole city. Further there was no organisational bid on the part of the merchants of Surat to save the city from the sack of the Marathas.

Sometimes the Governor appointed a person of his own choice as head of a team of merchants constituted for a particular purpose. The merchant chosen by the Governor could not be the richest or the eminent one. For example, in 1671 Abdul Ghafur (the future famous shipping and trading giant of Surat – Mulla Abdul Ghafur) was appointed by the Governor to head a group of merchant to negotiate with the Europeans ‘even though many of them were more eminent and of better quality’.<sup>42</sup>

The important incident which throws considerable light on the organisation skill of the Banias of Surat occurred in 1669. In the wake of the persecution by overzealous Qazi of Surat, who converted a nephew of the old Shroff of English named Tulsidas Parekh, and a Persian writer, about 8000 Banias of Surat shut their business in Surat. They left their families in Surat and migrated, under the leadership of Bhimji Parekh to Bhroach and

---

<sup>41</sup> EFI, 1661-64, p-299.

<sup>42</sup> EFI, (NS) vol. I, p-211.

from there to Ahmedabad. From here they approached to the Mughal Emperor. The whole business at Surat came to standstill. The letter says- "Bannians having bound themselves under severe penalties not to open any of their shops without order from their Mahger or General Council, there was not any provisions to be got; the tanksall (mint) and customhouse shut; no mony to be procured, soe much as for house expensed, much less for trade, which was wholly at a stand....."<sup>43</sup> The *hartal* (closure) lasted for about three months during which time not much trade was done at Surat.<sup>44</sup> They returned to Surat only when they were assured by the Mughal emperor "of their safety and more freedome in their religion."<sup>45</sup>

This incident throws many light on the organisational capacities of the Bania merchants of Surat. The General Council or Mahajan referred in the letter was basically a caste-council, as Mr. Edwardes suggests<sup>46</sup>, and not a merchants' organisation.

Also, it should not be concluded that Bhimji Parekh was the leader or chief of this caste-council. His leadership was quite incidental, occasioned by conversion of one of his cousin (Bhimji

---

<sup>43</sup> EFI, 1667-69, PP-191-92, 92.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p-197.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 205.



Parekh was the son of Tulsidas). This incident perhaps enhanced the social position of Bhimji Parekh among the Bania community. For in 1673, we find him leading a group of many Hindu merchants petitioning to the English to settle in Bombay.<sup>47</sup>

This incident also throws light on the role of the local administration in organisation of the *banias*. After the Banias had left the city the Qazi was enraged over this and asked the Governor to bring them back. However, the Governor was sympathetic to the Banians' cause and hence replied "they are the Kings subjects and may travel in his country where they please ....."<sup>48</sup>

The organisational capacity of the banias of Surat was not very strong. Personal interests and rivalries were more important for them and they could be easily lured by temporary promises of gain. In a note of July 1686, Francois Martin writes that the principal merchants of Surat got together and *nominated their representatives* to carry their complaints to the Mughal emperor

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., footnote 1, p-192.

<sup>47</sup> Although this issue could not materialise because their first petition carried by a ship *Falcon* was captured by the Dutch and the second petition had the signature of only Bhimji Parekh, while earlier one was signed by several banias. See EFI, (NS), vol. I, p-233.

<sup>48</sup> EFI, 1667-69, p-192.

about the extortionate behaviour of the Governor. When the Governor came to know of this, he detached some of its members promising them better treatment. This resulted in the merchants disagreeing among themselves and as a result no action could be taken.<sup>49</sup>

This incidence again shows that there was no permanent organisation of the merchants of Surat. They only organised when they faced some problems and this 'organisation' vanished as soon as the problem was gone.

However the absence of an all-merchant organisation at Surat does not mean that there was no cooperation among the merchants to protest jointly, when their interests were threatened either by the European Companies or the Mughal state. In fact, we come across a number of instances when all the merchants of Surat, irrespective of the communities they belonged, unitedly opposed. One such incidence occurred in 1619, which I discussed above. In this case, the merchants also made representation at Court and procured order from there to the effect that the English should not be allowed to sell their coral brought from the Red Sea for one year.

---

<sup>49</sup> F. Martin, Lotika Vardarajan, op.cit., p-1015.

In another incident, the merchants of Surat became vexed due to continuous harassment and extortion by the Surat Governor Ghiyasuddin Khan (1772-77). They rose against him and chosen a Muslim merchant named Mirza Muazzam to represent their case before the Mughal emperor. The merchants were successful and Ghyasuddin Khan was replaced by Mirza Muhammad Beg.<sup>50</sup>

The most important tool of Surat merchants protest to against any sort of injustice done to them either by the officials at Surat or the English companies was immediate closure of their business and threat to complain to the Emperor. This tool was most of the time very effective and successful. In fact, in a mercantile city of Surat no one could bear the closure of business for long time, because interests of all the officials at Surat were tied with the flourishing of trade. The first recorded incident of such protest was in 1616 when due to injustice done to a chief merchant of Surat by the Customer (Judge of Alfandica) the whole *banyas* of Surat shut up their shops and after complaining to the Governor left the city, threatening to go to the Emperor to seek justice. However, the Governor Ibrahim

---

<sup>50</sup> EFI, (NS), vol. I, PP-283-84. It was reported that Ghiyasuddin Khan had amassed a wealth of about Rs 100 lakhs by extortion from the inhabitants and by defrauding the Emperor. Ibid., p-284.

Khan persuaded them to come back “with much fair usage and fairer promises”.<sup>51</sup> We have seen the incidences of 1619 and 1669 above. In the episode of 1669 migration of the *bantias* had brought all the mercantile activities at Surat to a standstill, even the mint and customhouse was shut. No credit was available in the city.<sup>52</sup> The effectivity of the tool (of closure of business and temporary migration) can be guessed from this. The return of the *bantias* gave “the great satisfaction to the Governor, officers, and all the inhabitants of the towne.”<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Letters Received, vol. IV, (1616-17), p-320.

<sup>52</sup> EFI, 1667-69, p-192.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p-205.

## CHAPTER V

### MUGHAL STATE, SURAT MERCHANTS AND EUROPEAN COMPANIES

This chapter shall discuss some aspects of the Mughal-Merchant-Company relations during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The attitude of the Mughals towards merchants' problems as well as towards the European Companies shall be dealt with.

Generally the merchants were not held in high esteem by the Mughals. After the failure of the representation of Paul Canning as merchant to the Mughal Court for obtaining permission to open factories in India and trading concessions, the English factors at Surat decided to send Edwards at the Court with the title of "the Messenger and servant sent by our King to the Great Mugul".<sup>1</sup> The reason behind this change in the title by the Surat factors was that the merchants were not respected by the Mughals. The letter which they wrote to the Company says that, "whosoever should go up to the King under the title of a merchant should not be respected, as by experience in entertainment of Paul Canning, for that merchants generally

---

<sup>1</sup> Letters Received, vol. II (1613-15), pp. XIX, 138.

are not regarded by the King".<sup>2</sup> John Fryer also observed this. He says that while the local merchant communities were held in slight consideration by the Mughal bureaucracy, the English merchants were looked upon as nobles. The reason behind the latter's consideration as nobles, according to him, was the naval power of the English and not the *firman*s of the Mughals. He writes,

"Our susage by Pharmaund granted successively from their Emperors is kind enough, but the better because our naval power curbs them ..... they (the Mughal officials at Surat) depose something of their severity, and treat with us in a more favourable style; giving us the preference before others here resident, and look on us with same aspect as they do on their great Ombrahs (i.e. *Omr*as, nobles)."<sup>3</sup>

However, this does not mean that the interests of the indigenous merchants were totally sidelined and the Mughals granted the *farmans* to the European Companies at their cost. We find evidences of the Mughals bluntly refusing the monopolistic demands of the English. The English attempted to

---

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> John Fryer, W. Crooke (ed.), *op.cit.*, vol. I, pp. 288-89.

establish monopoly over the Red Sea trade in late 1610's. The idea was that of Thomas Roe. But it was initially opposed by the English President at Surat, Thomas Kerridge. However, after reaping the superprofit from the commodities sent on the ship 'Lion', he changed his mind and made all attempts to monopolise this trade. The merchants of Surat opposed this tendency of English by organising a 'general boycott' and refusing to sell them any commodities, which they required to sell in the Red Sea markets. The governor Ishaq Beg also sided the cause of the merchants and arrested some merchants who tried to sell some goods to the English.<sup>4</sup> The Surat Governor replied to the English President, that he could not go against the interests of the general people and also reminded that they had already done enough damage to the local merchants. The English factory quotes the reply of the Governor as "he neither durst nor would be a broacher of a new custome, heareby to incure the generall exclamations of all the people; and therefore wisht us contente ourselves with our wanted lymitts, as beeing a sufficient encroach allready, to there generall damage."<sup>5</sup> Biddulph's attempt to get this concession from the Prince Khurram, under whose charge Surat fell, also failed.<sup>6</sup> After this, the English

---

<sup>4</sup> *EFI*, 1618-21, pp. XIV, 56.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p XIV,

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p XV.

factory at Surat sent its two factors, William Biddulph and John Willoughby, to the Mughal emperor Jahangir at Sirohi, where the Court was camped at that time. When they approached the Emperor for a farman to this effect, he replied that he would not give such grant which would made his people poor. He also said that if the English wished to go out, they could do so. In a letter dated 25 December, 1619, the Company wrote the reply of the Emperor in these words, "He (the Emperor) absolutelye tould mee wee should not trade to the Red Sea ..... nor bring any corall into these partes to sell; and yf (we) could not be contented to have free trade for all but Mocha, we might go out of the country yf we would, for (he) must not begger his people for us; but yf (we) would have his firmaen for a house and free trade in all other places, with good usage, we should have one." To this Biddulph answered "it (we) had not free trade to buy and sell in all places, as custome of merchants were, we needed neither house nor firmaen." Whereupon, the Prince replied that regarding this, they need not trouble him anymore.<sup>7</sup>

Merchant's complaints were seriously considered by the Mughals. In the above case (Red Sea) also the principal merchants of Surat had petitioned to the Prince Khurram not to

---

<sup>7</sup> EFI, 1618-21, p-176.



grant such monopoly to the English.<sup>8</sup> In a number of incidents the officials of Surat port were dismissed on the complaints of the merchants. In early 1616, the Surat Governor, Zulfiqar Khan was recalled by the Emperor as complaint by Thomas Roe about his extortionist behaviour. Not only this, the English was also able to recover from him most of the extorted money.<sup>9</sup> It was because of his dismissal on this ground, says the English letter, that the succeeding Governor, Ibrahim Khan was friendly towards the English.<sup>10</sup> In the same year, the *Shah Bandar* (whom the factors called Judge of Alfandica) was recalled by the Prince within six days of his appointment on the complaint by the banias of Surat about "some violence done by him to a chief bannyane".<sup>11</sup> In 1677, the Surat Governor Ghiyasuddin Khan was dismissed when a group of merchants headed by a Muslim merchant named Mirza Muazzam apprised Aurangzeb about his extortionate behaviour.<sup>12</sup>

These incidents show that the Mughals did not tolerate any misuse of the office and extortion by the officials of Surat, if the

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p XV.

<sup>9</sup> Letters Received, vol. IV, p XXIV.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p XXXII.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p-320.

<sup>12</sup> EFI, (N.S.), vol. I, p-283-84.

complaints were adequately represented at the Court. However, these decisions of the Mughals were not in accordance with any 'policy' as such to protect the interests of the merchants. The decision totally depended on the nature of representation at the Court. The Mughals on their own did not take any initiative against the officials. The Mughals provided the treatment by removing individual official but did not take any pre-emptive policy measure to check the misuse of authority.

Here it needs to be kept in mind that there was a difference in the extortion by the Governors and other officials at Surat and the Mughal Princes during the times of civil war. The extortion money, which the Governors collected from the Europeans and the indigenous merchants at Surat, were not to be repaid. These were either in the form of bribe given by the merchants for favours or extortion forcibly collected by the Governor. However, the forcible exaction of money by the Princes should not technically be called 'extortion' because they took it as loans, which were to be paid later. For example when, in 1657 Shahbaz Khan, the trusted general of Prince Murad, secured a forcible loan of about 5 lakhs from the merchants of Surat, through Haji Muhammad Zahid Beg and Virji Vora, they were given a bond

duly stamped with Murad's seal, as a pledge for repayment.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the loans taken from the merchants of Ahmedabad were also to be paid. In the latter case, it was clearly stated about the revenues from the Paraganas, which were to be taken for payment to the merchants.<sup>14</sup>

However, this does not mean the Governors of Surat were punished always. The fact to be noted is that they feared the complaints of the merchants at the Court. Most of the time, the merchants did not complain because of the fear of retaliation by the Governor. The Governors themselves appointed officials to see that no such letter reached the Court. In 1662, a number of merchants wrote a letter to the Court complaining about the disturbances in trade created by the Governor. The Governor's men intercepted the letter and brought it to Surat. The Governor became very angry and threatened the merchants of dire consequences, if they again complained to the Court. Two ships of Khwaja Minas, the Armenian merchant, were also detained and released only when bribed.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> M.S. Commissariat, op.cit., vol. II, p-135.

<sup>14</sup> Details of the name of Parganas and the amount of revenue to be taken from these is given in *Imperial Mughal Farmans in Gujarat*, in M.S. Commissariat- Studies in the History of Gujarat, 1987 (Reprint), pp. 15-17.

<sup>15</sup> See this incident is narrated by Abbe Carró. See B.G. Gokhale, Surat in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, op.cit., pp. 55-56.

A number of incidents show that though the Mughals were sympathetic to the merchants' causes and their interests, they had no consistent policy. Sometimes justice was done even by the use of force against the European Company, at other times the merchants' cause was utterly neglected. This is shown by the following incidents.

In November 1619, the English captured a ship from Lahori Bandar in Sind on its way to Persia carrying the Portuguese pass. The merchants of Sind made representation to the Mughal Court and demanded justice. The English Company was called on to explain their viewpoint. They justified their action by saying that the ship was carrying the pass issued by the Portuguese, their enemy, and hence the Company was not liable to pay compensation to the merchants of Sind. This logic was not accepted by the Mughals. Consequently, stern action was taken against them. Their factory at Agra was seized and its two factors, Hughes and Parker, were arrested at the orders of no other than but Asaf Khan, whom the English frequently called "friend of ours". The Sind merchants were paid with Rs.10,200 from the proceeds of the goods seized from the English factory at Agra.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Efi, 1622-23, pp. XVI-XVII.

In later 1680's the English had full-fledged war with the Mughal. Immediately, all their factories within the territory of the Mughal Empire were seized. In reply, the Company extensively looted the ships and merchandise of the Surat merchants. In 1690, the English appealed for pardon, which was done after a payment of war compensation. They were allowed to operate their business. However, the Mughals did not insist on the demands of the merchants that they should be paid full compensation by the English. Francois Martin says, "..... (peace) terms were somewhat ambiguous with regard to the seizure of the merchandise by the English at Surat, only a partial restoration being insisted upon."<sup>17</sup>

Another inconsistency towards the mercantile affairs is shown by the episode of '*Muchalka*'. Hasan Hamadani, a shipping merchant of Surat, approached the Mughal emperor for payment of compensation for his plundered ship by the European pirates. Upon this appeal, Aurangzeb directed the Surat Governor that he should ensure not only the compensation to the said merchant by the Europeans but also that he should take an undertaking (*Muchalka*) from them agreeing to pay compensation in such cases of piracy in future

---

<sup>17</sup> Francois Martin, Lotika Varadarajan (ed.), op.cit., vol. II, part ii, p-1271.

also. The European Companies obeyed this order reluctantly and signed undertaking in 1699. Meanwhile the news of plunder of three ships (two of them belonging to Abdul Ghafur), which were under the Dutch protection, also reached Surat. Abdul Ghafur manipulated the support of the merchants of Surat, protested against the Dutch and demanded compensation from them. However, the Dutch did not give in the demand of Abdul Ghafur and made representation at the Court. In 1704, by the order of Aurangzeb, Muchalka was cancelled.<sup>18</sup>

Yet another inconsistency is shown by the episode of the English attempt to get monopoly of the Red Sea trade. Attempt by the English to get monopoly of this trade was refused by Jahangir in 1619.<sup>19</sup> But the Emperor could not hold his decision for long and by 1624, he granted a *farman* to the English by which they were allowed to have a share of the Red Sea trade, and the merchants of Surat, despite initial assurances, were deprived of this lucrative trade also.<sup>20</sup> This episode also shows that though the Mughals had sympathy for the indigenous merchants, they failed to protect their interest. Aurangzeb's

---

<sup>18</sup> Aisn Dasgupta, op.cit., pp. 104-27.

<sup>19</sup> See *Supra* p.104

<sup>20</sup> Detailed description of the English attempt to get grant from the Mughal to establish monopoly in the Red Sea trade is given by P.N. Chakrabarty – 'Decay of Mughal India's Red Sea Trade Monopoly', IHC, 1978, pp. 326-32.

grant of ½ percent custom remission to the English and the Dutch for future, as a token of appreciation of their valour to defend themselves during the first sack of Surat by Shivaji in January 1664<sup>21</sup>, shows that the Mughals viewed the European Companies differently and gave deferential treatment to them. In the same sack Virji Vora's house was looted and he lost lakhs of rupees. The houses of Haji Zahid Beg and Bhimji Parekh, along with large number of merchants, were also looted.<sup>22</sup> Somji Chitta and Chhota Thakur (two English brokers, who were dismissed by the company on grounds of fraud in 1662) were reported by the English factors to have become 'very poor' after their houses were looted.<sup>23</sup> The Mughals provided no compensation to these merchants. It failed to realise that the protection of the city and hence its inhabitants was the responsibility of the Mughal state.

It seems that the Mughal and the merchants of Surat had different notions about the European Companies. Merchants showed indifferent attitude towards the politics of the Mughals. They were only concerned about smooth running of their trade.

---

<sup>21</sup> Efi, 1661-64, p- 315. However, this grant was taken back in 1679, as we come to know from the *Diaries* of Streynsham Master. The relevant part from this *Diary* is quoted on the same page (i.e. 315). It reads "The King, being informed how our customes were paid at Surratt, demanded the ½ percent again, both of the English and the Dutch, that was taken off for service done at Sevagees first plundering that towne, and turned out all the writers for letting it pass free soe long."

<sup>22</sup> For description given by the English of the Shivaji's sack and also the details of the losses suffered by eminent merchants of Surat (Virji Vora, Haji Zahid Beg etc.), *Ibid.* pp. 296-307.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

They were not only ready to hire but also approached the Emperor to allow them to hire ships of a Company, which was hostile to the Mughals. In November 1684, when the Portuguese and Sambhaji (the Maratha leader) dissolved their mutual hostility and signed agreement, Aurangzeb became upset. The reason was that this alliance enhanced the naval power of Sambhaji. Aurangzeb wrote to the Governor of Surat that the merchants should not be allowed to hire the Portuguese ships for their trading. This interference in their trading was not liked by Surat merchants, who made representation to the Mughal emperor. After some day, write Francois Martin, they were given freedom to conduct their trade in *whatever manner they thought best*.<sup>24</sup>

The Mughals never thought of European Companies as powers to be reined, as it was the case with hinterland enemies, in which case even a petty defiance of authority was not tolerated. They thought it to be a power, which could be used for its benefit. Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century we see the Mughals or the Mughal Governors at Surat asking for naval help from the English and the Dutch and later the French. It is interesting to

---

<sup>24</sup> Francois Martin, Lotika Vardarajan, op.cit, pp. 914-15. This incident also shows that even by 1680s the Portugese had some hold on high seas in the Indian Ocean and the merchants of Surat preferred taking passes from him.



note that these European Companies conspicuously followed a policy of not giving naval help to the Mughals.

In 1615, the Surat Governor sought help of the English ship to fight the Portuguese in Daman. The English refused this. The Governor became angry and told the Company even to pack off and depart.<sup>25</sup> In 1658, even the Prince Murad sent its trusted man Shahbaz Khan to Surat to seek assistance from the European Companies. In this case too the Dutch and the English humbly refused to assist.<sup>26</sup> In 1682, the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb himself wrote to the European Companies at Surat to supply some ships and European sailors while he was fighting against the Maratha leader, Shambhuji. This request was declined by the French, the Dutch and the English.<sup>27</sup> Yet again in 1685, the Governor of Surat sought European Companies' help of ships to transport troops to Bhroach to suppress the insurrection of the *Matias* there. Francois Martin notes that all the companies excused themselves saying that the season was too busy for them to spare hoys.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Letters Received, vol II, p. 240.

<sup>26</sup> EFI, 1655-60, p. 123.

<sup>27</sup> F. Martin, Lotika Vardarajan, op.cit., p.845.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.976.

However, we get an instance in 1668 when the English accepted the Governor's request to bring the royal ship back to Surat from the Red Sea by protecting it from the pirates. The company was promised by the governor to inform the king about their service. The Company despatched its ship, *Bantam*, for this purpose. The English Company had its own reasons to accept the request at this time, as the letter says –

“For it doth at this time more especially concerne us to ingratiate ourselves into the favour of the King and people, who were soe lately disgusted at us, by reason of the commands imposed on them by the Governour of Bommbaym to fetch their passes from him, in a stile soe majestique that it will highly incense the King, the effects of whose anger we may expect..... Soe that wee are glad to embrace this service of putting forth the pinke, that the King, hearing of our readiness to preserve his peoples interesse, may mitigate his displeasure against us; and wee shall alsoe much oblidge his ministers here in their affections to us and the dispatch of our buisnesse upon any urgent occations.”<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> EFI, 1668-69, p. 12.

The Mughals also purchased arms and ammunitions from the English. 'During the war of succession' Revington, the head of the English factory at Surat, privately sold to Prince Murad some guns, which were not the property of the Company.<sup>30</sup> An English factor Blackman also sold some shells to Prince Aurangzeb in 1656 and, in 1657 Colonel Rainford made a contract to supply two thousand shells at the rate of 38 per mound.<sup>31</sup>

The merchants of Surat suffered a lot due to the monopoly established by the European Companies over the Indian Ocean and the acts of piracies. But the Mughals never gave a serious thought to protect the merchants on high seas. Perhaps the Mughals believed in the continental sovereignty.

The Sidis of Janjira were made the Admiral of the Mughal fleet at Surat in 1669-70 by an agreement. To maintain the fleet they were allowed to take 1½ lakh rupees from the customs of Surat. Their duty was to protect the Surat merchants' ships and

---

<sup>30</sup> M.S. Commissariat, op.cit, p.135.

<sup>31</sup> It is interesting to note that a Company followed a policy of not selling arms and ammunition to the Mughals. The factors appealed to the company for excuse on these dealings saying that sale of ordnance and ammunition did not figure in the Company's list of prohibited goods. However, soon the company declared that "such goods were also to be regarded for the future as prohibited." EFI, 1655-60, p.159.

the pilgrimage traffic against pirates.<sup>32</sup> However, not only Sidis failed to perform this duty, rather became more involved in their personal benefit through illegal trade.<sup>33</sup> This neglect was basically because the Mughals never forced them to take this responsibility seriously. The Sidis, though did not possess large ships like the European Companies, but they were able to provide valuable service in the mid 1680's to defeat the English who had waged a war against the Mughals.

An important point to note is that we do not find the merchants of Surat themselves complaining to the Mughal about this. They were content to take passes from the Europeans, trade and suffer silently without any use of force to assert their grievances either before the Mughals or to the Europeans. The only exception was Abdul Ghafur. He was shipping giant of Surat during 1690's and 1700's. He had large number of ships of his own. He refused to take passes from the European Companies and mounted his ships with guns. He was very instrumental in forcing the Dutch to accept *Muchalka* in 1701. But this did not last long and the Dutch were free from such obligation by 1704. This shows that, in general, neither the

---

<sup>32</sup> M.S. Commissariat, op.cit, pp. 172-73.

<sup>33</sup> Asin Dasgupta, op.cit, p.26.

Mughals gave serious thought to protect merchants on high sea nor the merchants themselves expected the Mughals take this responsibility.

This gives us an insight into the nature of the merchants of Surat. Despite they being millionaires, they could not develop the capacity to assert themselves. They failed to assert their interests forcibly even though they faced challenges from the European Companies continuously, who used naval power to monopolise the sea trade. Even though, in the light of their extensive trading network in various commodities and countries we can not regard the eminent merchants of Surat as peddlers, but it seems, "they remained peddlers somewhere deep in their minds."<sup>34</sup>

If the Europeans were at advantage at the sea, they were always dependent on the Surat merchants for procurement of goods and also financial support. The *Bania's* help was a must to strike a deal. As John Fryer says, "without these, neither you nor the natives themselves shall do any business."<sup>35</sup>

The European Companies and travellers frequently mention that the local *banias* know better about the hinterland

---

<sup>34</sup> Asin Dasgupta, Residential Address, IHC, 1974, pp. 99-111, p. 106.

<sup>35</sup> John Fryer, W. Crooke, Vol. I, p. 212.

market. The *bantias* of Surat sent their agents in advance to various places of production and markets to purchase goods bit by bit and then bring them to Surat. Their agents roamed even for months to procure goods from different parts of the country. The Companies had limited men and time to effect purchasing of commodities and hence they had to purchase these at higher prices from the local merchants. Peter Mundy, while in Patna, writes that, "It may bee alleadged that other Merchants make greate Investments here, and whie might not I? It is graunted; but there are such whoe have used this trade a long time, go gathering of it by litle and litle from town to town, knowe its valuewe and where to find it, so that in 5 or 6 monthes they may procure 40 or 50 Corge (pieces) or perhaps 100. .... But we were sent as though we should find heer readye what we wanted, how could it possiblie be performed in soe short tyme as lymitted?"<sup>36</sup>

Francois Martin writes that the French courtiers at Surat were not able to provide enough commodities for shipping and hence he agreed to appoint one man of Bora brothers' choice to

---

<sup>36</sup> Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-67*, ed. R.C. Temple, 2 vols. London, 1914; vol. II (Travels in Asia, 1628-34), p.145.

procure commodities from Surat and other areas so that the three French ships expected in the next season could be filled.<sup>37</sup>

The Europeans also had difficulty in procuring goods from local ports of the western coast of India and for this they had to depend on the local merchants who had smaller ships (called *tawris*) plying from port to port for collection of commodities. Virji Vora's ships frequently went to Calicut to bring pepper and English had to purchase it at higher cost. In 1658, the English factors at Surat wrote to the Company for smaller ships to assemble commodities from various ports. The letter says –

“If you intend that wee shall make use of the trade of India form port to port (as wee may to your great benefitt), we desire that you will never let us be without two or three small ships of 200 or 300 tunns, to stay in the country; for besides the proffitt which we hope to make for you by God assistance, your business will require small shipping to touch, as they retourne from other parts, upon this coast, for to bring from thence what goods shall be there provided; which we hope to make more considerable then hitherto it hath been. And for what goods are

---

<sup>37</sup> Francois Martin, Lotika Vardarajan, op.cit, p. 950.

bought at Scinda you must have shipping to bring them hither.”<sup>38</sup>

Further, another advantage for the Surat merchants was the European Companies' lack of adequate finance to support their trade. Ever since, they began their factories at Surat, they frequently borrowed money from the local merchants and brokers. In 1616, the English factors at Surat wrote to the Company, “..... but were indebted for five or six thousand mamudis (*mahmudis*) to sundry men, and whereas this present time, being immediately after the departure of the ships, is the cheafest and the best time to make provisions for the lading of the next year's fleet, we shall be forced to omit this oppurtunity in regard to our present wants of money.”<sup>39</sup> The more expansion in the business network of the European Companies brought them further into the debts of the indigenous merchants and brokers of Surat. In 1658, the President and Council of English factory at Surat expressed about the destitute of funds in these words—

“So that, unless you have been pleased for to send us a considerable stocke upon the ship wee expect from

---

<sup>38</sup> EFI, 1655-60, pp. 157-58.

<sup>39</sup> Letters Received, vol. IV (1616-17), p. 295.



Gilnnney (Guinea), we must run further into the usurers bookes, or sitt still; which wee conceive can no ways bee honourable or profitable for so plentiful a stocke as is underwrittern, when you pay (when least) 7½ if no 9 (as most of the money that hath been taken up for your accompt before the shippes arrival). Bee pleased, therefore, not to starve your business here .....”<sup>40</sup>

The financial crisis of the English Company continued to remain despite the new stock of the Company being increased to 6,00,000 *l* and then again <sup>to</sup> 8,00,000 *l* in 1658.<sup>41</sup> An English letter of 1659 says that “..... hoping your favourable censure of our endervours will remedye soone this present intollerable evil of want of moneys to mannadge your businesse with credit and comfort.”<sup>42</sup> Further the letter says that “..... goods bought here for ready money are 10 and 15 percent cheaper .....”<sup>43</sup>

The English Company at Surat was always indebted to Virji Vora mainly and other merchants of Surat. In 1669, the Company was in debt of Rs. 6,00,000 of which Rs. 4,00,000 was

---

<sup>40</sup> EFI, 1655-60 p. 158.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, pp. 144-45.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 215.

taken from Virji Vora's family and other *shroffs* at Surat. The letter from English Surat factory written to the Company says,

“To effect and carry on which (purchase of cloth from the hinterland market) we were enforced to engage you in a vast debt at interest, to the amount of 6,00,000 rupees ..... the greatest part whereof is owing to Virgee Vora's family and other shroffs in Surat, to the amount of 4,00,000 rupees ..... and the remainder ..... is taken up on your credit in Ahmadavad, Nundrabaud, and Cambaya.”<sup>44</sup>

The positions of the Dutch and French at Surat was not better. The French at Surat were always indebted to Bora brothers and a number of other merchants of Surat.<sup>45</sup>

The Surat merchants could not use their entrepreneurial skill, financial power and other facilities (like *Hundis*, brokerage, etc) to bargain against the use of force by the Europeans at Sea. They could not develop a common association or a united front

---

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> EFI, 1668-69, p. 193.

<sup>45</sup> F. Martin, Lotika Vardarajan, *op.cit.*, pp. 948, 950, 968 (footnote no. 47). It is important to note that one of reasons considered by Martin for not replacing the earlier Courtiers by those of Bora brothers, as they demanded, was that those courtiers had stood as guarantors for several loans made to the Company. The total amount could well amount up to more than 100,000 rupees (p. 948).

against the European Companies' use of force. The *bantias* of Surat failed to show the same zeal in opposing the threat to their mercantile interests as they showed in the cases of interference into their religious affairs, as we see in the conversion issue of 1669.

The merchants of Surat, even if united, failed to sustain it for longer time. The 'general boycott' of 1619 was for a very short period. Further they did not oppose vehemently when the Red Sea trading monopoly was granted to the English in 1624. The attempt of Abdul Ghafur to unite all merchants against the European Companies in early 1700's also proved short lived.s

**APPENDIX**  
**GOVERNORS OF SURAT**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Source</b>
1608	Mirza Nuruddin	"old man"	<i>Early Travels</i> , 70
1609/15	Muqarrab Khan	Former Governor of Gujarat	<i>Early travels</i> , 63; <i>LR</i> , I, 23; II, 27; III, 84, 138, 237, 240, 258
1615/16	Zulfiqar Khan	favourite of Khuram died indebted	<i>LR</i> , III, xi, 16; IV, 78-81, 197; V, 335
1616/18	Ibrahim Khan		<i>Broecke</i> , I, 110; <i>LR</i> , IV, XXXII, 161; V, 153
1618/19	Jamal Khan		<i>EFI</i> , 1618-1621, 100, 176.
1619/22	Jamshed Beg	trouble with English	<i>EFI</i> , 1618-1621, xx, 148, 150, 187.
1622/24	Ishaq Beg	called "arch-enemy" "Machiavellian" by English	<i>EFI</i> , 1618-1621, xiv, 101, 109, 111, 114, 120, 123, 126, 145; 1622-1623, 39, 110, 276, 291.

1624	Saif Khan	Concluded agreement with the English Sept 1624	<i>EFI</i> , 1622-23, p-XXXI, <i>EFI</i> , 1624-29, p-27, 30.
1625/26 1628?	Jam Quli Beg	Former commander of Fort	<i>Broecke</i> , II, 323.
1628	Yaqub Khan	trouble with English Son-in-law in cloth business	<i>EFI</i> , 1624-1629, 191.
1629/35	Mir Musa	See chapter on Govt.	
1635/38	Masih-us-Zam	"60 years old" "extortion" dismissed	<i>EFI</i> , 1634-1636, xv, 311; 1637-1641, xiii.
1639/41	Mir Musa		
1641/44	Jam Quli Beg	"illiterate"	<i>EFI</i> , 1642-1645, x, 3, 160, 162.
1645/46	Mirza Ali Amin		<i>EFI</i> , 1642-1645, 253, 1646-1650, ix, 62-65, 84, 100, 130, 133.
1646/49	Mir Musa	trouble with Dutch dismissed	<i>EFI</i> , 1646-1650, xxii.
1649/52	Mriza Arab		<i>EFI</i> , 1646-1650, 282,

			289, 302, 319; 1655-1660, 289, 330.
1652/55	Hafiz Nasir		<i>EFI</i> , 1651- 1654, 140, 279, 223; 1655-1660, 15; Gen. Miss., III, 82, 104.
1655/57	Muhammad Amin		<i>EFI</i> , 1655- 1660, 56, 62; Gen. Miss., III, 82, 104.
1657/60	Mirza Arab	died Oct 28, 1660	<i>EFI</i> , 1655- 1660, 121, 216, 330.
1660/63	Mustafa Khan	called to court to answer charges	<i>EFI</i> , 1655- 1660, 330; 1661-1664, 12- 13; <i>Forrest</i> , I, 192-193, 205.
11 June 1663- 21 April 1664	Inayat Khan	- replaced all officials of the port with his favourites.  - Dismissed for failure to defend the city against Shivaji's attack in Jan 1664.	<i>Batavia Dagh Register</i> , 1663, p-590.  <i>EFI</i> , 1661-64, pp-205, 311, 314.

22 April 1664-68	Ghiyasuddin Khan <sup>1</sup>		<i>EFI</i> , 1661-64, p-314; <i>EFI</i> , 1665-67, p-274.
Oct/Nov 1668	Mihrab Khan <sup>2</sup>		<i>EFI</i> , 1668-69, p-45.
1669	Rustam Zamir	-established an understanding with the English to raise the price of lead to be sold the Mughal from Rs 5 to Rs 6 per maund on condition of getting half of the increased amount (i.e. Rs ½) for himself.  -died early Sept 1670	<i>EFI</i> , 1668-69, p-198, 202.  <i>EFI</i> , (NS) vol-I, p-193.
Sept 1670- Oct, 1670	Temporary chief (name not given)		<i>EFI</i> , (NS), Vol-I p-193
14 Nov 1670/1672	Mirza Saifullah		<i>EFI</i> , (NS), Vol.-I, p-193, 198

<sup>1</sup> Ghasty Channor Jhasly Ckaun in the letter. The name appears to have been Ghiyasuddin (Original Correspondence, 3218), the suburb of Surat known as Gastipur is said to have been name after him. See *EFI*, 1661-64, p-314, footnote-2.

<sup>2</sup> Ali Vardi Beg, the new Shah Bandar was also appointed along with him. See *EFI*, 1668-69, p-45.

14 Nov 1672/ Nov 1677	Ghiyasuddin Khan <sup>3</sup>	Of "Insatiable Iyannys" – removed due to discontentment with a number of merchants headed by Mirza Muazzam.	<i>EFI (NS) Vol-I</i> p-217, 1673, p- 219, 1675.
20 Nov 1677	Mirza Muhammad Beg		<i>EFI (NS) Vol-I,</i> p-284

**NOTE** – The list of Surat Governors from 1608 to 1663 (except Saif Khan, 1624) is taken from B. G. Gokhale – “*Surat in the Seventeenth Century*”. The name of Governors from 1663-77 have been compiled and added to the list by me.

---

<sup>3</sup> Reappointed, earlier appointed as Governor of Surat in 1664.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### 1. Primary Sources

#### I.

Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Badshahnama*, as in *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, tr. and ed., H.M. Elliot and J. Dowson, vol. VII, Allahabad, 1972.

Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. Blochmann (vol. I); Jarret (vols. II and III), Calcutta, 1927-39.

Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, tr. M.F. Lokhandwala, Baroda, 1965.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Khatima* or Supplement of *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, tr. Syed Nawab Ali and C.N. Seddon, Baroda, 1928.

Bhimsen, *Tarikh-i Dilkasha*, Sir Jadunath Sarkar commemorative volume, tr. Jadunath Sarkar, ed., v.g. Khobrekar, Bombay University, 1972.

Inayat Khan, *Shah Jahan Nama*, as in Elliot and Dowson, vol. VII.

Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangir*, tr. A. Rogers and H. Beveridge, 2 vols., reprint, Delhi 1968.

Khwajah Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i Akbari*, tr. and ed. B. De and M.H. Hussain, 3 vols., Calcutta, 1913-41.

Muhammad Saqu Mustaid Khan, *Maásir-i Alamgiri*, tr. and ed. Jadunath Sarkar, reprint, Calcutta, 1974.

Shahnawaz Khan, *Maáthir-ul Unara*, tr. H. Beveridge, ed. Beni Prasad, 2 vols., Calcutta, 1911-41.

Shaikh Sikandar Ibn Muhammad, *Mirat-i-Sikandari*, tr. Edward Clive Bayley, London, 1895.

H.Khan (ed.) – Selected Documents of Aurangzeb's Reign, 1659-1706, Hyderabad, 1958.

## II)

- Barbosa Duarte, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa – An Account of the Countries on the Indian Ocean and their Inhabitants*, tr. M.L. Drames, 2 vols., London, 1918.
- Bernier Francois, *Travels in the Mogul Empire, 1656-68*, tr. kIA. Constable, ed. V.A. Smith, reprint, New Delhi, 1968.
- Best Thomas, *The Voyage of Thomas Best*, ed. W. Foster, London, 1934.
- Bowrey Thomas, *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, 1669-79*, ed. R.C. Temple, Cambridge, 1905.
- Downton Nicholas, *The Voyage of Nicholas Downton to the East Indies. 614-15*, London, 1939.
- Foster W., ed., *Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*, reprint, New Delhi, 1968.
- Fryer John, *A New Account of Eastern India and Persia Being Nine Years' Travels, 1672-81*, ed. W. Crooke, 3 vols., London, 1912.
- Hamilton Alexander, *A New Account of the East Indies*, vol.I, London, 1968.
- Jourdain John, *The Journal of Jourdain, 1608-17*, ed. W. Foster, London, 1906.
- Mandelslo J. Albertoe, *The Voyage and Travels of J. Albertoe Mandelslo*, tr. John Davis, London, 1931.
- Manucci Niccolao, *Storia do Mogor, 1653-1708*, tr. William Irvine, 4 vols., reprint, New Delhi, 1981.
- Martin, Francois, *India During the 17<sup>th</sup> Century (Political, Social and Economic) Memoirs of Francois Martin*, tr. and annotated by Lotika Varadarajan, 2 vols.
- Methwold W., *Relations of Gloconda in the Early Seventeenth Century*, tr. kW.H. Moreland, London, 1931.
- Mundy Peter, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-67*, ed. R.C. Temple, 2 vols., London, 1914.

- Ovington J., *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689*, ed. H.G. Rawlinson, London, 1929.
- Pleasaert Francisco, *Remonstrantie*, tr. Moreland and Geyl, Jahangir's India, Cambridge, 1925.
- Roe Sir Thomas, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615-19*, ed. W.Foster, Oxford, 1926.
- Tavernier Jean Baptiste, *Travels in India*, tr. V. Ball, ed. W. Crooke, 2 vols., reprint, New Delhi, 1977.
- Thevenot Jean de, *Jean de Thevenot's Account of Surat*, ed. H.G. Rawlinson, Bombay, 1927.
- Thevenot and Careri, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, ed. S.N. Sen, New Delhi, 1949.
- John Jourdain, *The Travels of John Jourdain, 1608-17*, ed. W.Foster, London, 1906.
- J. Albertoe Mandelslo, *The Voyage and Travels of J. Albertoe Mandelslo*, tr. John Davis, London, 1931.
- Danvers F.C. ed., *Letters Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East, 1602-12*, vol. I, London, 1896.
- Faweett Charles F., ed., *The English Factories in India. The Western Presidency, 1670-77*, Oxford 1936.
- Foster William, ed., *The English Factories in India, 1618-69*, 13 vols. Oxford, 1906-27.

## **2. Secondary Sources**

- Agarwala P.N., *The History of Indian Business*, Delhi, 1985.
- Alam, Muzaffar and Sanjay Subramanyam (eds.), *The Mughal State*, New Delhi, 1998.
- Ali M. Athar, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, Delhi, 1966.
- \_\_\_\_\_ *The Apparatus of Empire*, Aligarh, 1985.
- Altekar A.S., *The Village Communities of Western India*, Bombay, 1963.
- Anderson P., *The English in Western India*, London, 1856.

- Ansari M.A., *English Travellers in India*, Delhi, 1974.
- Arasaratnam S., *Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast, 1650-1740*, OUP, 1986.
- Chandra Satish, *Medieval India-Society, the Jagirdari Crisis and the Village*, New Delhi, 1982.
- Chandra Satish, ed., *The Indian Ocean, Explorations in History, Commerce and Politics*, New Delhi, 1987.
- Chaudhuri K.N., *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean, An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, Delhi, 1985.
- \_\_\_\_\_ *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760*, Cambridge, 1978.
- Commissariat M.S., *History of Gujarat*, vol. I & II, Bombay, 1938.
- Das Gupta Ashin, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat, c. 1700-1750*, Wiesbaden, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_ "The Maritime Trade of Indonesia, 1500-1800", Dasgupta and Pearson (eds.), *India and Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*, Calcutta, OUP, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Indian Merchants and the Trade of the Indian Ocean" in Tapan Roy Chaudhury and Irfan Habib (eds.) CEHI, vol. I, 1200-1750, CPU, 1982.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Presidential Address, IHC, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Indian Merchants and the Western Indian Ocean: The early Seventeenth Century, in *Modern Asian Studies*, 19.3, 1985
- Das Gupta Ashin and Pearson M.N., eds., *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*, OUP, 1987.
- Elliot H.M., and Dowson J., eds., *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, vols. V, VI, VII and VIII, London, 1877.
- Foster W., *The East India House*, London, 1924.
- Frykenberg R.E., ed., *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History*, Wisconsin, 1969.

- Furber Holden, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800*, Minneapolis and Oxford, 1976.
- Gopal, Surendra – *Commerce and Crafts in Gujarat, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century*. A study in the impact of European expansion on Pre-Capitalist Economy, New Delhi, 1975.
- \_\_\_\_\_ “Nobility and Mercantile Community in India, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries”, in *Journal of Indian History*, vol. L, part III, 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_ “Merchants in Western India in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries” in R.S. Sharma (ed.) *Indian Society: Historical Probing*s, pp.235-47.
- Habib irfan, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Bombay, 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_ *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Oxford, 1982.
- Habib Irfan and Raychaudhuri Tapan, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of India, c.1200-1750*, col. I, Delhi, 1982.
- Hasan Nurul S., *Thoughts on Agrarian Relations in Mughal India*, Delhi, 1971.
- Khan S.A., *The East India Trade in the Seventeenth Century in Its Political and Economic Aspects*, London, 1938.
- Krishna Bal., *Commercial Relations between India and England, 1661-1757*, London, 1924.
- Kulshrestha S.S., *Development of Trade and Industry under the Mughals*, Allahabad, 1964.
- Leach E. and Mukherjee S.N., eds., *Elites in South Asia*, Cambridge, 1970.
- Mokerji Radha Kamal, *The Economic History of India, 1600 to 1800*, Calcutta, 1945.
- Mookerji Radha Kumud, *Indian Shipping, A History of the Seaborne Trade and Maritime Activities of the Indians from the Earliest Times*, Bombay, 1912.
- Moosvi Shireen, *The Economy of the Mughal Empire*, OUP, 1987.

- Moreland W.H., *From Akbar to Aurangzeb, A Study in Indian Economic History*, reprint, Delhi, 1972.
- Muir Ramsay, *Making of British India*, Manchester, 1923.
- Mukherjee Ramakrishna, *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company, A Sociological Appraisal*, London, 1974.
- Naqvi H.K., *Urban Centers and Industries in Upper India, 1556-1803*, Bombay, 1968.
- Pant D., *The Commercial Policy of the Mughals*, Bombay, 1930.
- Pearson M.N., *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat, the Response to the Portuguese in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century*, Berkeley, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Coastal Western India*, Delhi, 1981.
- Prakash Om, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1640-1720*, Princeton, 1986.
- Prakash Om, ed., *The Dutch Factories in India, 1617-1623*, New Delhi, 1984.
- Prasad Beni, *History of Jehangir*, Allahabad, 1940.
- Qaisar A.j., *The Indian Response to European Technology and Culture*, Delhi, 1982.
- Rawlinson H.G., *British Beginings in Western India*, Oxford, 1926.
- Raychaudhuri Tapan, *Jan Company in Coromandle, 1605-90*, Gravenhage, 1962.
- Saran P. *The Provincial Governement of the Mughals, 1526-1658*, Bombay, 1972.
- Sarkar Jædunath, *History of Aurangzeb*, 5 vols., Calcutta, 1928.
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 4 vols., reprint, Bombay, 1971.
- Sarkar Jagdish Narayan, *The Life of Mir Jumla*, New Delhi, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Studies in Economic Life in Mughla India*, New Delhi, 1957.

- Singh O.P., *Surat and its Trade in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century*, Delhi, 1977.
- Tirmizi S.A.I., *Some Aspects of Medieval Gujarat*, Delhi, 1968.
- Tripathi Dwijendra, ed., *Business Communities of India, A Historical Perspective*, New Delhi, 1984.
- Trivedi K.K., *The Mughal Province of Agra during the Seventeenth Century*, Aligarh, 1975.
- Watson Ian Bruce, *English Private in India, 1659-1760*, Delhi, 1980.
- Arasaratnam S., 'Indian Merchants and their Trading methods-c.1700', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. III, No. 1, 1968.
- Chakrabarti P.N., 'Decay of Mughal India's Red Sea Trade Monopoly, 1619-27', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 38<sup>th</sup> session, 1977.
- Chandra satish, 'Some Aspects of Growth of a Money Economy in India during the 17<sup>th</sup> Century', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. III, No.4, 1966.
- Chaudhary K.N., 'The Structure of the Indian Textile Industry in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries' *Indian Economic and History Review*, vol. XI, Nos. 2-3, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 'Towards and Inter-Continental Model: Some Trends in Indo-European Trade in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. VI, No. 1, 1969.
- Commissariat M.S., 'Imperial Mughal Farmans in Gujarat' Reprint 1984.
- Ferrier R.W., 'The Trade between India and the Persian Gulf and the East India Company in the Seventeenth Century', *Bengal Past and Present*, No. 89, 1970.
- Furber Holden, Book Review of *Jan Company in Coromandel* by T. Raychaudhuri, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, No.4, 1964.
- Gopal Surendra, 'Aspects of Indo-Persian Trade in the Seventeenth Century', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 30<sup>th</sup> Session, 1969.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 'Nobility and the Mercantile Community in India, 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries', *Journal of Indian History*, vol. 3, 1972.
- Habib Irfan, 'Potentialities of Capitalistic Development in the Economy of Mughal India', *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 29, No. 4, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 'The Currency System of the Mughal Empire', *Medieval India Quarterly*, vol. IV, 1961.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 'The System of Bills of Exchange (Hundis) in the Mughal Empire', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 33<sup>rd</sup> Session, 1972.
- Hasan Aziza, 'The Silver Currency Output of the Mughal Empire and Prices in India during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. VI, No. 1, 1969.
- Khan M.A., 'The Chalebi Merchants of Surat', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 40<sup>th</sup> Session, 1979.
- Mehta M.J., 'Some Aspects of Surat as a Trading Centre in the Seventeenth Century', *Indian Historical Review*, vol. 1, No. 2, 1974.
- Mishra S.C., 'The Medieval Trader and his Social World', in *Business Communities in India*, ed. D. Tripathi, New Delhi, 1984.
- Moraes G.M., 'Surat in 1663, as described by Father Godinho', in Satis Chandra- *Essays in Economic History of Medieval India*, 1987, pp.140-49.
- Naqvi S. 'Marx on Pre-British Indian Society and Economy' *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. IX, 1972.
- Perason M.N., 'Cafilas and Cartazes', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 29<sup>th</sup> Session, 1968.
- Prakash Om, 'The European Trading Companies and the Merchants of Bengal; 1650-1724', *Indian Economic and social History Review*, vol. 1, No. 3, 1964.
- ✓Qaisar A.J., 'The Role of Brokers in Medieval India', *Indian Historical Review*, vol., I, No. 2, 1974.



- Ray Aniruddha, 'Last Memoir of Francois Bernier from Surat, 1668', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 1981.
- Singh M.P., 'Mulla Muhammad Ali, the Merchant Prince of Surat', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 38<sup>th</sup> Session, 1977.
- Tirmizi S.A.I., 'Two Business Houses of Mughal Gujarat', *Indian Historical Records Commission*, vol. XLV, 1977.
- Tripathi D. and Mehta M.J., 'The Nagarseth of Ahmadabad: The History of an Urban Institution in a Gujarati City', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 39<sup>th</sup> Session, 1978.
- Arasaratnam, S. "India and the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century," Ashin Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson, ed., *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*, Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Bayly, C.A. "India and West Asia, c. 1700-1830", *Asian Affairs*, vol. 19 no. 1 (Feb., 1988).
- Bouchon, Genevieve. "Sixteenth Century Malabar and the Indian Ocean." In Ashin Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson, eds., *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*. Calcutta: Oxford University, Press, 1987.
- Broeze, Frank, ed. *Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. Honolulu: University of Hawali Press, 1989.
- Chandra, Satish, ed. *The Indian Ocean: Explorations in History, Commerce and Politics*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1987.
- Chaudhuri, K.N. *Asia Before Europe: Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Reflections on the Organizing Principle of Premodern Trade," James D. Tracy, ed., *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760*. Cambridge University Press, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Das Gupte, Arun. "The Maritime Trade of Indonesia, 1500-1800," Ashin Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson, ed., *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "A Note on the Shipowning Merchants of Surat c.1700," Denys Lombard and Jean Aubin, ed., *Marchands et hommes d'affaires asiatiques dans l'Océan Indien et la Mer de Chine 13e-20e Siecles*. Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. and M.N. Pearson, eds. *Indian and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Digby, Simon. "The Maritime Trade of India," Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib, ed., *The Cambridge Economic History of India, 2 vols., vol. 1, c. 1200-1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Di Meglio, Rita R. "Arab Trade with Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century", D.S. Richards, ed., *Islam and the Trade of Asia*. Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1970.
- Habib, Irfan. "Merchant Communities in Precolonial India", James D Tracy, ed., *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350-1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Mookerji, Radhakumud. *Indian Shipping: A History of the Sea-Borne Trade and Maritime Activities of the Indian Ocean from th Earliest Times*. Bombay: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912.
- Moreland, W.H. *From Akbar to Aurangzeb: A Study in Indian Economic Histroy*. New Delhi; Oriental Reprint Corporation, 1972 (originally published in 1923).
- Pearson, M.N. *Before Colonialism: Theories on Asian-European Relations 1500-1750*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Calicut", *Encyclopedia of Asian History*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "India and the Indian Ocean in the Sixteenth Century," Ashin Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson, eds., *Indian and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat: The Response to the Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Merchants and States," James D. Tracy, ed., *The Political Economy of Merchants Empires*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Pries Tome. *The Suma Oriental: An Account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan, Written in Malacca and India in 1512-1515*, 2 vols., trans. and ed. by Armando Cortesao. London: The Hakluyt Society, 1944.
- Prakash, Om. "The Dutch East India Company in the Trade of the Indian Ocean," Ashin Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson, eds., *Indian and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Raychaudhuri, Tapan, and Irfan Habib. *The Cambridge History of India*, 2 vols, vol. 1, c.1200-1750. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Richards, D.S., ed. *Islam and the Trade of Asia*. Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1970.
- Richards, John F. *The New Cambridge History of India*, part 1, vol. 5, *The Mughal Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Review of Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of commerce*, in *The American Historical Review*, vol. 96, no.3 (June, 1991).
- Steensgaard, Niels. *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.

Subrahmanyam, Sanjay. *The Political Economy of Commerce: Southern India, 1500-1650*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

\_\_\_\_\_ and Luis Filipe Thomaz, "Evolution of Empire; The Portuguese in the Indian Ocean During the Sixteenth Century," James D. Tracy, ed. *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Tracy, James D., ed. *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

\_\_\_\_\_, ed. *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350-1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. "The Incorporation of the Indian Subcontinent into the Capitalist World-Economy," Satish Chandra, ed., *The Indian Ocean: Explorations in History, Commerce and Politics*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1987.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Modern World System*. New York: Academic Press, 1974.