The economic prosperity of Gujarat has always been a major incentive for the political powers in the subcontinent or for the adventurers who have raided the subcontinent in search for wealth and glory. Mahmud of Ghazni invaded the region, primarily targeting the wealthy port of Somniath and its famous temple. Almost a century later Sultan Muhammad of Ghur invaded the region in search of wealth, however the attack was repulsed. Qutbuddin Aibek invaded a few years later and sacked the prosperous capital of Anhilvad Pattan. The towns of Cambay and its flourishing commerce served as major attraction in the decades following. The armies of Alauddin Khalji finally captured the region by the end of the 13th century and sacked the town of Cambay and also the capital of Anhilvad. The region remained a prized possession with Muhammad Tughlaq in later years of his reign, although losing the region of Deccan to rebel nobles and commanders, tried his utmost to quell the revolt in Gujarat, and even breathe his last while leading campaign against the rebel leaders in the region. The region finally snapped its connection with the Delhi Sultanate during the years immediately following the invasion of Timur, which also signalled the end of Tughlaq rule in Delhi. The succeeding dynasties of Sayyids and Lodhis did not try to recapture the region. In fact the desire for holding the wealth of Gujarat in his hands is clearly reflected in statement attributed

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2 Ibid, p. 95.


6 J. Chaube, History of Gujarat Kingdom, 1458-1537, Delhi, 1975, pp. 1-10.
to Sikander Lodhi that the ‘base of padshahi of Delhi rests in wheat and barley and wheat of Gujarat in coral and pearls, because it has eighty four ports under its control.’\(^7\) The flourishing commerce served as a major source of income for the political entities in the region as well as a source of weapons and horses imported from Arabia and Persia.

The Gujarat sultans who held the region under their tight control for next 150 years, continued to benefit from the rich maritime trade and commerce. Their struggle against the kingdoms of Malwa,\(^8\) Bahmanis\(^9\) and Mewar\(^10\) continued through the course of their rule, and fuelled by the commerce and wealth of the region. The Sultans although had to struggle to keep the outlying regions of Kutch, Saurashtra, and the mountain regions in the North and east, such as Idar and Baglan, under their control and had to undertake several campaigns through the harsh and difficult terrains to suppress the refractory zamindars and rajas.\(^11\)

The entry of the Portuguese by the beginning of the 15\(^{th}\) century added another dimension to the political complexities of the region. The Portuguese with their desire to supplant the Indian merchants in the carrying trade to West and Southeast Asia introduced the system of cartazes\(^12\) in the Indian waters. More over the Portuguese capture of Diu, Daman and Goa enabled them to infuse a tighter control regime in the waters of Gulf of Cambay which was the life line for the most prosperous ports in the region.

The Gujarat Sultans continued to have a hot and cold relation with the Portuguese, for they could not go on a decisive offensive against them because of the openly accepted and

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8 J. Chaube, History of Gujarat, pp. 11, 110-130.
12 M.N. Pearson, Merchants and Rulers of Gujarat, pp. 48-52.
demonstrated Portuguese maritime superiority, which seriously affected the safety of Gujarati shipping. The Portuguese also never tried to enter into decisive conflict because of the procurement regions for their trade in cotton, indigo and other important stuff which they exchanged for spices in Malabar and in South East Asia was under the control of Gujarat sultans. However, both of them never lost an opportunity to inflict some damage on the others, whenever the opportunity arose. The murder of Sultan Bahadur at Diu while on Portuguese ship was the final chapter in this relationship. The political instability which followed his death and the growing discord and discontent with in the nobility provided the Mughal Emperor Akbar to attempt an annexation of the region. Thus in 1573, he conquered Gujarat and converted it into an administrative suba of the Mughal Empire.

The internal polity of the region was also marred in complexity, with local zamindars, and rajas although being powerful in their own domain accepted the over lordship of the Gujarat Sultans and later of the Mughals. However, they never lost an opportunity to create disturbance and defy authority, by indulging in such activities as piracy along the shipping lanes, or in robbery and extortions along the highways, whenever any weakening in administrative and military control of the central authority was discerned.

MUGHAL CONQUEST OF GUJARAT:

THE FIRST CONTACT: HUMAYUN’S GUJARAT CAMPAIGN:

The initial intervention by Mughal’s in the politics of the region came during the early years of Humayun’s reign. Fuelled by the desire to establish Mughal Authority in the subcontinent, and cut off from his base at Kabul, which went in hand of his half-brother Mirza Kamran, Humayun desired a control of the region essential so as to keep the funds in his treasury flowing along with maintaining a steady supply of the Arabic and Persian horses, for his

13 J. Chaube, History of Gujarat, pp. 275-278.
armies, which were getting difficult to procure due to the lawlessness along the highways connecting the north Indian cities across the Mountain passes to Kabul and Kandahar, which were the great marts for the procurement of Central Asian horses.

In the year A.D. 1535 Humayun marched against Gujarat and met Gujarat Sultan Bahadur near Mandsor, which is about 80 miles North of Ujjain. 14 Bahadur, flushed with his recent success in capture of great Rajput fortress of Chittor and confident of his artillery under Rumi Khan blundered on the battle plan and relied too much on his artillery. 15 The swiftness of Mughal cavalry in cutting of the supply lines to his camp, and an almost famine like situation which resulted in his camp, 16 forced him to abandon his guns and much of his army and retreat to the security of his fort at Champanir. Humayun however pursued him so vigorously that he had to escape to Cambay and onwards to Diu. In process he also had to destroy his warships at Cambay which he had gotten built with the aim of using against Portuguese, so that Mughals did not pursue him to Diu. Humayun returned to Champanir after sacking Cambay and in August 1535 succeeded in scaling the walls and capturing the fort. 17

With the fall of Cambay and Champanir, southern Gujarat passed into Humayun's hands. He pressed on to Ahmedabad after few months and captured the capital city in October 1535. However he hardly got time to entrench and consolidate Mughal rule in Gujarat, and with the news of rebellion in newly conquered province of Malwa reaching him, he left Gujarat in hands of his brother Mirza Askari and marched on to Mandu, to bring the situation in Malwa under control. 18

18 Ibid, p. 318
However, his withdrawal from the region gave the forces of Sultan Bahadur some respite and they counter attacked on Mughal positions with the support of the Portuguese and soon recovered Surat, Broach and Baroda, and thereafter Bahadur marched on to Ahmedabad. Askari in confusion left the city and marched towards Champanir, however commander of the fort at Champanir – Tardi Beg, refused him admission suspecting foul play and treachery. Thus Askari marched back to Agra, leaving much of Mughal forces in Gujarat. Humayun on hearing the news hastened to meet Askari, also suspecting his intentions behind moving towards Agra. The two were reconciled near Chittor, however in the confusion; the Mughals lost both Malwa and Gujarat.

**FINAL CONQUEST OF GUJARAT: AKBAR’S GUJARAT CAMPAIGN (1572-73)**

The death of Bahadur Shah at the hands of the Portuguese, off the coast of Diu, led to a state of anarchy and confusion in Gujarat. The infighting and corruption within the Gujarat nobility led to a situation of complete anarchy, where the Sultan was left with no powers or authority to reign in on the seditious elements in his nobility. The situation was ripe for the Mughals to make a second attempt, who were in a better situation this time, having reigned in on the Afghans and entered into matrimonial and friendly alliances with various Rajput princes of Rajputana. Malwa had already fallen in to the hands of the Mughals, and they were searching for an excuse and an opportunity to make an attempt on Gujarat. This was provided by the entry of Mirzas into Gujarat, who had rebelled against Akbar and were on run.

The nobles of Gujarat along with powerful zamindars and rajas had divided the kingdoms into several spheres of influences. While the vazir I’timad Khan held on to large territories around Ahmedabad and Cambay, Musa Khan Fauladi and Sher Khan took the region around Pattan. Changhiz Khan occupied Surat, Broach, Baroda and Champanir. Dhandhuka and Dholka
came to be controlled by Syed Hamin and Amin Khan Ghori controlled Junagarh and Sorath.\(^{19}\)

By the mid of 1572, Ibrahim Hussain Mirza, Ma’sud Hussain Mirza and Qabil Hussain Mirza, rebelled against Akbar, and hotly pursued by Imperial army, fled to Gujarat. They were assigned the jagir of Broach by Changiz Khan, who hoped to use them against I’timad Khan, who at the time as Vazir of Sultan Muzaffar III exercised considerable influence over the affairs of the state and also over Sultan Muzaffar himself. However Changiz Khan was soon assassinated by Jhujar Khan Habshi and Mirzas seeking the opportunity captured the forts of Surat, Champanir and Broach.\(^{20}\) About the same time at the instigation of Sher Khan Fauladi, Sultan Muzaffar III moved out of Ahmedabad, and I’timad Khan was cornered and attacked at Ahmedabad. Garrisoning himself inside the fort, I’timad Khan petitioned Akbar to come to his rescue. This provided the opportunity for Akbar to decisively move into Gujarat, by the end of 1572.

Akbar marched on to Gujarat towards the end of 1572, and helped by Habshi and Gujarati nobles had no problems in capturing Ahmedabad. However Mirzas proved to be the real problem, and once he had to personally lead an attack on Ibrahim Hussain Mirza at Sarnal, with merely 40 men, risking his own life in the process.\(^{21}\) He captured Surat in early 1573, and appointing Mirza Aziz Koka as governor of the province, and giving the sarkars of Pattan, Dholka, Broach and Baroda to Gujarati nobles who had aligned with him, he marched back to Agra.\(^{22}\)

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However, his return saw the Gujarati and other seditious elements joining hands to expel the Mughal forces. They advanced towards Ahmedabad, where Mirza Aziz Koka entrenching himself, sent the news of the developments to Akbar and asked for help. Akbar through a lightening expedition with about 3000 horsemen reached Ahmedabad from Fatehpur Sikri, near Agra, in about 11 days and broke the back of rebellion in Gujarat. After this, in spite of sporadic attempts being made at rebelling against the Mughal rule, the Mughal authority in the region was firmly established.

MUGHAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE:

The systematisation in administrative sphere under the Mughals was most clearly reflected in the development of the Mansab system, and in the evolution of the Jagir assignment. They also formed the instrument through which newer, localized and powerful elements could be assimilated within the Empire. The division of empire into Subas (Provinces), Mahals, sarkars and parganas, made the administration at the grass root level more effective and functional, and gave a uniform identity to the administration irrespective of the region.

Various other features, such as creation of a standing army, application of written rules and procedures in all parts of the empire, also provided a uniform and stable structure.

For administrative convenience the province of Gujarat was divided into 9 Sarkars and 138 Mahals towards the end of Akbar's reign in about 1594. These were listed as Ahmadabad, with 28 mahals; Pattan (16 mahals); Nandod (12 mahals); Baroda (4 mahals); Broach (14 mahals); Champanir (9 mahals); Surat (31 mahals); Godra (12 mahals); and Sorath or Kathiawar (12 mahals). However by the year 1720, the number of sarkars increased to 10,


24 For an understanding of the evolution of Mansab system under Mughals see Irfan Habib’s ‘Mansab System 1595-1637’, Proceedings of Indian History Congress, 1967 and, his ‘Mansab Salary scales under Jahangir and Shah Jahan’, Islamic Culture, 1965
with Islamnagar, conquered in 1661 added to the list. Moreover with gradual expansion of Mughal rule and expansion of cultivable and taxable lands the number of Mahals also saw an increase to about 256. Jadunath Sarkar in his 'India of Aurangzeb' gave a comparative list of number of Sarkars and Mahals in the province over a period of two centuries on the basis of a comparative study of the information provided in Ain-i Akbari (1595), Khulasat-ut Tawarih (1695) and Chahar Gulshan (1720) as follows: 25

- 1594 - 9 sarkars, 138 mahals
- 1665 - 9 sarkars, 190 parganas
- 1695 - 9 sarkars, 188 mahals
- 1700 - 10 sarkars, 216 mahals
- 1720 - 10 sarkars, 256 mahals

The principal officers of the province were the Subadar and the Diwan. The Subadar was the principal administrative officer of the province and acted as the viceroy to the Mughal Emperor in the province. He was appointed directly by the emperor. If the subadar himself was in attendance at the court or is unable to come to the suba he governs the province through a naib subadar or deputy governor. The subadar had a diwan who was the de-facto revenue authority in the province and looked after the revenue collection in the region. The emperor again directly appointed him. The principal reason behind this was to keep a check on the power of the subadar, who at times acquired considerable influence. The faujdar was responsible for the security and administration in a sarkar. Certain areas had their own special arrangements, thus the port of Surat was governed by a mutasaddi, who was independent of the governor of the suba, and was directly appointed by the emperor. In judicial matters the principal officers were Sadr, Qazi, Muhtasibs, and others appointed by the diwan, with the approval of Sadr-us Sudur or head of the judicial department at the Imperial Court.

25 Jadunath Sarkar, India of Aurangzeb, p. lxiv.
PORT ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MUGHALS - A CASE STUDY OF SURAT:

European sources have given in detail analysis of the working of various Mughal administrative and political institutions at Surat. Surat was administered directly by the imperial centre and was often given as maintenance gifts to royal princes and princesses. The officials directly appointed by the imperial centre governed the port. The main officials at the port were the chief governor of the port - the mutasaddi (The office was farmed out by the highest bidder till about mid-17th century, when Shah Jahan discontinued the practice), governor of the fort, who worked in independent capacity to that of the governor and the port.26

Of the powers of the governor, it has been mentioned that none of the ships could enter or leave the harbour, load or unload cargoes unless he issued permit. Those foreigners who wished to land and carry on the trade had to approach him for permission. The supervision of custom house and collection of custom was part of his main duties, but he usually left it to the shahbandar or customer. It was his responsibility to see that whatever was imported or exported did not evade payment of custom dues. He also appears in the sources as the chief buyer from the side of the government. Thus one find Mughal port governors such as Muqarrab Khan, Saif Khan, and others interacting with the merchants and conducting trade on behalf of their royal patrons, and sometimes even conducting negotiations and concluding treaties with foreign agencies. They also supervised the arrangements for annual pilgrimage to Mecca. It was through the Mutasaddi that all government mercantile policy was executed. He made all-important announcements and decisions public and helped to fix the market rates by setting the values of goods at customhouse.

Next to governor was the shahbandar whose main concern was the collection of customs at the port, and was the chief of customhouse. The Europeans called him by various titles, the darogha (of custom house), shahbandar, and customer.

**CUSTOM HOUSE:**

The customhouse at Surat was the perfect reflection of the extent to which the Mughal involvement in the commerce of the region, and the importance of the custom duties had in the overall revenue of the province. Almost all the European travellers who came to the region had noted the exactness and severity of the search at the customhouse. The tension between the governor of the port and Sir Thomas Roe over the search of his baggage had been noted in his memoirs in details. Thevenot detailed the search at custom house in detail:

> Presently they write down in register, the name of him that enters, and then he is searched. He must take off his cup or turban, his gridle, shoes, stockins and all the rest of his cloaths if the searcher thinks fit. They feel his body all over, and handles every the least inch of stuff about him with all exactness, if the perceive anything hard in it, they immediately rip it up, and all that can be done is to suffer patiently. That search s long and takes up above a quarter of an hour for every person severally. 27

**REBELLIONS AND REVOLTS IN 17TH CENTURY:**

**REVOLT OF MUZAFFAR III:**

Of the first major incidence which shook the foundations of new established Mughal rule was the rebellion of Sultan Muzaffar III, the ousted ruler of the region, who after escaping from

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27 S.N. Sen (ed.) *Indian travels*, p.3.
Mughal custody, made an attempt at reconquering his kingdom and recaptured Ahmedabad in 1583.

The support garnered by Muzaffar III included the ruler of Rajpipla and of the Kathi chief Luma Khuman, who traditionally owed allegiance to Gujarat sultans. Other than these, there was the body of about 7000 troopers who had been dismissed from the service. These had been in service of Gujarat sultans earlier and went back to supporting the cause of Muzaffar III. He was also supported by the powerful zamindars of Nawanagar and Junagarh.

Muzaffar marched on to Ahmedabad with a body of 1500 horsemen from Kathiawar, and city without any established defence fell into the hands of Muzaffar, who had the Khutba read in his name and struck his coins. Akbar, who was busy at Kara, near Allahabad, had to dispatch Abdul Rahim Khan, son of Bairam Khan, at the head of a strong force to recapture Ahmedabad and crush the rebellion. His arrival turned the tide in favour of Mughal forces and Muzaffar was defeated near Sarkhej. In recognition of his victory, Abdul Rahim was given the title of Khan-i Khanan. Muzaffar fled to Cambay and looted the town and its people and again raised an army:

He took money from merchants and residents. Nearly ten, twelve thousand war seeking vagabonds gathered around him on account of distribution of money, subjects also displayed fidelity around him considering him to be a hereditary prince. There was a big crowd again.

28 Muzaffar after escaping from the confines of Mughal custody had taken refuge with these chiefs. See, M.S. Commissariat, History of Gujarat, Vol. 2, p. 17.

29 ibid

On hearing of the news, the Mughal contingent sent from Malwa to reinforce Abdur Rahim and which had been camping near Baroda, moved towards Cambay and forced Muzaffar to flee towards Kathiawar.\textsuperscript{31}

However, he continued to create trouble for the Mughal establishment in the region, till about 1591, when Mirza Aziz Koka defeated him at Bhuchar Mori, near the town of Dhrol, in the territory controlled by Jam of Nawanagar. Muzaffar fled towards Dwarka and finally by sea to Kutch, where he was given refuge by Rao Bhaimal, who ultimately betrayed him to the Mughal forces in 1592. Muzaffar committed suicide soon after, thus ending his chequered career as the last Sultan of Gujarat.\textsuperscript{32}

**REBELLION OF BAHADUR, SON OF MUZAFFAR III:**

The early years of Jahangir's reign saw the rebellion of Bahadur in Gujarat, who was the son of Muzaffar III. He plundered the environs of Ahmedabad and killed several Mughal officials in the process. Jahangir had to dispatch a strong contingent under Raja Vikramjit and other notable mansabdars to bring the situation under control.\textsuperscript{33} That this was not an isolated incidence can be made out from reference to Bahadur and his activities sources, dating to as early as 1596:

Bahadur, son of Muzaffar, rose in revolt and suffered a defeat...he came out from an ambush of opportunity and raised banners of disturbance and revolts. He collected a party of war seeking vagabonds and began to attack and pillage towns and villages.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{31} ibid

\textsuperscript{32} ibid


William Finch, an English merchant who reached Surat in 1608, along with Captain Hawkins, noted the scare which the residents and officials of the town were experiencing, due to presence of Bahadur in the vicinity:

In December (1609), we stood much in fear of Badur, his coming upon Surat, he laying within 2 days’ journey with 600 horses and many foot; for which the governour cessed all men with the entertainment of soldiers…During this time the Banias were forced to labour to barricade all streets in the city; great watches were appointed on the gates, certain pieces drawn from the castle, and from the Karod garrison fifty horse; which had not sufficed had not the governor of Ahmadavar sent 1000 horse and 2000 foot to our succor; upon news of which Badur withdrew his hold. 35

Finch also noted that Bahadur had two years earlier sacked Cambay, with an army of 100,000 which had been got together in hope of plunder, and remained there for 14 days. 36 Again, in 1611, on his visit to Ahmedabad, he notes the preparation and precautions being taken to defend the city against Bahadur, who was reported to be in vicinity. 37

PLUNDERING RAIDS OF MALIK AMBER:

The year 1609 saw Malik Amber of Bijapur make plundering inroads into the province. Mirat mentions this incursion in following words:

Malek Amber, the major domo of Nizam Shah, Ruler of Daulatabad roamed around in the sarkar of Surat and Baroda with a cavalry of fifty thousand horses. He went away after plunder and pillage of the towns and villages. A royal order therefore was issued to the naim of the subah and the best rajahs

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35 W. Foster (ed.) Early Travels, p. 133.
36 Ibid
appointed in the subah, that the nazim, amirs, royal fief holders of the subah should obstruct his path at Ramnagar in the mahal of Surat with a cavalry of twenty five thousand horse.\textsuperscript{38}

The raids of Malik Amber continued to create trouble for the Mughal authority in the province, for most of the years of Jahangir’s reign.

**REBELLION OF PRINCE KHURRAM (1622-1623):**

The rebellion of Prince Khurram, in about the year 1622, kept the province of Gujarat in a state of disturbance. Shah Jahan instigated by the mechanisms of Nur Jahan, who had been espousing the cause of Jahangir’s youngest son Shahriyar, who had been married to her daughter from previous marriage, saw in the directive to move to Kandahar in March 1622, a plot to move him away from his supporters at the court, and as such a plot against him.

At the time of his rebellion, the suba was under his governorship, and hence he held on to the province since its riches were essential to fund his war plans against the Imperial centre. After his defeat near Agra, he repaired to Mandu and ordered his officials to direct all the treasures from Ahmedabad and Surat to Mandu. In Jan, 1623 the English Factors at Ahmedabad reported the scarcity of money on account of Khurram’s orders to transfer the money to Mandu.\textsuperscript{39} The attempts to gain control over Ahmedabad were however thwarted by some of the officials, principal being Safi Khan, the diwan of the Suba, who refused to part away with the treasure and instead defeated the army sent by Khurram to take Ahmedabad under the command of Abdullah Khan in 1623.\textsuperscript{40}

Death of Jahangir towards the end of 1627, gave the opportunity to Khuram to stake his claim more forcefully. Decalaring himself emperor with the title of Shah Jahan, he got all the


\textsuperscript{39} William Foster, *English Factories in India*, 1622-1623, p. 181.

plausible claimants and heirs to Mughal Throne assassinated. Moving slowly from Deccan towards Agra, he took the route running via Ahmedabad, and for some time encamped at Mahmudabad, near Ahmedabad. He is said to have collected a sum of nearly 20 lakhs from the residents, making no difference between rich and poor. According to the English Factors at Ahmedabad, after he left, he appointed officials to make the exaction on his behalf, which resulted in a general exodus from the city, ‘the wealthy being unwilling to pay and the poor not able to do so.’

**War of Succession:**

Towards the end of Shah Jahan’s reign the empire was thrown into a civil war among his four sons, with each staking his own claim to the throne. Shah Jahan fell ill towards the end of 1657, and as the news spread, the civil war became inevitable, with all four brothers vying for the throne.

This had serious repercussions on the political and commercial atmosphere in Gujarat, which was under the supervision of Prince Murad Baksh at the time. In order to prepare for the war, Murad needed money and he ordered his general Shahbaz Khan to capture the royal treasury at Surat, and the city and fort fell by December 1657. Murad also obtained loan from the principal merchants of the city – haji Muhammad Zahid Beg and Virji Vora, of about 5 lakh rupees. A bond stamped by Murad’s seal was delivered to them as pledge for the repayment. Murad coronated himself at Ahmedabad in Dec 1657, and before leaving for Agra, along with Aurangzeb who had joined him by the time, exacted an amount of 50 lakh rupees from the residents of the city, of which about 5 lakh were borrowed from Manek Chand and his brothers, sons of great Jain merchant Shantidas. Mirat-I Ahmadi gives a copy of the mandate for the loan with the seal of Murad Baksh, in which he says:

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An order is issued by the way of favours to him (Shanti Das) that I borrowed a sum from his son Manek Chand and his brothers in the abode of succession, Ahmedabad by way of a loan.\textsuperscript{42}

The war ended in captivity of Shah Jahan, and the accession of Aurangzeb. Murad Baksh was arrested and executed on charge of murdering Ali Naqi, the diwan of Ahmadabad in a fit of drunken rage in the year 1661. Dara Shikoh and Shah Shuja were forced to run and in this commotion Dara Shikoh reached Ahmadabad and acquired the splendid treasure of Murad Baksh and with its use raised an army of about 22000 horsemen, along with an excellent arsenal of canons, and after a stay of about a month and seven days at Ahmadabad, started the March towards Ajmer, with an intention of offering challenge to Aurangzeb.\textsuperscript{43} Dara however was defeated near Ajmer, in the last of the major battles of the war of succession after a hard fought struggle, which lasted for about four days, after which, he made a dash towards Ahmadabad. However the officials there had already declared for Aurangzeb and refused him admission and he fled to Bhakkar.\textsuperscript{44}

\textbf{DETERIORATING POLITICAL SITUATION TOWARDS THE END OF 17\textsuperscript{TH} CENTURY:}

\textit{BEGINNING OF MARATHA MENACE: SHIVAJI'S RAIDS OF SURAT AND ADJOINING TERRITORIES:}

The initial years after the accession of Aurangzeb saw relative peace and stability. However his constant involvement in the Deccan and the reversal of the policies followed by earlier Emperors towards the Deccan sultanates, with the aim of an outright annexation, precipitated warfare in the region. With the aim of annexing the state of Bijapur, Aurangzeb attempted to play the Maratha forces against the Bijapuri state, and this provided the Maratha sardar

\textsuperscript{42} Ali Muhammad Khan, \textit{Mirat-i Ahmadi}, Vol. 1, p. 211.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid, p. 215.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid, p. 219.
Shivaji to gain in power and influence, to the extent that he began to challenge the authority in the provinces bordering the Deccan sultanate of Bijapur. Gujarat being one of the most prosperous regions in the vicinity was an obvious attraction for Shivaji to try his fortunes and gain wealth by raiding the province. One of his most daring raids was made in year 1663 on the royal port of Surat which was a direct assault on the prestige and reputation of Aurangzeb.

The contemporary official records of the period however don't give much importance to the event and refers to the raid in a very casual way. The Mirat-i Ahmadi records the raid in the following manner:

Shivaji Maratha who raised head of disturbance in the Dekhan excited dust and disorder, and came this time to Surat port. The city in those days had no fortifications; he caused much ruin and great loss to its merchants and residents. He returned after carrying plunder and pillage to distant and nearby places. This became a cause of great consternation and panic. 45

The raid however has been discussed with much interest by the English factors and the European travellers who visited the region during the course of seventeenth century. On hearing the news of the arrival of the troops of Shivaji, there occurred a general panic in the town and not equipped with adequate force to defend the town against the raiders, the Governor along with the principal merchants of the town hid in the castle. The English factors thus noted:

being the 6th January... was brought us a hott allarum that Sevagy the grand rebel of Decan was within 10 or 15 miles of the towne. This suddaine surprise strucke such a terrour into all, both men, women and children, that this governor and the rest of the Kings ministers and eminent merchants be tooke

themselves to the castle; which the townes folks perceiving, left their and whatever belonged to them and fled with their wives and children. Some upon the river in vessails and boats some to the out villages, that in few howers the whole towne was dispeopled, excepting that part of the towne about us in hopes of our protection. ⁴⁶

Shivaji on reaching near Surat, sent letters to the governor and the principal merchants and officials demanding personal attendance and money from the governor and the eminent merchants of the town, otherwise he threatened to burn the town down. ⁴⁷

The English factors at Surat defended stoutly against the men of Shivaji, whose men did not ventured near the factory due to the guns which the English had planted there, and Shivaji, was moving light was without any artillery of his own. None but the English and Dutch saved their quarters from the pillage, by the vigorous defence they made, and by means of cannons they planted which Sivagy would not venture upon, having none of his own. ⁴⁸ The English factors posted at Surat under the President ship of George Oxinden, sent particularly graphic account of the defence of English factory from Shivaji's men:

...by the time hee had broken Hodgy Saed Beague's house open and had one nightes plunder out of it, which being soe neare us, as one wall to part both houses, wee feared they would strengthen that place and afterwards annoy us, and by their multitude force their way or undermine and blow us up and seeing that they did begin with their horse and foote to surround us, some then standing under our ewe for noe good, we caused a party of foote to sally forth

⁴⁷ ibid
⁴⁸ S.N. Sen (ed.) Indian Travels, p. 41.
the house and fight them; in which scuffle we had 3 men slightly wounded, ours slew a horse and a man, some say two or three, but we routed them. This good success animated us further to clear our quarters of them, and hearing they had taken their rendezvous in a Muskeett or Moore church joining close to our house, and also in Kodgy Saeds house warehouses, having out of fear of us not done him the quarter of the mischief they intended him. Whilst our men were clearing the Muskeett they in the house and warehouses opened the doors and fled so we shut up the doors and barricaded them, and made a passage from ours into his house, and kept a garrison in the balcony that cleared all the street and guarded the other house of this Hodgies. 49

The defence of the factory at Surat resulted in tax exemptions being granted to the English factors as reward for their bravery. 50 The Dutch were also able to save their factory, although Shivaji had burnt that section of the town to the ground, so that the Dutch factory looked like standing alone in the rubble of stone and ashes. 51

Shivaji caused great destruction and damage to the property of the town, and looted many eminent merchants of their wealth, of which the loot at Haji Zahid Beg's house deserves mention. English factors had noted that he took one night's plunder out of his house. 52 Thevenot noted that it is believed at Surat that this raja carried away in jewels, gold, and silver to the value of above 30 French millions; for in the house of one banian he found 22 pound weight of strung pearl, besides a great quantity of other that were not yet priced. 53

50 Ibid
51 Ibid
52 Ibid
53 S.N. Sen (ed.) Indian Travels, p. 41.
Shivaji returned to Surat again in 1667, and by the end of Aurangzeb’s reign the Maratha menace in Gujarat and in its hinterland region had become severe with Maratha forces under Shivaji’s son Sambhaji, and after also later on continued to attack the merchant caravans in the area and also important trade centres in the region. By 1690 it became amply clear that the Marathas were a force to reckon with. Commenting on the spread of Maratha activities, the Amber agent at the court in 1695 wrote:

the royal servants are worried day and night how to deal with the Marathas in the Deccan. Large territories have been brought under control of royal officials, but due to lack of means, they do not have strength (to control them). For in place of 7000 (sawars) they keep only 700. Royal princes and their sons are roaming around in every quarter like faujdars but to no avail. From every quarter, news of the activities of the Marathas reaches the ears of Emperor, but he is unable to find a proper remedy for dealing with them. He is further confounded by hearing the news of disturbances in Hindustan.  

**THE RAJPUT REBELLION AND DISTURBANCES IN GÜJARAT:**

Among other important event in Gujarat during the reign of Aurangzeb was the disturbance caused in the region due to entry of Durgadas Rathor, who led the Rajput revolt against Aurangzeb 1668. The genesis of revolt lay in the refusal of Aurangzeb to grant tikka and gaddi to any of the sons of Maharaja Jaswant Singh, following his death at Jamrud.

Aurangzeb's decision to annex the Kingdom of Marwar, led to the revolt of the Rajputs, and the guerrilla war against the Mughal establishment in the region of Rajputana and Gujarat continued until the restoration of the kingdom and acceptance of Ajit Singh as the ruler of Marwar. Durgadas Rathor continued to create trouble for the authorities in Deccan until the

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signing of truce, in 1697, when he handed over the daughter and son of Prince Akbar to the royal court. The year 1701 again saw the peace being disturbed when Durgadas fearing an attempt on his life, when invited to attend upon Prince Azam, the new Subadar of the province, he fled from Gujarat, with the royal army chasing him. The peace was finally brought about in 1707 on accession of Muazzam as Bahadur Shah (1707-1712), who handed over the state of Marwar to Ajit Singh and granted the tikka and gaddi to him.

MUGHAL RELATIONS WITH ZAMINDARS AND RAJAS:

The Mughal Empire as it consolidated itself over most of the subcontinent in the course of 16th and 17th centuries came into conflict and in contact with a wide range of political formations and regional power groupings. The most prominent among them were the Rajputs, who were assimilated within the Mughal political setup in the course of 16th century. Similarly the Deccanis and the Marathas, who came into contact and conflict with the Mughals, became an important power group in the late 17th and early 18th century. In addition there were other local groupings as of Jats and Sikhs who also came into conflict with the Empire during the course of two centuries.

The success of the Mughals in creating a strong centralized edifice depended primarily on their success in carefully balancing the ambitions of Mughal nobles and other Mansabdars on one hand, and the interests of various regional and local magnates on the other. Thus extreme systematisation in administrative sphere, a new theoretical base for sovereignty, and the creation of a balanced and heterogeneous ruling class, were the new elements on which a large stable political structure was created.

The two centuries of Mughal rule in the region was witness to a constant struggle between the Mughal officials and local rajas and zamindars such as those belonging to the region of 55 Ali Muhammad Khan, Mirat-i Ahmadi, Vol.1, pp.295-96.
Junagarh in Saurath and Nawanagar, for control over their areas and resources. An Imperial farman to Mirza Aziz Koka the subadar of Gujarat notes:

Habits of rebelliousness, brigandage theft and riot are kneaded in the malignant nature of these classes (Rajputs, Kolis, and Muslims) they created disturbances always when they noticed a slight weakness in the control of a Nazim. Most of the Nazims therefore have built strong forts in ancient times in most of the places and established parties of sepoys befitting every place known as thanas.56

Ovington made an interesting observation regarding the frequent revolts in India and their impact on the countryside and the local inhabitants. The inhabitants according to him suffered from the dual exaction of the Mughals and of the local rajas and zamindars, who in order to raise money to oppose the Mughals in hope of retrieving their lost kingdom and privileges often resort to looting and illegal exactions:

The frequent revolts in India render those parts very miserable and reduce the inhabitants to a very distressed state for hoping to retrieve their liberty and regain the kingdom they have lost, they often declare for a rajah, which is native Indian prince, and stand by him till the Mogul overpowers their forces, defeats their rebellion, stints their progress, and reduce them to tame obedience again. So that one while the Mogul comes upon a city, and demands the contribution of so many thousand moors (mohur) or else he threatens raising its foundations, pillaging the houses, and converting them into smoke and flames. When he is retreated, the rajah's army flies upon them with fury and hunger, and storm their towns, and threaten them with fire and sword as their inevitable fate, if they offer to delay the payment of so many thousand gold ropies more.

Or if these formidable threats were not listened to, they take that by Rapine, which was civilly demanded, ravage the country and load them with plunder and spoil.\textsuperscript{57}

Such ravaging activities by the Mughal armies, officials and those of the local rajas often resulted in fear, distress, poverty and famine like conditions among the population of the region. In similar vein, Francois martin records that many rajas and minor Hindu potentates descend from the security of their home bases to scourge the countryside.\textsuperscript{58}

That the zamindars of the region were powerful and resourceful enough can be made out from their respective strength which Am gives, while detailing the suba of Gujarat' Thus Abu'l Fazl while describing the sarkar of sorath mentions that it was an independent territory, having a force of 50,000 cavalry and 100,000 infantry, and ruled by Ghelot tribe of Rajputs,\textsuperscript{59} and at the time of compiling of Ain, their influence was in the district of New sorath and Pattan, with their force consisting of 1000 horse and 2000 foot in New Sorath and 1000 horse and 3000 foot in that of Pattan.\textsuperscript{60} Similarly in the region around Palitana, to the south east of the peninsula, the zamindar was of Gohel tribe and possesses 2000 horse and 4000 foot.\textsuperscript{61} Similarly the Badhel tribesmen who inhabit the area around Jagat( Dwarka) were able to muster 1000 horse and 2000 foot.\textsuperscript{62} Again the military force in the district of Baghelahs was about 6000 cavalry and 6000 infantry.\textsuperscript{63} The Mirat-i Ahmadi also makes a note of the habitation of the region of Sorath by various tribes of Rajputs and Kolis and says that 'they

\textsuperscript{57} J. Ovington, \textit{A Voyage to Surat}, p. 114.


\textsuperscript{59} A'bul Fazl, \textit{Ain-i Akbari}, Vol. 2, p. 250.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, p. 253.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid, p. 254.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid
are armed horsemen with lances who seize opportunities on their lightening movement horses and run away. Brigandage is inborn in them. They do not pay land revenue without leading an army.  

Many of the zamindars in the region had acquired zamindari rights during the rule of the sultans of Gujarat, and thus many of these such as Jam of Nawanagar, although had never been under their direct control, did backed the Sultans and their descendants against the Mughal occupation forces till the starting years of 17th century. Abu'l Fazl makes constant reference to the support received by Muzaffar III, the last Sultan of Gujarat during his years of rebellions, against the Mughal occupation, by the zamindars of Saurath, Nawanagar and Cutch:

Jam, the best zamindars of Saurath always waited for an opportunity in an ambush of revolt and war. He brought out Muzaffar. This time also, from a corner of oblivion and devoted himself to collection of war-seeking vagabonds and care for him. Daulat Khan, son of Amin Khan Ghori, ruler of Saurath and Raja Khingar zamindars of Kutch also accorded with him.  

Of the principal zamindars and Raja of Gujarat may be listed the zamindars of Junagarh, Nawanagar, Idar and Baglana. Of these the imperial forces conquered Junagarh in 1592. The zamindar of Nawanagar, also called Jam, made submission to the Mughal emperor Jahangir during the latter's visit to the province in 1617, near Dohad. However, the zamindars of the region continued to defy the imperial standards at the slightest pretext, and engaged in such activities as issuing coinage from his mint in the name of Gujarat sultans, and creating trouble.

66 Ibid
For Mughal officials in the region.\textsuperscript{67} The zamindari of Nawanagar was finally conquered during the reign of Aurangzeb, who named the city of Nawanagar as Islamnagar in 1661, and attached it to the crown territory.\textsuperscript{68} The raja of Baglana (a mountainous tract between Surat and Nandurbar) was said to possess a cavalry of 3000 and an infantry of 10,000 and in possession of seven remarkable fortresses, of them principal being Mulher and Salher.\textsuperscript{69}

\textbf{THE KATHIS, KOLIS AND OTHER LOCALIZED GROUPS UNDER THE MUGHALS:}

The region of Gujarat was also home to a large tribal population engaged primarily in activities related with cultivation and fishing, and sea faring. They have been various styled as Bhils, Kathis, Kolis, and Garsias in the contemporary sources. They owed their allegiance primarily to the local zamindars and rajas or had their own chiefs to supervise them. The Mughal chronicles however reflects that the officials of the region were normally apprehensive of their activities and regarded them as thieves and trouble makers for the administration as well as the local people engaged in trade and other related activities. Their involvement in highway thefts and robbery had been noted in details in the chronicles of the European companies, the travellers in the region, and also in the Mughal official correspondences. Thevenot in his travels calls them the turbulent people of hills, committing robbery. Regarding their profession and caste he says that they were:

\begin{quote}
A people of a caste or tribe of gentiles, who have no fixed habitation, but wander from village to village, and carry all they have about them. Their chief
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid, pp. 188-89: It refers to a mint run by Jam of Nawanagar and exaction of peshkash from him by the Mughal governor Azam Khan

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid, p. 236.

\textsuperscript{69} A'bul Fazl, \textit{Ain-i Akbari}, Vol. 2, p. 257.
business is to pick and clean cotton and when they have no more to do in one
village, they go to another... 70

The oppression of the Mughal officials and the growing revenue demand of the administration
on the peasantry often result in large scale migration among the peasantry; or result more
often then not in a revolt or rebellion against the Mughal officials '...a tyranny often so
excessive as to deprive the peasantry and artisans of the necessaries of life and leave them to
die of mercy and exhaustion.' 71

The European sources with regard to the local population of the region were of the opinion
that most of them employed themselves in looting on the highways and were for the most part
robbers. Martin puts forward the opinion that most of the peasants inhabiting the region
engaged themselves in the looting on the highways. Describing the country between Baroda
and Surat he opines that the inhabitants were 'inveterate thieves, who in absence of any other
victim would fall on each other for sake of booty... It is said that peasants right up to Agra
have the same characteristics.' 72 Thevenot details an encounter with a robber, who he says
belonged to the caste of Gratiates, who lived in the village of Bilpar (Bilpad), while on his
way back to Surat from Cambay. He describes the members of the tribe as for most part
robbers', and details the robber he encountered as 'a fellow in very bad clothes, and carrying a
sword upon his shoulders who did not gave way unless satisfied with a pecha.' 73 On modus
operandi of these robbers he commented that they move about in whole groups, and one of

70 S.N. Sen, Indian Travels, p. 10.
71 F. Bernier, Travels, p. 226.
73 S.N. Sen, Indian Travels, p. 10.
them being satisfied, others come after upon the same roads, who must also be contended with, and in case of violence being done on any one of them others come over to assist.\(^74\)

Martin records the deeds of the tribe of people called grasias, who had been identified with Kolis by Lotika Varadarajan:

The grasias, a tribe centred around Diu, came right up to the gates of Ahmadabad, forcing contribution from all the territories through which they passed. If they encountered refusal, they brought back the leading members of village as prisoners.\(^75\)

He records his experience with them and says that:

These robbers operated in numbers, even at a distance of a league from Ahmadabad, and were armed with lances and sabres. Right through the night they moved about the house and the garden but did not attack us fearing guns with which we were well armed. They withdrew at dawn.\(^76\)

At another place in his memoirs Martin notes the pillage of merchant goods and destruction of countryside between Suwali and Surat by the people called Grasias:

The passage between Surat and suvali had become unsafe because of the incursion of the grasias around the region of Suvali...since a long time, villages and settlements in the region had agreed to pay them contributions. When mukkadams wished to stop paying this contribution, the grasias swept down in droves. Some of the mukkadams were captured and taken away, while

\(^{74}\) ibid

\(^{75}\) Lotika Varadarajan, India in the 17th century, Vol. 2, part 1, p. 863.

\(^{76}\) Ibid, pp. 863-864.
others who tried to resist were killed. Villages were looted and the inhabitants to protect themselves were forced to resume payments of these contributions.  

Hamilton, almost about a century and a half later notes that the grasias were the numerous class of landlords claiming and possessing a certain degree of feudal authority over the portions of villages and in countryside. However he also states that the basis of the claim could not be traced and it was only during the reign of Farrukh Siyar (1713-1719), that the Nawab of Surat, troubled by their activities entered into agreements with them and ceded certain portion of land in each village to them.  

Most of the zaminoars of the region relied on their numbers and strength and the allegiance of these locals and tribals to their cause, in their struggle and fight against the Mughal occupation and we come numerous references to the clashes between the Mughals and these tribals, sometimes with violent effect. One of the earliest experiences which the Mughal forces had of the strength of the tribals was during Humayrn's Gujarat campaign, when during his stay at Cambay; his camp was attacked and destroyed by the Gujarati officials of the region, backed by the Kathi tribesmen of the region:

When his majesty Jahanbani was encamped at Cambay with a small force Malik Ahmad Lad and Rukn Daud who were officers of sultan Bahadur, and leading men in Koliwara, arranged with the Kolis and gawars of that country as there were few men with his Majesty Jahanbani there was a suitable opportunity of making a night attack...Near dawn 5 Or 6000 Bhils and Gawars fell upon the royal enclosures.  

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77 Ibid, p. 907.  
78 Walter Hamilton, Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description, Vol. 1, p. 647.  
Humayun incensed with the attack, ordered the destruction and burning down of the town of Cambay and returned to complete the siege of Champanir.

The Kathi tribesmen of Kathiawar also continued to support the actions of Sultan Muzaffar III against the Mughal occupation, and his capture of Ahmadabad in the year 1583, was backed by Loma Khuman, a Kathi chief in village of Kherdi near Rajkot in Kathiawar. Mughal governors to the province spent considerable amount of resources and time on the chastisement of these tribal people, and laxity in part of the administration gave opportunity for the tribesmen led the local zamindars and chieftains to create disturbance in the region. Shihabuddin Ahmad Khan (1578-83) unhappy with the terms of his removal from the office, recalled his men from as many as 80 thanas and garhis which he had erected, giving space for the turbulent Kathis and others to engage in marauding activities and capture these establishment: 'the moment his men left the thanas the Kolis and Girasias laid most of the forts waste and raised heads in revolt.'

That these tribals were powerful enough and were steadfast in loyalty towards their local chiefs and zamindars is evident from an incidence noted in Mirat, when in order to avenge the defeat of their zamindars by the royal forces, the Kathis defeated the royal army near Baroda. Similarly Azam Khan, one of the most famous viceroys of the province spent considerable time of his viceroy-ship in chastisement of these troublesome elements. The Mirat-i Ahmadi notes:

That at the beginning of his subadari, as the suba of Gujarat is a mine of mischievous persons of distracted heads and an adobe of disturbing rebels, Azam Khan devoted himself without entering Ahmadabad, to destroy the

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82 Ibid, p. 163.
malevolent Kathis and Kolis, who through misguidance and stupidity caused harm to the ryots always by robbery and theft and made efforts to ruin and lay waste the province as well as to chastise other refractory elements of the region especially in the parganas of Bhil near Mandu inhabited mostly by Kolis.\(^83\)

Mughal officials took several steps to encounter the marauding activities of these local tribals, and to protect the highways in the region, such as constructing thanas and garhis at places, and keeping them with armed guards to protect the travellers and locals of the areas against these marauders. An English record of the year 1647, notes the measures taken by Mughal officials in safeguarding the route near Broach:

As soon as he (governor) hears of the approach of a caravan from Ahmadabad he will send soldiers to meet it on this side of Baroda, because the ways are very dangerous there being caphila some three days since being robbed a mile from hence. Last night the governor's soldiers went to the rouges town, but they all fled, and left only there cattles which were this day sold in bazaar... The faujdars has now promised to order some of his soldiers at Sambod thana to go and meet the caravan and these with a few peons Walwyn is about to send from this place, will secure it from danger.\(^84\)

The activities of these tribes and people make it imperative for the travellers and merchants to hire armed escorts or make their way under the care of a local official or noble. These attacks on the caravans destined for ports or coming from them had an adverse impact on the commerce of the region, often resulting in loss of goods and precious commodities, sometimes in loss of life also. The hiring of armed escorts resulted in increase in the already high cost of transportation. Most of the travellers noted of the necessity of travelling with

\(^83\) Ibid, p. 184.

\(^84\) W. Foster, *English Factories in India*, 1646-50, p. 129.
proper guards and safety. Thevenot gave an interesting description of the people called Charans who as guards to the travellers and of their manner of protecting the travellers:

They belonged to a caste which was highly esteemed among the Hindu population of the region. Thus killing them or causing an injury to them was considered as an act beyond any redemption. Making use if this status in the society, they provided security to the travellers, by threatening to harm themselves in cases of emergency, and for which the entire would be on the robber. 85

However he also indicates compliance or an association, which had developed between the members of the aforesaid tribe and the robbers in the region:

Heretofore some Tcherons, both men and women have killed themselves upon such occasions, but that has not been seen for a long time, and at present they say, they compound with the robber for certain sum, which the traveller give them, and that many times the divide it with them. The Banians make use of these people and I was told that if I would employ them, I would be served for 2 rupees a day. 86

However, even when travelling under the security of a Mughal official the travellers and their goods at times faced the danger of being looted. Thus Peter Mundy, while travelling from Surat to Burhanpur, notes his encounters with the roaming bands of the Rajputs who were on lookout for opportunity to loot the caphilas passing the region. Mandelslo on his way back to Surat had a fierce engagement with a band of Rajputs who attempted to loot the caravan. 87

Although the conditions during the time when Mundy undertook the journey was more acute,

86 ibid
87 MS. Commissariat (ed.) Mandelslo's Travels, pp. 51-52.
than normal, on account of the severe famine ravaging the country of Gujarat, still his experiences does illustrates what the travellers in the region had to undergo from time to time, even while travelling under the protection of an officer:

By the way hither (Nouapora - Narayanpur), wee made accompt to have met Rashpootes whoe are here rife, but wee mist them, although between this place and Kirka, wee found ourselves alone by the side of a little brooke being near the highwaye, there past 11 or 12 of them on horseback, all well-armed and provided with the guns, swords, lances, bows and arrows, where espinge us alone, made a stand, but seeing wee were not those theie looked for, left us going on their way, givinge out they came to meet and conduct Mirza. But after our companie came upp, wee understood they were rovers and watched for the caphila, whose by the reason of a hilly and stonie way was gone somewhat the further about in the valley, and soe met them not. However it was settupon a great company of footemen whose att length were fame to betake themselves to flight. Hard by us lay the skulls and bones of sundrie men said to be killed by thes fellows. 88

The caphilas in which Mundy was travelling lost about three carts further on in journey: 'cutt from the caphilas by theves in the reare, and carried cleane away, the people escaping but not without wounds.' 89

By the latter half of the seventeenth century, the effectiveness of administrative institutions began to be undermined by the local zamindars and the Mughal officials posted in the region. Thus we come across numerous instances of the nobles and officers in the province acting contrary to the orders and advice of the imperial centre. The phenomenon gained strength

88 Peter Mundy, Travels, Vol. 2, p. 45.
89 ibid
towards the end of 17th century. With the power of the Emperor veining after the death of Aurangzeb, and the ascendancy of various nobles and beginning of factional infighting, the control of the Emperor over the subadars decreased. The nobles in charge of the provinces used the strength of their respective subadar is to gain ascendency over their rival factions in the court.

**EUROPEAN COMPANIES IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY & RELATION WITH MUGHAL STATE:**

The pattern of European commerce in the area can be understood to have gone through various phases, with each phase bringing about a distinct change in the pattern of their activities and engagements. The first half of the seventeenth century can be seen as a phase of struggle between the companies to muster control over the trading rights and privileges in the Asian waters, at the expense of each other.

**PORTUGUESE:**

The first to suffer in this struggle for supremacy over Asian waters were the Portuguese, who from being the virtual masters of the Asian seas were almost reduced to the position where they ceased to count in the politics and commerce of the region. The Portuguese maritime power came to be seriously challenged by the other European companies as the English and the Dutch.

**THE ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANY:**

Early records of the English East India company and the chronicles of their embassies to the Indian powers for seeking permission to trade on their ports testifies to the struggle and the extent of mistrust created by one company for the other in the minds of local officials and rulers.
Thus, Thomas Best in his report acknowledges to the fact that the Indian merchants and officials at the ports such as Surat were operating in the awe and fear of the Portuguese. In a letter addressed to the East India Company, Thomas Roe wrote about the fear they have of the ‘Portugall; for they incurring the same danger in sending to the Redd Sea which they sought to avoyd by givinge us trade.’ Sir Thomas Roe had acknowledged in his memoirs that the Mughal officials were in general partisan to the cause of the Portuguese who had succeeded in creating a negative impression of the English in the minds of the Mughal nobles and officials hence creating conditions detrimental to the cause of the English. Roe also highlighted the confusion in the mind if the Mughal officials and wrote that, they are very giddy in theyr resolutions whom they shall entertayne, and says that they would favour in general, the stronger side.

The extent of mistrust between the two companies has been brought out most aptly in the letter written by Roe to the Portuguese governor at Goa, in which he accuses the Portuguese of making attacks on the English and reminds him of the English naval power which had the capacity to defeat them:

The injurys yor Excellence or your predecessors have offered to the subjects of the high and mighty prince, the King of England... by assaulting them in their peacable course of trade, contrary to the amytye and league of both our soveraynes, although by the assistance of God yow have received shame and confusion in your unchristian attempts, yet I have commandement to admonish yow, like the subject of a prince at peace with his master, to desist from

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91 ibid
undertaking that which can bring forth no other effect but war and revenge and shedding of Christian blood.\textsuperscript{92}

The decline of the Portuguese hegemony over the waters of Western Indian Ocean had both the positive and negative effect on the commercial prosperity of the region. It must be remembered that the coast of Gujarat was probably the only region in the Asian trading network where the Portuguese system of control based on Cartazes and military superiority had an impact on the way the commerce was being conducted.\textsuperscript{93}

The defeat of Portuguese by the hands of English captain Thomas Best, off the coast of Gujarat gave a major dent to the aura of superiority so carefully nurtured by the Portuguese.\textsuperscript{94} However, in-spite of the decline in their power, they continued to hold important ports on the Western coast of India, such as Diu, Daman, Bassian, Goa among others within their jurisdiction.

The English were able to impress upon the Mughal officials to enter into trade agreements with them. Best concluded a treaty with, the diwan of Gujarat, who at the time was also acting as the viceroy of the province, which allowed them to settle their factories at Surat and other parts of the Mughal domain. A custom of 3½ % was fixed on the English good, with an assurance of safety against the Portuguese.

The embassy of Thomas Roe to the Mughal court further strengthened the English position in the country. His affairs at the court provided us with information regarding the mechanizations, which the Portuguese resorted to prevent Roe from acquiring farman

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid, p. 57.

\textsuperscript{93} For a comprehensive insight into the working of the Portuguese system on the Indian Coast and its influence in India see- F.C. Danver, Portuguese in India 2 Vols, London, 1894.

\textsuperscript{94} Thomas Best. The Voyage of Thomas Best to the East Indies. 1612-1614, (ed.) W. Foster, London, 1934, pp. 135-137.
regarding the English trade in the Empire and also the internal mechanizations of the various power groups during the reign of Jahangir. However, the activities of various Mughal officials and governors continued to create problems for the English commerce, and it was not before 1624 that an agreement was signed between the English and the Surat authorities, which established their position in clear terms.95

It allowed the English to have a free access to trade at the centres as the ports of Surat, Cambay, Broach, Goga, Beryal, Scyda, and other cities of kings' domain. Moreover it allowed them to import and export all types of items except corals, on which there was to be an embargo of about a year. However its clauses were not always followed in words by any of the party. Throughout the 17th century such fluctuations in the relations continued however by the second half of the period English commerce in India was established on a firm basis.

The English made Surat their headquarters for commerce with the East, and had established several subordinate factories in the inland centres such as Broach, Baroda, Ahmadabad, Agra and even the factories located in Persia, such as the one at Ispahan, was under the presidency of Surat. Dr. John Fryer, who visited the city in the year 1675, gives a list of factories subject to the English presidency at Surat, which during the time was esteemed superior to all of India:

...the inland factories subject to it are Amdavad, whence is provided silks, as Atlases wrought with Gold; Agra where they fetch indigo, Chuperly, Course Cloath, String-Chints; Broach bafts broad and narrow; Dimities and other fine calicuts: Along the coasts are Bombaim, Rajapore for Salloos; Camear for Dungarees, and the weightiest Pepper: Calicut for Spice, Ambergreez, Granats, Opiun, with Salpetre, and no cloath, though it give the name of calicut to all in India, it being the first port from whence they were known to be brought into

Europe: All which, after the Europe ships have unladen at Surat, they go down to fetch; and bring up time enough before Caphalas out of the country come with their wares.\textsuperscript{96}

In fact the clout of the Surat factory was so much that the factory at Bantam although not under Surat, still the president of Bantam factory, observes a certain deference towards the latter, and so did the captains of all the English ships coming to the east, for no ship would consider its voyage complete, until it had cast anchors at Surat.\textsuperscript{97}

Towards the end of the century the English company faced crisis of its existence with the establishment of New East India Company and the interloping activities of the deserters and the members of the old company, creating problem for the English trade, through piratical as well as involving themselves in competitive buying and trading activities. By the first quarter of 18th century the loci of English trade in the region shifted from Surat to Bombay. This shift resulted was a result of decline in trade and commerce of the port of Surat, as well as marked the beginning of the end of the commercial prosperity of the suba of Gujarat which during the period was a region much disturbed and troubled due to the internecine warfare among various nobles and factions to gain control over the province.

\textbf{THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY:}

The growth of Dutch commerce in the region almost paralleled the developments in relation to the English, however by the middle decades of seventeenth century. They had outpaced the English in the level of sophistication attained in their commercial enterprises. The Dutch however were more interested in the initial years of their involvement in Asian trade to gain control over the spice trade and spice marts of South East Asia. However after realizing the importance of Gujarati Cotton textile products in the markets of South East Asia and after the

\textsuperscript{96} John Fryer \textit{A New Account of East India}, pp.215.

\textsuperscript{97} M.S. Commissariat (ed.) \textit{Mandelslo's Travels}, p. 10.
fall of Malacca, in 1641 which gave to them an almost exclusive access to the spice markets of South East Asia, that they were seriously involved in the textile trade at Gujarat, and in the Indian trade.

Within the sub-continent also their commerce rivalled that of the English. In fact English records and official correspondences reflect upon the nature of Dutch trading in the region and the impact of their commerce on a market, which the English were trying get hold of. Thus there had been numerous instances of both the parties engaged in competitive buying of such commodities as indigo, and cotton goods, so as to get hold of the largest share of produce, and thus emerge as major player in the European markets. Thus, a letter addressed to the Factors at Broach, asks them to make an enquiry into the nature of Dutch trade at the place. The mistrust between the various companies was on many occasions the reason behind their losses for they were not able to present a unified front against the Mughal officials and their exactions.

Abbe Carre on his visit to Surat wrote about the humiliation of the French residents and traders at the city by the officials and the merchants of the town, due to The intrigues of the Dutch who this time had spread rumours regarding the humiliation of the French by the Dutch in wars in Europe. The humiliation had reached such climax that the French were about to be thrown out of the city by the Mughal Custom officer who was a friend of the Dutch:

For 7 or 8 months they had been subject to strange insults and actions, at which our enemies, the Dutch were working underhand, and which had reached such a climax that they were on point of being driven from Surat by the powerful Moor Custom officer, a friend of Dutch.

98 W. Foster (ed.) English Factories in India, 1634-36, p. 201.

On the other hand, there have also been instances when these companies worked together, in order to deal with the problems created by the local mercantile communities, or by the Mughal government. We have already mentioned the factors of the various companies coming together, in order to look into and analyse the situation created by the increase in custom duties on European goods. Martin informs us about a joint effort on part of the chiefs of the factories of the three nations the Dutch, the English and the French to obtain a redress against the general increase in the custom ditties in about year 1681.\textsuperscript{100} The companies sometimes in response to the Mughal exactions and monopolistic practices took a similar united stand. Thus we find the English and the Dutch abstaining completely from buying of Indigo, after Mughal emperor Shah Jahan imposed the royal monopoly over its trade, in the year 1633.\textsuperscript{101}

\textbf{EUROPEAN INFLUENCE ON THE COMMERCE OF THE REGION:}

Although it is a difficult task to discern the extent of the share of European commerce in the overall commercial exchanges in the Indian commerce, it is nevertheless safe to speak that by the middle decades of seventeenth century, Europeans had emerged as one of the key players in the Indian markets, with the power to influence it to an extent hitherto not possible by these companies. Their system of factories and dealing directly with the producers opened up the possibilities for the indigenous traders and manufacturers who were now assimilated in and come in contact with the international markets on a scale, which had not been achieved as yet.

The European companies also had an influence over the manner in which the indigenous merchants were conducting their business. The system of Cartazes introduced by the Portuguese was taken over and adopted by the English. Thus they came to impound ships travelling without their passes and by the middle decades of seventeenth century had themselves came to participate majorly in the carrying trade of the Gujarat ports with the


\textsuperscript{101} W. Foster (ed.) \textit{English Factories in India, 1630-1633}, p. 25.

131
markets of west Asia. The extent of European dominance was to such an extent that that even the ships belonging to the Emperors trading with the West Asian marts on the Red Sea and Persian Gulf also had to rely on the European Cartazes and passes during the course of the century. The Dutch dominance in the Eastern seas and over the markets of Southeast Asia had already resulted in almost total decline of Gujarati shipping with the ports of the area.

The European companies also recognized this factor, and they utilized it to the fullest extent to gain leverage against the Indian merchants and officials. The act of Henry Middleton to trouble the ships of Gujarat is a case in point.

Surat lived by its sea borne trade and especially by its pilgrim traffic to the Red sea; and its merchants were painfully aware of the fact that their ships were at mercy of any well aimed aggressor. They were anxious therefore to keep on good terms with new corners. Evidently too, several of chief merchants were well disposed towards the English and desirous of establishing commerce with them as far as possible.

Also, we have evidences that, English thought of using this as possible leverage against the state officials when in distress. Consultations held in prison at Surat, between various factors of the company who were put under arrest, reflects that they thought about sending ships on high seas to trouble the Surat commerce, and thus force their way out.

The Dutch also resorted to similar threats to gain leverage against the Mughal officials and the mercantile communities in the region. Martin records one such instance when the Dutch commander at Surat retired to their house at Suwali and waited for the Dutch fleet engaged in

102 M.N. Pearson, Merchants and Rulers, p 56, narrates an interesting incident of a struggle Portuguese and the Mughal noble Muhammad Quilij Khan over the question of the latter's refusal to seek cartazes from the Portuguese for his ships sailing to Red Sea

103 Thomas Best, The Voyage, p. xxiv.
the blockade of Bandar Abbas to reach there and enact a similar Blockade of the port. However the fleet got delayed due to the stubbornness of Persians, and ultimately a compromise had to be reached.\textsuperscript{104} Similarly he also records the panic amongst the residents of the port of Surat, on the arrival of French fleet at Surat, under De la Haye.\textsuperscript{105} Abbe Carre reported on the rumours regarding the French fleet and accused the Dutch of spreading the rumours.\textsuperscript{106}

\textbf{MUGHAL CONTROL ALONG COASTAL GUJARAT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON COMMERCE:}

The attitude of the state, towards the commerce of the region and the various participants in it had a determining role in the way the commerce of the period was being carried out. Ashin Das Gupta's qualification regarding medieval states playing crucial role in the growth of important commercial centres, as Surat is not out of place with the facts, which presents them to us. Arasratnam in his works defined the role of the state vis-à-vis commerce as:

\begin{quote}
In the Indian sub-continent, commerce was looked upon as an area of activity intricately linked with states' concern. Just as the rulers were conscious of the need to protect, and where possible expand the boundaries of the state, they were alive to prosecution of commerce in their domains.\textsuperscript{107}
\end{quote}

Although not having a direct control over agencies of commerce, the state emerges from the sources at our disposal, as an entity capable of affecting the performance of networks of trade in operation in seventeenth century, by its policies. Thus infra-structural development,


\textsuperscript{105} Ibid, Vol. 1, Part 2, p. 35.


\textsuperscript{107} S. Arasratnam, \textit{Maritime India in seventeenth century}, N. Delhi, 1994, p. 175.
protection of ports, duties and levies in form of custom, or on transit of goods, and imposing of monopolies were just the few of the ways in which medieval state was able to impinge upon and benefit from commercial transactions. Moreover participation of rulers and officials in trading activities must also be seen as a major factor, for bringing the commercial matters to forefront of state policy in a way previously unknown. This was highlighted in various attempts made by medieval states to utilize their control over resources, desired by the Europeans, to force them to keep the trading routes open and free of piracy.

Although, it is well evident from the sources placed before us that the medieval state had an important impact on the way commerce was conducted within their realms and by their subjects, the impact as such had both the positive as well as negative sides to it. Thus, on one hand we find the state involving itself in such activities as the development of infra structural facilities, making provisions of food and safety available to the merchants trading within their realms, regulating the tolls and duties levied on the goods and merchandise, introducing uniform system of currency and taxation, among other such beneficial measures; on the other hand we find the officials and nobles which constitutes the state as such and their dependents, involving themselves in such activities as over exaction and exploitation of the mercantile communities in their jurisdiction.

Involvement of Mughal rulers and officials in the trading activities also had similar double edged effect on commerce. On one hand it personally involved them into the complex world of commerce, and enabled them to get first hand views of the things, thus enabling them to formulate policies beneficial for the trading communities as whole; on the other hand the nature of such involvement, such as their exercising of political power for commercial gains, as was the case with the various monopolies introduced during our period, brought them into conflict with both the local mercantile communities as well as with the European companies operating in the area.
MUGHAL STATE AND COMMERCE:

From the scattered references in the English records, it appears that at the beginning of 17th century, Jahangir, Nur Jahan, Prince Khurram, and even the queen mother owned ships, which piled between Surat and Red sea. While Khurram was the viceroy of Gujarat, his ships carried on an extensive trade with Mocha, carrying mostly broad cloth and textiles. His ships also went to Masulipatam, and carried textiles and gum lac to the Persian ports. During the same period Jahangir's junks piled between Mocha and Goga. Official pressure was also sometimes used to procure cargo for these ships from the merchants. Thus in 1643, the governor of Swally Marine prohibited merchants from lading any ship, 'untill both the great junks belonging to this King are full.'

Another method adopted by Shahjahan for augmenting his income was to create monopolies. Thus we hear of establishment of Indigo monopoly in 1633, according to which Munmodas Dunda was granted sole right of buying all indigo in the kingdom, and the return after 3 years was to be 11 lakh of rupee. The English responded by abstaining from Indigo trade altogether, and with the revenues of various ports dwindling, and on petition of various high officials the monopoly was ultimately dissolved in 1635. Tavernier mentions the royal monopoly on lime:

All the wagons which come to Surat from Agra or other places in the Empire and return to Agra and Jahanabad are compelled to carry lime which comes from Broach, and which as soon as it is used, becomes as hard as marble. It is a great source of profit to the Emperor who sends it wherever he pleases.

109 Ibid
110 Ibid, p. 165.
111 J.B. Tavernier, Travels, Vol. 1, p. 35.
Even the local Mughal governors engaged themselves in monopoly practices. An English letter written to factory at Surat from Broach, mentions the monopoly practices of the Mughal governor Yakub Khan:

The governor of this town Yakub Khan had sent for all our lead and his people had carried it to his house, who as I understand will keep it until such time as he shall see, whether he shall have occasion to use it or not If not, he intends to return it back. When they fetch it away, they promised current payment of it, however there is no trust of his words, only dilasas.112

Infact the general delay and difficulties which Merchants had to face in order to obtain concessions and privileges, in matters relating to commerce, does reinforce the fact that official involvement in affairs of commerce had certain negative effects.

We come across references of Company moving out of a place or failing to establish factory at a place due to the hostilities of local officials. For example we here of company's business being obstructed at Dharangaon due to the hostilities of local officials and improper exactions which were reported in the year, 1679, 1682, and 1683; however these did not prevent the transit of goods to Surat.113 We also have evidences of officials treating important Indian merchants indifferently and without concern. Thus one hears of the whole scale migration of large sections of a particular business community from Surat. In fact persecution of local Banya community and of the Europeans by the Mughal officials at Surat and at the subordinate factories was sighted as one of the chief reasons for shifting the council at Surat to Bombay, in last quarter of the century.114

112 W. Foster (ed.) English Factories in India, 1624-29, pp. 190-91.
114 ibid, p. xxxv.
However, one does come across differences in response by the state officials towards European companies and Indian Merchants, primarily because of the realization of European naval power, by the Officials, and of the trouble they cause to the shipping of their respective ports. However, this was not always a one-way scenario. Infact many Mughal port officials tried to utilize the hostility between various European powers, to protect the shipping of their own port. Khwaja Murad Beg, governor of the port of Dabhol, wrote to the President and council at Surat, inviting them to trade at his port.\textsuperscript{115}

In fact at Surat itself, one of the primary reasons behind the support given by mercantile community to the English and Dutch was due to their strength vis-à-vis the Portuguese, who at the time were a major threat to their shipping, and commerce.

That the Mughal state was not oblivious and ignorant of the developments taking place in the commercial world and that it was prepared to go to extreme extent to safe guard the interest of its merchants and of course of its own, can be discerned from the ways and manner in which the Mughal officials and nobles acted and responded on various occasion to safe guard the trade of the realm, weather against the piracy or the hostile attitudes of the European companies against the Indian traders and their commerce.

One of the most interesting case in point was the conflict between the local Mughal officials and the Dutch company about the year 1648-49, when following the conquest of Malacca in 1641, the Dutch faced heavy losses in their trade in tin and pepper, because of the operations of the Indian merchants in the region. Thus in order to stem their losses it was decided to restrict the Indian shipping to the Southeast Asian ports of Acheh and Malacca. The Mughal authorities in response banned the lading of Dutch ships at the port. Moreover on 20th April 1648, the Dutch house at Surat was attacked and robbed, by upward of 100 men, who for the space of 3 hours ransacked almost all rooms therein without opposition. The governor was

\textsuperscript{115} W. Foster, \textit{English Factories in India, 1624-29}, p. 116.
seen as having a hand behind the attack, as nobody was convinced that so many men could otherwise have moved undiscovered.  

The Dutch being so surprised that it became their whole care to secure their persons, yet were 5 of them, a black and a porter wounded, where of one of the Dutch died the next day and the porter yet lives but irrecoverable. Their loss is said to be about 22,000 rupees, where of 14,000 rupees in money belonging to the company and the rest in jewels appertaining to particular person.  

THE MARATHA ASCENDENCY AND DETERIORATING MUGHAL CONTROL IN FIRST HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY:  

The death of Aurangzeb in 1707 was followed by a civil war, which saw his surviving sons - Muazzam, Azam, and Kam Baksh battle it out for the throne. The war ended with the accession of Muazzam, with the title of Bahadur Shah. His rule saw peace being established on the Rajput front. However his release of Shahu, saw the beginning of a bitter civil war between the various factions in the Marathas, with the generals siding with Shahu, or with Tara Bai, the widow of Raja Ram, who till now was leading resistance against the Mughal occupation and her generals had been creating problems for the Mughal administration in the subas adjoining Deccan. The political situation in the Deccan had a direct bearing on the peace and tranquillity of Gujarat, with Maratha generals in search for treasure and cash to fund their campaigns made numerous forays into the province, and created disturbance for Mughal officials to the extent that the administration of the province collapsed completely by the middle decades of 18th century, with the last Nazim of the suba, Momin Khan II handing

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116 ibid, p. 217.
over the charge of the capital city of Ahmadabad to the combined assault of the Deccani forces sent by the orders of the Peshwa, after a siege of the city for about 14 months.

Khafi Khan noted the activities of Maratha generals under the command of Tara Bai. In the early years of 18th century, and notes that the energies and resources spend by the Mughals in order to bring the Maratha under control now seemed wasted:

She (Tara Bai) took vigorous measures for ravaging the imperial territories and sent armies to plunder the six subas of Dakhin as far as sironj, Mandisor, and the suba of Malwa... and so all the struggles and schemes, the campaigns and sieges of Aurangzeb up to the end of his reign, the power of the Marathas increased day by day. By hard fighting, by the expenditure of vast treasures accumulated by Shah Jahan, and by sacrifices of many thousands of men, he had penetrated into their wretched country, had subdued their lofty forts, and had driven them from their houses and homes; still the daring of Mahrattas increased, and they penetrated into old territories of the imperial throne, plundering and destroying wherever they went... and plunder it... And the rahdars of these evil doers takes small parties of Merchants, who are anxious to obtain security from plunder, a toll upon every cart and bullock, 3 or 4 times greater than the amount imposed by the faujdars of the government.\(^{118}\)

The first Maratha invasion of Gujarat was undertaken under the command of Dhanaji Jadhav in 1706. The march of Prince Azam to Burhanpur in 1706 coupled with the absence of a powerful force in the province; capable of repelling a large scale Maratha army was the primary reasons, which led Dhanaji Jadhav to attack Gujarat. The Marathas at Ratanpur on the banks of river Narbada defeated the imperial forces. Khwaja Abdul Hamid Khan, who was the diwan of the suba was captured in the engagement and was executed.

\(^{118}\)Khafi Khan, Muntakhab-ul lubab, pp. 373-74.
The defeat of the imperial forces was mainly due to the lack of coherence in the command structure, indecisiveness on the part of the commanders and the lack of experience in dealing and fighting with the Marathas. The Mirat-i Ahmadi notes the condition of the Mughal camp a night before the battle:

Every commander planted his tent according to his desire and habit as well as pleased his temperament. They did not observe caution and care of camping at one place. Scattered like tresses of moon-faced beauties, they encamped with their companions.\(^{119}\)

The immediate after effect of the defeat of the imperial army was the large-scale looting and depredation activities undertaken by the Marathas as well as the Kolis and Kathis who saw in the defeat the signs of weakness of the Mughal administration.

They [Marathas] then plundered towns and villages and exacted Khandani tribute. A great commotion and vast relaxation spread in the subah. There was disorder and anarchy. Rebellious Kolis who had retired to a corner of obscurity and oblivion due to chastisement and punishment of faujdars and thanadars, emerged from every corner and side, reverted to their inborn nature and raised disturbances.\(^{120}\)

The years between 1706 and 1716 saw several Maratha raids being conducted in the region, especially into South Gujarat, by Khanderao Dabhade, one of the most famous of Raja Shahu's officers. The raids were conducted to primarily control the trade route from Surat to Burhanpur, and constructed blockhouses to extract payment from all caravans.\(^{121}\) In year 1716 he defeated the Mughal force under Zulfiqar Khan, at Baglan, sent against him by Sayyid


\(^{120}\) Ibid, p. 323.

Hussain Ali, who was on his way to take charge of the government of the Deccan. The officers of Khanderao, continued to make raids in the years after 1716, an almost annual incursions into the province and established Maratha claims to chauth in the Surat district.

From the year 1719 onwards Pilaji Gaekwad, who until his death in 1732 remained the most powerful of Maratha leaders in Gujarat and established the supremacy of Gaekwad family in the province, made almost annual incursion in the environs of Surat, and created disturbance for the Mughal officials there: ‘During these days the Maratha Pilaji Rao Gaekwad raised disturbances in the vicinity of Surat port, he plundered and pillaged villages...’122 His plundering activities proved a major source of fear and tension among the residents and officials at Surat.

The crisis in the provincial administration of the suba, became grave, when in the year 1722, Haider Quli Khan the viceroy of Gujarat, rebelled against the imperial authority. ‘Puffed up’, by the role he played in the imperial affairs with regard to the downfall of the Sayyid brothers, and having been refused the office of Vizarate, which was granted to Nizam-ul Mulk, he began to aspire for establishing an independent kingdom of Gujarat. Incensed and angered by his high handed actions and deference and disrespect shown to the imperial authority he was recalled in October 1722, and subadari was granted to Nizam-ul Mulk.123

Sarbuland Khan was appointed the Viceroy of Gujarat after the withdrawal of Nizam-ul Mulk in 1724 to Deccan, and was ordered to proceed in person with a large army to check on the Maratha activities. However by the year 1730, his resources were exhausted and several bands of Marathas ravaged the countryside to ruins. The Marathas reduced the city of Vadnagar to rubble in the year 1726. Unable to receive resources and back up from the imperial court, he entered into the treaty with Peshwa Baji Rao 1, on 23rd March 1730, and agreed to cede to

Baji Rao the sardeshmukhi, or 10% of the whole revenue, both from the land and the customs, excepting that from the port of Surat and the district attached to it, together with the chauth from the same sources, and 5% of the revenues of the city of Ahmadabad. It was further stipulated that the Peshwa was to maintain 2500 horse to keep peace in the province and that as few as men as possible should be kept in the district to collect the tribute, and no extra demand were to be made on the ryots. The Peshwa on behalf of Shahu Raja was to help uphold imperial authority, and to prevent Raja's subjects from supporting disaffected desais and zamindars and other disturbers of public peace. 124

The year following the treaty saw Dhabde who till now were the Maratha senapatis in the province revolting against the authority of the Peshwa. The year 1731 saw the culmination of the rivalry between the two factions and the issue was decided in favour of Baji Rao in the battlefield of Dabhoi.

The year 1732 saw the assassination of Pilaji Gaekwad on orders of Maharaja Abhay Singh, the subadar of Gujarat. However, the subsequent years did not witness any revival of Mughal power in the province and the Marathas under the leadership of Dhamaji Gaekwad II (1732-68), created further troubles resulting in loss of Mughal control over almost whole of the province, with cities like Baroda (1734), Viramgam (1735) falling in Maratha hands.

Dhamaji laid the foundations of Gaekwad rule in the province on a more strong footing. The Marathas made various attempts to take Ahmadabad - first in the year 1733 under the leadership of Umabai - widow of Khanderao Senapati, along with Kanthaji Kadam and Gaekwad; the 9-month siege by Momin Khan and Ranghoji from end of August 1736 to end of May 1737; the capture of Ahmadabad by Raghunath Rao and Dhamaji in 1753, 125 and the

124 Ibid, pp. 427-28
final siege in the year 1757-58, for about 14 months and the final surrender of the city by Momin Khan II.

The years 1758 to 1816 saw the dual government of Peshwa and Gaekwads functioning in the province, moreover there were fairly large tracts within the province where Mughal officials continued to hold sway, as independent princes. Among these may be listed the Nawabs of Radhanpur, Balasinor, Cambay, Surat and Broach. Similarly Sher Khan Babi, the Mughal governor at Junagarh, established his independent sway over the area. 126

THE ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANY, THE SIDDIS & THE ANGRIAS: STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY ALONG COASTAL GUJARAT

The English East India Company's Relations with the Marathas and its growing interest in territorial gains along the western coast has to be seen in its attempt to strengthen its position as the premier naval power along the western coast of India, along with preserving its carrying trade to West Asia.

The eighteenth century as we have seen began with increasing depredation of the Marathas along the highways connecting the major ports of Gujarat, such as Surat with the inland production centres. The sources of revenue for the Mughal Imperial ports as Surat and Cambay had all but dried in wake of Maratha assaults. The governors of these port cities in attempt to raise revenue tried to extort money from the mercantile classes in the city. At Surat a similar attempt to extort money from merchants by the mutsaddi Sohrab Khan in 1725 resulted in large scale resentment against him. 127 The Qiladar Beglar Khan and his two


nephews Gadai Beg Khan and Teg Beg Khan, were also involved in similar extortion attempts. The merchants petitioned the Imperial court on the conduct of Sohrab Khan, however the decree of the Imperial court had stopped having the desired effect by the 1730s. The merchants thus under the leadership of Seth Laldas Vithaldas, the nagarseth, drew up a plan with English support to replace Sohrab Khan with Teg Beg Khan. The attempt was successful and Sohrab Khan gave way to Teg Beg Khan as the governor of Surat.\textsuperscript{128} However, Teg Beg Khan soon usurped power in Surat in 1733\textsuperscript{129} and became the Nawab, with his brother holding on to the Surat castle.

On the second front, the company had already shifted its chief settlement on the west coast to Bombay, on the Konkan coast. the Konkan coastline, by the decade of 1730 came under heavy pressure from the activities of Maratha naval commander Kanhoji Angria. Further north, the Siddi, who was the Mughal Naval commander, continued to hold his own and make unreasonable demands on the government of Surat.\textsuperscript{130} However, by 1739, the Angrias had run over almost whole of Konkan coast.\textsuperscript{131}

However, the death of Kanhoji Angria earlier in 1729, had rendered Angria position vulnerable, and the English were able to gain ascendancy over the sea-lanes around Bombay. This changed the situation for the English who now saw in it an opportunity to assert themselves decisively and become masters of the India's West coast. The trigger to this aspiration was provided by the seizure of four English ships by the Maratha navy in 1740 A.D.\textsuperscript{132} The English as a counter decided to station a marine force in the region with the aim

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid, p. 34.


\textsuperscript{130} Ibid, pp. 117-119.

\textsuperscript{131} L. Subramanian, \textit{Indigenous Capital}, p. 35.

\textsuperscript{132} Public Department Diary of Bombay Presidency, No. 13C of 1740, pp. 545-546.
of attaining two objectives in one go. The first one was to impress upon the Marathas the naval superiority of the English and second was to assure the native traders of the English ability to hold its own against the other navies in the region. The English continued to be locked in this struggle for supremacy and it was not until 1765, that English domination of entire west coast was complete.

The English continued to make intervention in local politics of the port cities of Gujarat as Surat, such as in 1744, when Mullah Fakruddin, great grandson of Mulla Abdul Gafur, sought English protection against the ruling administration. In 1747, the English again intervened to support the cause of Meah Achan, against the claims of ruling Nawab, Safdar Khan. Although English removed Safdar Khan, he made a decisive comeback three years later, with support of Sidi Masud and Damaji Gaekwad.

Safdar Khan resumed hostilities with the English, and asked the city's merchants to inform the English of the displeasure of the city's government with the English attitudes and positions, and that they were dabbing in politics rather than confining themselves to matters of trade. In 1752, the Siddi proposed a new tax to meet the growing demands of the Marathas on the city merchants, who asked the English to intervene and persuade the government to follow an alternate plan of raising funds. The Surat council intervened fearing that merchants may go to the Dutch for support. The Siddi incensed by the English action ordered the leading Banya merchant to persuade his community members to pay

133 ibid.
136 Surat Factory Diary, No. 9 of 1751-52, pp. 31-32.
137 ibid, pp. 309-11.
additional tax.\textsuperscript{138} The Surat factors took strong exception to the case and declare that they intend to protect the merchants at whatever the cost from the exaction of the city government.

The tussle between the two parties continued till the year 1758, with the death of Safdar Khan. With multiple claimants to the throne, and the danger from the side of the Siddi and the Marathas ever present, the merchants petitioned the English council to take over the Surat castle and end the chaotic situation in the city. The English no longer in mood to let go of the opportunity, finally took over the castle of Surat on 4\textsuperscript{th} March 1759.\textsuperscript{139} Meah Achan was allowed to retain his position as Nawab, but all effective power passed on to English hands. The official farman to the effect was procured in November 1759.\textsuperscript{140}

\section*{Topography and Pattern of Political Control:}

Topography of the region played a very determining role in the way the commerce in the region was conducted. In similar fashion, the extent of influence, which was exercised by the land based powers such as the Mughals and that exerted by the Europeans was to a large extent determined by the topography along the coastline.

The Portuguese during the course of the 16th century attempted to gain control over the shipping lanes in Asia through their system based on the Cartazes and construction of fortresses at strategic points to gain control over the shipping lanes in the various regions. However, nowhere but in the Gulf of Cambay, and along the coastal Gujarat, was their system to an extent was successful. Though unable to fully curb the Gujarati Shipping, the Portuguese control over the two strategically located ports Daman and Diu, located on the Eastern and Western end of the coast of Gulf of Cambay, gave them a strategic advantage to

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid, p. 326.

\textsuperscript{139} Surat Factory Diary, No. 14 (1) of 1758-59, pp. 224-226.

\textsuperscript{140} Public Department Diary – Bombay Presidency, No. 33 (II) of 1759, p. 266.
gain control over the pattern of shipping in the region. The influence of their control was to the extent that even the ships owned by the Mughal Emperors and the royal princes and other members of the Imperial family took Cartazes from the Portuguese as safe guard against any sort of depredating activity on their voyages to the ports of West Asia.

However, it was the coastal topography, which gave advantage to their rivals, the English when they entered the Asian trade in the beginning of the Seventeenth century. The location of sand banks along the coastline, gave protection against the direct of the Portuguese brigantines, on their ships. This is most evident along the of Swally, where some of the most serious engagements between the English the Portuguese took place, and protected by the sandbanks along the harbour the English ships were able to do considerable damage to the Portuguese brigantines, when they were attacked.

Other than the Europeans, Shipping in the gulf also faced the threats of by the hands of Kolis inhabiting the islands in the region, and by the Malabar pirates whose activities became major source of disruption for maritime commerce in the region. Pelsaert reports the activities of Malabar pirates in the region. While detailing the various ways by which goods can be transported from Swally to Surat, he forwards the opinion at although the transportation of goods by boats is cheaper than sending them by land, the course is exceedingly dangerous, because the Malabar pirates can keep their small crafts lying off the river’s mouth without being observed, and capture whatever there is. Thevenot also mentions about the similar threat on the route from Cambay to Surat, in Portuguese Alamadies used for coast-to-coast transport in the Gulf. He mentions that such vessels do not venture out, but in the night time, so that the Malabars might not discover them. Explaining the modus operandi of these pirates,

\[141\] F. Pelsaert, Remonstrante, p. 39.
he says that they 'sulk behind the rocks and then falling upon them (in this case Portuguese Alamadies used for such transportation) in its passage.\footnote{142 S.N. Sen (ed.) \textit{Indian Travels}, pp. 18-19.}