CONTINUITY AND COMPULSIONS:

Sambhaji, the son and successor of Shivaji, inherited a well-organized and spirited naval establishment. The Maratha navy, at the death of Shivaji, was undeniably an authority to reckon with. At that time of Sambhaji’s succession, the Maratha naval establishment was actively complimented by a large number of coastal and sea-forts. The boat-building enterprise was accorded high priority and fighting boats of different types and sizes were constructed depending upon the nature of marine-operations. The vessels were also suitably equipped with fire power to make them more menacing. For effective functioning, the naval administration was further streamlined during the rule of Shivaji by way of the creation of ‘naval-subahs’. In other words, the Maratha navy had become a crucial element of the military strategy of the Maratha Swarajya. Going by the size and organisation of the naval establishment, it may perhaps not be erroneous to regard the Maratha navy as the first of its kind amongst the lot of native powers in India in the late 17th century.

As the head of the Maratha Swarajya, Sambhaji’s naval tasks were rather predetermined and obvious - he needed to complete the unfinished assignments of his predecessor. It had been a life-long mission of Shivaji to eliminate (or subdue) the Siddi from the vicinity of the Konkan coast. Ultimately, however, Shivaji ran out of time; and his untimely death left this mission un-accomplished. Hence, it was natural that the task of removal of the challenge of the Siddi was going to be pursued by Sambhaji in the same spirit as that of his father. On the other hand, for the Siddi, the situation had quite changed during the last couple of years. He was in a much better position ever since he had shifted his loyalties and allegiance from Bijapur Sultans to the Mughals. As a result, the Siddi was now totally free from any threat originating from the land-side. His control over the island of Underi acted as a strategic deterrence to any Maratha action originating from their island fortress of Khanderi which was close by. Moreover, the British at Bombay, who were also the strategic partners of the Siddi, made the latter’s position
more secure on the Konkan coast. The Siddi, thus, freely roved along the Konkan Coast and exercised his authority as the ‘Mughal Admiral’. Sambhaji could well comprehend that under the changed circumstances the reduction of Siddi required more than mere crude military force. He understood that in this venture, therefore, the Maratha navy was going to play the most decisive part; but, at the same time, he needed to devise superior tactics so that the Siddi’s attention could be diverted both on land as well as on water. This was certainly a difficult task to accomplish as it required both - the resourcefulness as well as the imagination, of a military genius.

Fortunately, the naval department, which Sambhaji had inherited, was one of the best managed and most efficient units of the Maratha military organisation. The Maratha Admirals Mai Nayak Bhandari and Daulat Khan had, in the past, distinguished themselves in the naval engagements with the Siddi as well as the Europeans. Sambhaji could rely upon these illustrious commanders along with the likes of Govind Kanhoji Angre, Govind Das Jadhav, Dadaji Prabhu Deshpande, etc., who comprised the list of the other better known Maratha naval officers of the time. Some other names associated with the Maratha naval establishment were: Kawaji Muhammad, Santaji Pawla, Siddi Misri (brother-in-law of Siddi Sambul), Jagoji Pharjand and Nagoji Waghmare (the Havaldars of Khanderi, Kulaba respectively), Antaji Bhaskar and Tanaji (both working as Majumdars, the latter being posted at Janjira Rajkot).¹

As regards the numerical strength of the Maratha fleet, it could be reasonably assumed that very little had changed in the period between the death of Shivaji and the succession of Sambhaji. We have rather convincing reasons to believe that Sambhaji paid equal attention towards the apparatus and expansion of the Maratha fleet since the beginning of his reign. A British (East India Company’s) letter dated 4⁰ Nov 1680, originated from Bombay (addressed to Surat) reads, “We have certain news of the Raja’s (Sambhaji’s) Armada, consisting of about 50 sails of Ghurabs and Galvats, all fitted at Rajapur and have on board them between 4000 to 5000 men under the command of Daulat Khan…” ² Though the above reference is not indicative of the actual strength of the Maratha fleet, however, it does give us an idea as to how a naval contingent could be readied for the purpose of a specific task on the Konkan waters.
Like his predecessor, Sambhaji also experienced the limitations in terms of fire power, particularly canons, to equip his vessels with. No doubt, therefore, he was tactful in dealing with the Europeans for the supply of ammunitions for his vessels. It seems that guns and ammunitions were supplied by the French to the Marathas in the year 1681. Such arrangements, however, were not going to continue forever and could not be totally relied upon at the time of dire need. Hence, to do away with the dependency on the Europeans, especially in the matters of arms and ammunitions, Sambhaji came up with the novel idea of having his own foundry and ammunitions manufacturing unit. The Portuguese accounts tell us about Sambhaji’s request to them (the Portuguese) to allow unhindered passage of a few Maratha boats (apparently laden with sulphur, saltpetre etc.) coming from Malabar and Karnatak. The supply of these materials was intended to be used for the production of ammunitions in the two factories that were to be constructed in Kudal and Dicholi during the year 1682.³ It should be noted, however, that it was not before the Peshwa period, that any progress towards the establishment of a modern foundry could be made. The endeavour of Sambhaji, in any case, was to maintain normal relations particularly with the French and the Dutch. The Europeans Companies, on the other hand, were always distressed - either by the Mughal-Maratha conflict in the Deccan/Western India, or by the intense rivalry between their respective countries - back in Europe. Hence, they could have ill afforded to ignore the demands of the Marathas whose authority in the Deccan could not be disregarded. Sambhaji capitalised on the situation and always tried to extract whatever supplies he needed from them. For example, in the year 1687, while the Mughal-Maratha struggle was in full swing in the lower Deccan region, and a possible Mughal success was on cards, in anticipation of the Mughal success and possible inimical relations with the Marathas, the French Governor, Francis Martin, started fortifying the French factory. At the same time, the French tried to cultivate friendship with the Mughals. The Marathas, however, in 1688, issued an order to stop further work of fortification. The French, though, were later permitted to fortify the said factory on payment of 5000 Chakras (1 Chakra = Re. 1 and P. 75 only) subject to reservation by the Marathas to decide the height of the bastion.⁴

For successful and unhindered operation of the Maratha fleet, Sambhaji also made every effort to keep the waters adjacent to the Maratha coast free from any influence of
hostile operators. Despite all his pre-occupations on land, he did not allow complacency to set in, particularly in the matters of coastal defence. He is said to have taken enough care not to leave the mouths of the rivers, leading to the Maratha hinterland, unguarded. The garrison strength and provisioning of the various coastal and island fortresses of strategic importance were properly monitored. In fact, there are references that Sambhaji also tried to acquire places strategically suitable the coastal defences of the Swarajya, and even fought wars with those who opposed him in doing so. His keenness to have a suitable landing site at Chaul and his attempt to capture and fortify the island of Elephanta, near Bombay, could be seen in such background. In fact, such attempts were also actually undertaken to counter the Siddi threat in the Konkan waters.

Another significant aspect of Sambhaji’s naval policy was that, like Shivaji, he too, did not enter into unnecessary conflicts with the Europeans on the west coast. On the contrary, he tried to be in constant correspondence with the English and the Portuguese to ensure that the Maratha fleet operated without any obstacles from their side. We have already referred to one such correspondence between the Maratha and the Portuguese in which the former had sought permission of the later to allow free passage of his vessels. As regards the English, their experiences of naval conflicts with Shivaji could not bring them any thing but a loss in commerce - which a commercial ‘Trading Company’ like the EAST INDIA COMPANY could hardly justify. After the Khanderi-Underi episode (of 1678-79) involving the Marathas, the Siddi and the EAST INDIA COMPANY, the English had worked hard for peace and had succeeded in signing a peace pact with the Marathas. It was, therefore, expected from them that they would go-ahead with the recently concluded peace treaty, they had signed with Shivaji in Jan 1680, which mostly dealt with naval provisions concerning the Marathas, Siddi and the English. The English factors, therefore, tried to get in touch with the Maratha authorities on the pretext of payment of ‘Bakshish’ to Sambhaji immediately after his accession. This, undoubtedly, would have been the most opportune moment to re-affirm their sincere desire to maintain cordial relations with the new Maratha ruler. This does not mean, however, that sources of disagreement (of any nature) between them were eliminated altogether. On the contrary, we find that on many occasions the Marathas had entered into military conflict (including naval actions) with the English, French or the Portuguese. It should be
understood that such conflicts were mostly of the nature of pressure tactics (as they had been in the past) and, many a times, arose because of the involvement of a third party in between. The normal business and transactions continued while the diplomatic channels were explored. Let us now assess the nature of naval problems faced by Sambhaji during his short tenure of nearly a decade, and his response to them.

(A) SAMBHAJI, MUGHALS AND THE SIDDI: STRUGGLE FOR UNDERI AND JANJIRA —

In the previous chapter we have discussed about the occupation and fortification of Khanderi and Underi by Shivaji and the Siddi respectively. We have also examined the role played by the English factors at Bombay during the struggle for Khanderi-Underi. Though Shivaji was not comfortable with the Siddi occupying and fortifying Underi, he could do little to lay his hands upon that. The Siddi got the opportunity to further strengthen the defences of Underi in view of the death of Shivaji. The eagerness to wrest Underi from the Siddi was very much alive when Sambhaji came to power. Sambhaji reviewed the situation and without wasting time, commenced a naval operation to capture Underi. The English Factory Records make a mention of a ‘hot bout’ at Underi between the Siddi and Sambhaji. Sambhaji’s attempt on Underi seems to have been made early in the month of August, 1680. It is mentioned that, “...in a dark night Sambhaji Raja’s men landed there (at Underi) - about 200 of them, got into the work undiscovered; but giving the alarm too soon, for want of daylight and a thorough knowledge of the place, were beaten... About 80 of the Maratha lives were lost in this process...”7 This letter does not tell us about the number of vessels put to use by the Marathas; neither does it reveal the identity of the Commander of the Maratha naval force for the said operation. However, another letter, dated 4th of Nov 1680, gives us an idea of the naval forces Sambhaji had readied for (yet another) action against the Siddi. The letter reads, “We have certain news of the Raja’s Armada, consisting of 50 sails of Ghurabs and Galvats, all fitted at Rajapur, and have on board them between 4000-5000 men under the command of Daulat Khan, and that, very suddenly they will be coming to the northward. What their intentions are,
we cannot learn...we shall be very vigilant and endeavour to prevent any surprise that they may attempt on us."³

It had been the policy of the English to accommodate the Siddi (for wintering of his fleet) at Bombay since long. The Siddi, thus, had become a cause of dispute between the Marathas and the English on the Konkan coast. The above policy of the English (particularly at Surat) towards the Siddi was observed more in letter and spirit ever since the Siddi was conferred with the title of Mughal Admiral by Aurangzeb. Since Bombay was largely dependent on the Marathas for the supply of food grains, oil, ghee, firewood, timber etc., its endeavour was, therefore, to try and keep their dealings with the Siddi concealed from the Marathas. In fact, it was quite difficult, thus, for Bombay to keep both, the Marathas as well as the Siddi, contented.

Early in 1682, the Mughals had initiated their military campaign against the Marathas. Kalyan-Bhiwandi was attacked by one of the Mughal contingents. The Jedhe Shakawali records that the Mughal Subedar Hasan Ali Khan had burnt down the town of Kalyan-Bhiwandi in the month of Magha (probably the month of January, 1682) and returned. It is interesting to find that, during this campaign, the British secretly supplied ammunitions to the Mughal commander Hasan Ali Khan.⁹ The Mughal military campaign against Sambhaji was to continue – which meant unsettled conditions and further loss of trade and commerce to the British. It must be kept in mind that the EAST INDIA COMPANY was primarily a trading body, with the prime objective of making huge profits through trade and commerce. A British letter suggests that the Surat factors, though, thought that it was not was not practical to displease the Siddi while the Mughal forces were advancing in the Deccan, they had advised Bombay to help the Marathas (against the Siddi) in a secret manner.¹⁰ At the same time Bombay, which had prevented the Siddi from entering Bombay harbour in the month of April 1682, were pressurised by the Surat authorities, early in the month of May, to grant the Siddi the permission to shelter in Bombay harbour on the pretext that their (Siddi’s) presence will be a help against the threat of Sambhaji on Bombay.¹¹

The Siddi exploited the situation to the best. He was definitely looking for an opportunity of settling scores with the Marathas, their arch rivals on the Konkan coast. The Siddi depredations in the Maratha coastal areas are well recorded in the
contemporary documents. The Siddi's *modus-operandi* was to use Underi as the base for carrying out his pillaging activities in the area around Bombay. Moreover, he had the additional advantage of using Bombay too for his wicked activities. Many a times, using the Bombay harbour as a base, the Siddi used to foray from there and/or made good his escape there. This could be substantiated by way of the following examples. After the naval engagement between the Marathas and the Siddi at Underi early in August 1680, the Siddi had gone to Bombay with the (chopped-off) heads of about 80 Maratha sailors with the intention of displaying them there. However, the Deputy Governor of Bombay did not allow him to do so.\(^1\) Elsewhere, in 1681, the Siddi had reportedly caught 02 of Sambhaji's Galvats that were going to Bombay. The Maratha Subedar of Pen demanded, from the factors at Bombay, the return of Galvats along with the crew threatening them that otherwise he would refer the matter to Sambhaji. The Galvats and the crew were duly returned.\(^2\) The intervention of the English, thus, sometimes got the desired results.

On the other hand, despite his preoccupations, Sambhaji could not afford to ignore the Siddi depredations for long. He had resolved to tackle the Siddi nuisance, particularly on water, on priority. He had been gearing up resources to strengthen the naval defenses of the Swarajya to meet the Siddi challenge. In this endeavour, Sambhaji could comprehend the strategic and tactical importance of naval bases and forts during naval contests. Hence, he tried to ensure that the Maratha navy should not suffer for want of such foundations. Apparently to coerce the Portuguese to cede a strip of land at Chaul, suitable for a base, Sambhaji pointed towards the fact that similar permission was granted by them (the Portuguese) to the Siddi in the recent past. However, the Portuguese Governor refused to oblige the request very politely intimating him that permission from the Viceroy of Goa would have to be obtained for the same.\(^3\) Sambhaji also comprehended that it was convenient to transport provisions from Thane to Kalyan by boats and thus maintain the logistics through an alternative route/channel. This was a prerequisite for the successful maneuver of any troop in that region. Hence, in view of the advancing Mughal army to Kalyan-Bhiwandi, Sambhaji decided to erect a fortification at Parsik. Such a fort was to check effectively the movement of the Mughal fleet or that of any other enemy through that route. But his efforts were frustrated as the Portuguese (understanding the strategic implications), acted swiftly, took possession of the place and
built their own fort there. The genuineness of Sambhaji could be further understood in the light of the occupation and simultaneous fortification of an island near Elephanta long before he could practically undertake the siege of Janjira. This was done, apparently, to counter the English at Bombay who were maintaining a sympathetic and friendly policy towards the Siddi. As such, the Maratha island fort of Khandari worked as a major deterrent against any possible misdemeanour of the English through the sea. Under such circumstances, the count of yet another fortified island near Bombay would have added strategic dimensions to the Maratha pressure on the English and might have appreciably altered the Siddi-British relations on the west coast.

Sambhaji made yet another attempt to capture Underi before he set out to obtain the invincible Janjira fort from the Siddi. The occupation of Underi, no doubt, would have given the Martha navy, peace of mind as it was dangerously close to their own stronghold of Khandari. There would have been no cause of worry of any marine attack on Khandari originating from Underi if it was brought under Maratha flag. This would have allowed the Maratha to concentrate their naval mission on Janjira. To achieve this objective, therefore, Sambhaji made another ‘purposefully considered’ effort in 1681. He is said to have stationed 22 Galvats and a sizeable crew along with 4000 men (who were requisitioned from Raigarh, perhaps with the payment of six month salary in advance), all alert, at river Nagotahna. It is also believed that, in addition to this incentive, every member of the crew was promised a reward of two seers of gold each, after the accomplishment of task. Orme writes that after waiting for a month for fair weather, the Maratha vessels sailed over to Underi and made an assault on it (probably on 18th July, 1681). As per the English records, after a fight for almost four hours, the Marathas were beaten off comprehensively. In this battle, the Marathas casualty was quite high and many of them were taken prisoners too. The failure of this venture, however, could not deter Sambhaji. The Siddi, on the other hand, elated with this success, sailed out of Bombay (where his fleet had been wintering) and once again wrecked havoc on the coastal possessions. The adjoining coast of Koral was looted, inhabitants were captured and a ransom of Rs. 18,000/- was collected form their relatives. The Siddi did not end the hostilities there, and continued to create nuisance for both the Marathas as well as the English. The Bombay factors when pressed the Siddi to refrain from depredations on the
Korlai, or even the hostilities within the harbour (the Siddi's men had virtually occupied Mazagaon during their stay at Bombay), the Siddi denied that he had received any such orders at Surat (i.e., the Mughal governor of Surat), and cruised daily, within and without, on all vessels trading to any part of Sambhaji's country, and even detained one belonging to Bombay, though it possessed the pass purchased from the Siddi. The 'arm-twisting' tactics of the Siddi worked against Bombay which had to (reluctantly) allow the Siddi to stay in Bombay though on the condition that the Siddi would refrain from looting or plundering the Maratha coast. The Siddi, however, did not honour his words, and on the 7th of December, he sent all his Galvats to Korlai where his men burnt the town of Apte. A few days later, the whole fleet went down to Chaul and, 'passing the Portuguese fort at the mouth of the river without offence, ravaged a large tract of the adjacent country, but were not able to assault the town of upper Chaul, belonging to Sambhaji... This was the most recent provocation to Sambhaji which came from the Siddi. All the more Sambhaji was getting more resolute in the pursuit of the one of the most longing objectives of the Maratha Swarajya, namely, the reduction of the Janjira fort and the annihilation of the Siddi. But he needed to be more cautious and tactically sound in military terminology.

Sambhaji wanted to ensure that the Portuguese and the English (especially at Bombay) were distanced from the Siddi in such a manner that the Siddi would find it difficult to get shelter or provisions or any other kind of material help from them. Only under such an eventuality that any military campaign of the Marathas directed against the Siddi could be meaningfully carried out. The English (at Bombay) being nearer to his territory than the Portuguese, Sambhaji had to put pressure on them so as to bring them to compliance in this matter.

For example, the English at Bombay were strictly conveyed that he (Sambhaji) would have no respect for, or take any notice of the English till the Siddi were turned out (of Bombay); and that, if they continued to stay in that port, Sambhaji would be very severe and demand the return of the amount that had already been paid as Bakhshish. As a result, the English at Bombay and Rajapur lived under constant fear of being attacked by Sambhaji's vessels which had been recently fitted at Rajapur. Negotiations with Bombay, at the same, time were carried out by one of the most able and shrewd
Maratha diplomats - Awaji Pandit, regarding the Siddi. Awaji Pandit was given secret instructions to personally watch the Siddi activities there. The letter read, “Sambhaji did not want to break the amicable relations between them in spite of their policy of giving shelter to the Siddi, and other activities against the alliance. If they do not stop the menace of the Siddi henceforth, against which he had to maintain an army of 10 thousand unnecessarily, he would, without hesitation, wage war against Bombay.”25 The Maratha deputation brought the desired result and consequently the English sent a delegation in the form of Robert Thorvin and Capt. Gary, on 20th Dec 1680 to hold talks with the Siddi. These two apparently warned the Siddi to stop plundering and devastating the Maratha coasts or else the English would be compelled to treat the Siddi as an enemy. They also asked him to give an assurance in writing that he will not be a menace to Korlai, Nagothana, Pen, Apte, etc., or to leave Bombay along with his fleet.26 This talk had some effect on the Siddi at Bombay. Moreover, the English at Surat also communicated to Bombay that no Englishmen should serve under Siddi and to fine anyone who disobeyed this command.27 Sambhaji used other coercive methods too to force the English to comply. For example, Sambhaji frequently pressurised them either by way of stopping the food and fuel supply to them from the adjoining Maratha territory, or by capturing their small vessels as prizes for negotiations. But Sambhaji was equally sensible to understand and appreciate that the tactics of putting pressure on the English in order to contain the Siddi mischief would not work actually. Moreover, there was also the risk of alienating the English, which he would have never wanted in view of the Mughal advance to the Deccan.

On the other hand, Sambhaji’s relations with the Portuguese were also not very conducive on account of the Chaul and Anjadiv episode. He understood that the Portuguese were in a comparatively more secure position in the Konkan waters as compared to the English. Hence, he ultimately decided to go ahead against the Siddi and strike at his stronghold of Janjira through a direct military action. As a pre-requisite - though, he tried to ensure that the Europeans were kept aloof of it by way of his military, strategic or even diplomatic activities against them. If the Maratha chronicles are to be believed in this respect, it comes to the fore that Sambhaji was very much physically presents and directing the siege operations against the island fort. The chronicles rather
give an interesting narrative of the episode of the siege of Janjira by Sambhaji. It is alleged that all means were applied to bring the island fortress of Janjira under control. To start with, one Khandoji Pharjand had joined the services of the Siddi with the intention of sabotage inside the fort. He had planned to burn the ammunition dumps in the fort as a preemptive measure before the actual Maratha attack. However, the Siddi got a scent of this conspiracy. He imprisoned and executed the said Maratha, and caused his accomplice to be drowned. Sambhaji, on the other hand, even after receiving the news of this disaster, stuck to his plan of action on the fort.28

The reduction of Janjira was possible, but it required a well conceived naval action, which should include actual landing too. Sambhaji’s plan was tactically sound. He chose to go ahead with a two pronged attack on Janjira – one from the sea side and the other - the complementary one - from the land side. On the land, the town of Danda-Rajpuri was besieged with 20,000 Maratha men along with a vast train of cannon, requisitioned from Raigad. Sambhaji was also accompanied by the fugitive Mughal prince Akbar in this mission.29 The military expedition theoretically commenced by the end of Dec, 1681. The siege of Danda-Rajpuri was pressed with such a determination and vigour that the English factors at Bombay also report about the concentration of the Maratha forces in the following manner, “... He (Sambhaji) has got such army of men with him that has made all provisions extraordinary dear...”30

The town of Danda-Rajpuri was subjected to continuous artillery bombardments for at least a fortnight. Siddi Khairiat, the Commander of the fort of Danda-Rajapuri, could do little against the determined Maratha action. As a result, the fortifications were virtually reduced to rubbles and the custodians of the fort were obliged to take shelter under a small rocky hill. On the other hand, the Maratha fleet had also accumulated in a considerable number to lay siege of the island fort of Janjira. However, it seems that the Siddi had taken preventive counter-measures to neutralize the threat of the Maratha attack on the sea. As a result, the Maratha vessels could not reach anywhere near the landing site of Janjira. But, this did not deter the Maratha navy to open artillery fire on the fort itself. It appears that the Maratha artillery on the coast of Danda-Rajpuri was positioned in such a manner that Janjira fort could also be brought within the range of the Maratha fire. The Persian (Mughal) Source Akhbarat throw some light on this event. In one of the
letters it is mentioned that the Mughal Subedar Siddi Yakut Khan (who was present at Danda-Rajpuri) had reported that ‘Sambhaji had aimed his guns against Janjira fort, and that he had fought with the Killedar, fired the guns and the balls weighing 3.25 seers each fell continuously in the fort. 31

Though the castle of Danda-Rajpuri was demolished, yet the Siddi could not be totally crushed till the time Janjira escaped capture. Janjira provided a safe refuge to the Siddi leadership. With the nearby coast and bays guarded by the Siddi navy, the Siddi leaders could easily manage to slip, via sea, into the safety of the Janjira fort, whenever hard-pressed from the ‘land based powers’. The recent history of the Siddi suggested that from the base of Janjira, they could carry on depredations on the opposite coast, till the time they get a firm-footing on the coast itself. In fact the invincibility of Janjira was more a symbol of the spirit of Siddi resistance. Hence, for Sambhaji, to put an end to the Siddi nuisance, it was necessary to either capture physically - the fort of Janjira, or to destroy it along with the Siddi fleet. But, the presence of the Siddi fleet in the coastal waters was too overwhelming to have allowed the Maratha King to accomplish his job without risking too much. Sambhaji was desperate; hence he approached the Portuguese at Chaul and tried to extract forcible collaboration from them in landing his men to Janjira. To put extra pressure on them he also issued the warning that in case of non-compliance, Chaul would be destroyed and that they would not be entitled for any compensation in such an eventuality. 32 The Portuguese, however, seems to have avoided any altercation and remained non-committal on this issue. On the other hand the English at Bombay had already applied to Surat for the permission to strengthen the fortifications at Bombay as they anticipated a possible Maratha attack in view of Siddi Kasim’s presence there along with his fleet. 33 With no help/cooperation coming from any quarters, the situation was apparently un-conducive for the Marathas. However, since he had already committed a large number of his troops and fleet for the Janjira expedition, he did not want to revert back from the course of action he had opted for. It was more a question of prestige for him. Yet, he reviewed the situation, and came up with an innovative idea of dealing with it. Since it was not possible to transport and subsequently land the Maratha troops to Janjira through sea, a distance of just half a mile or so (the channel leading to the island fortress roughly measured 800 x 30 yards) from the shore, he sought
to raise a bridge to the island with the inventive idea of filling the channel with stones, timber and bags of cotton. Such an ambitious project required, in addition to time, phenomenal efforts and resources. Sambhaji, undaunted, went ahead to realize his dream, but it is said that this plan could not be successfully executed mostly because of the rough sea.

Before Sambhaji could come up with any alternative plan to pursue his military and naval operations against Janjira in a more profitable manner, he received intelligence about the advance of the Mughal forces in the vicinity of Maratha territory. It was a matter of grave concern on two accounts. One, the rebellious (and fugitive) Mughal prince Akbar was extended hospitality by the Marathas; secondly, in view of the commitment of a large body of the Maratha troops to Janjira, the Maratha defenses were weak and exposed to the enemy from the landward side. At the same time, the Mughals, with the aim of the destruction of the Deccan principalities, were moving ahead in huge volumes. **Sambhaji, therefore, could not risk the fate of the Maratha Swarajya for Janjira.** At the same time, he was shrewd enough not to entirely relieve Janjira of the Maratha pressure. He arranged for the continuation of the siege of Janjira with a considerable number of troops and some of his most able commanders like Mai Naik, Govindrao Kate, Daulat Khan, Kavaji Mohammad, Govindji Kanho, Govindji Jadhav, Santaji Pavla and 400 resolute soldiers under the command of Dadaji Prabhu etc. In this way Sambhaji had to withdraw himself from the Janjira expedition which he had personally supervised and directed for some time. After the departure of Sambhaji, the remaining Maratha contingent continued to make attempts to demolish, get near and land at Janjira but fell short of mark and lost many a determined Maratha soldiers in this process. With the advent of monsoon it was no longer viable for the Marathas to continue at the sea hence the expedition was apparently called off during the peak of monsoon. From the English records, it seems that Sambhaji’s fleet at Khanderi were instructed to plunder and attack every vessels (particularly those of the Siddi which were expected to arrive at Bombay for the annual wintering of their fleet) entering the port of Bombay. The Maratha fleet, accordingly inflicted damages even to the English Company’s vessels too, and continued to do so for a considerable period. This highlights the strategic (as well as nuisance) value of Khanderi (as a naval base) with respect to Bombay.
After Sambhaji departed from Danda-Rajpuri, he applied himself to ensure the safety of his frontiers from the Mughal attack. He was almost certain of the chance of a Mughal action from land as well as from the sea as he had dared the Mughal admiral in his stronghold. Hence, he worked in advance to minimize the impact of such a possibility. He did not want the Mughals to take advantage of the British cooperation in any manner. Hence, in order to defuse the British role in case of a Mughal offensive on the Maratha territory, he opened up the channel of negotiations with Bombay. A Maratha delegation led by the Chief-Justice of the Swarajya, Prahlad Niraji, was sent with a proposal to have some sort of 'dual alliance' between the English and the Marathas, directed against the Mughals. In other words, it was purely an attempt to keep the British away from the Mughals/Siddi so that they could not offer any voluntary help to them. At the same time he is said to have come closer to the Arabs for the purpose of a naval alliance directed against the combined enemies of the Marathas and the Arabs. The English at Bombay, however, appeared unperturbed and did not look very keen about the Maratha proposal for dual alliance. One of the reasons of their indifference towards the Marathas might have been the total subordination of Bombay to Surat in policy matters at that time. The Maratha delegation led by Prahlad Niraji, therefore, was kept guessing about the reply of the English till Dec 1682. By that time a strong Mughal fleet consisting of more than a hundred Galvats had already made their way to Bombay with succor for those engaged against the Marathas. This imperial fleet along with the vessels commanded by the Siddi created more problems not only for Sambhaji, but for the English too. It is reported that the return journey of the Maratha delegation, accompanied by one Henry Smith was made precarious by the Siddi as all the passage leading to the sea (from Bombay) was blocked by the Siddi vessels. This incident makes up yet another example of the susceptible position of Bombay.

The Janjira expedition of having failed, Sambhaji had to look for other means and ways to assault the Siddi strongholds. Any immediate undertaking on Janjira fort was ruled out owing to obvious limitations in terms of naval resources. However, the ruin of Underi was still a viable option which Sambhaji wanted to put into effect. We have already noted the manner in which desperate attempts made by Sambhaji to capture Underi in the years 1680 and 1681 respectively.
The Janjira campaign, Sambhaji had tried to 'neutralize' the potential threats from Underi. It is said that the Maratha navy, with an augmented strength (which consisted of 85 Galvats with 5000 crew on board), under the command of Siddi Misri, was strategically deployed in the waters near the upper Konkan. A simultaneous naval attack was to be carried out on the Siddi vessels at Underi, Chaul and Bombay. A similar naval force at Thal was also kept ready with the intent to capture Underi at night. Some of the naval commanders who participated in the siege of Bombay/Underi were - Daulat Khan, Mai Nayak Bhandari, Kavji Mahmud and Govind Kanbo etc. Yet, the entire exercise could not fetch anything significant in view of a strong counter-offensive by the Siddi, who had resorted to heavy artillery firing from Underi. Subsequent to the lifting of the siege of Janjira, the Siddi became free to pursue his hostilities against the Maratha coastal areas. This was being done more vocally now as the Marathas were facing the Mughal onslaught on the other side. In the month of October, there was yet another naval engagement between the Marathas and the Siddi near Bombay. The English records informs us that this naval engagement proved disastrous for the Marathas as they lost one of their valuable commanders Siddi Misri along with some vessels and a few men.

The Maratha-Siddi tussle was renewed when Richard Keigwin assumed the command of the island of Bombay. This was the time when Bombay had openly refused any kind of help to the Siddi. Keigwin, at the same time, had tried to maintain a friendly relation with the Marathas during his short rule over Bombay. This welcome change in the attitude of English administrators at Bombay encouraged the Marathas to try their luck against the Siddi once more. It is reported that late in the year 1685, a person, by the name Balaji, son of Vaidya Pilaji Knhavi, a resident of Chaul, tried to capture Underi on behalf of Sambhaji. But, in this process, he, along with a number of people, was killed. The Siddi retaliated by attacking Chaul. The subsequent gains of the Siddi at Chaul have been reported in the English Records. It is interesting to note that the English at Bombay contemplated that the Siddi, in retaliation to the repeated Maratha designs on Underi and Khanderi, would try to capture the Maratha naval forts of Khanderi, Kulaba and Padmadurg etc. The English records mention that the Siddi had besieged a small fort called Cullane at the mouth of the river Nagaon, which, if captured, Khanderi would be in the danger of falling in his hands. Their apprehension was not totally speculative.
After devastating Chaul, the *Siddi* had almost advanced up to Pen and had demanded some guns from Bombay. The Maratha docks at Kalyan-Bhiwandi could also have been the possible target of the *Siddi* adventure. However, in absence of any definite information it is difficult to confirm the actual intention of the *Siddi* action. The advance of the *Siddi* vessels up to Pen, on the other hand, was sufficient basis to create nervousness in the English camp at Bombay about the safety of Bombay itself. Hence, Bombay recommended Surat to send an envoy to Sambhai at once with a request to entrust the responsibility of the defense of Khanderi temporarily to them. The approval of the Maratha King would also have ensured Bombay additional security, as the island fort of Khanderi stood almost at the entrance to the Bombay harbour. The English sources are silent on the outcome of this mission. However, it seems that Sambhai could not have consented to this proposal of the English. The Marathi chronicles verify that the forts of Padmadurg, Kulaba and Khanderi continued to be firmly held by the Marathas.

On the other hand, the *Siddi*, too, could not vigorously push forward his expedition, and was obliged to raise it very soon in order to meet the superior strategic requirements of the Mughals campaign against Sambhai. The *Siddi* was directed to rush to Jaitapur in pursuit of the rebel Mughal prince Akbar, who was enjoying the hospitality of Sambhai. But the *Siddi* was unable to complete this task as disaster struck him in course of his exploit. At Jaitapur, he had to face a retaliatory action from the Marathas who not only killed 400 of his men, but also succeeded in capturing four of his Galvats. In this melee, it is further reported that *Siddi* Kasim himself escaped narrowly with four wounds.

At that time Sambhai was totally engrossed in a war of survival against the Mughals. The writing was very clear on the wall. Sambhai needed to concentrate and reorganize his energy and resources against the Mughals if he wanted to save the Maratha *Swarajya* from almost certain destruction. However, he could not afford to ignore the threats posed by the *Siddi* from the sea-frontage either. Such a situation needed judicious application of the mental faculty so that the available resources could be utilized in a more tactical manner. Fortunately, the English initiative of friendship (by the new governor of Bombay - Richard Keigwin) at that point of time, proved to be a boon in disguise for the sinking fortunes of the Maratha *Swarajya*. Moreover, the English were
apparently not keeping good terms with the Portuguese too. Under such conditions Bombay sent George Weldon and Robert Graham as their envoy to Raigad for negotiations with Sambhaji. Sambhaji pounced upon the opportunity he had been waiting for quite a long time. The result was a defensive Anglo-Maratha alliance with the agreement of providing protection to the Maratha territory (particularly the coastal areas from the Siddi depredations) by the English in return for food and other necessary supply from the Maratha side. The above-mentioned Anglo-Maratha understanding, thus, appears to be probably the last meaningful attempt of Sambhaji to counter the Siddi challenge. It should not be inferred, however, that the requisite strength of the Maratha navy was not maintained because of the compulsions of the Mughal pressure from land. To tackle the critical situation, Sambhaji seems to have even appointed the deserters from the Siddi navy probably in order to enhance the efficiency of his navy. Reportedly, one the highest ranked naval officer of the Maratha fleet during Sambhaji’s reign (later on) was a Siddi by the name of Siddi Misri. The Maratha navy indeed continued to perform its basic job of securing the sea frontiers of the Swarajya, however, references of intense naval clashes during the concluding years of Sambhaji’s reign does not figure in the contemporary literature.

(B) SAMBHAJI AND THE ENGLISH -

The intensity of understanding between the Marathas and the English were not adequate throughout the Sambhaji’s reign. There was no reason not to foster and consolidate the amicable relations cemented between the two sides in the concluding year of Shivaji’s reign. However, the pressing politico-military compulsions on both the sides kept them pre-occupied and the ground gained in the bilateral relations was soon allowed to slip out of their hands. Sambhaji had inherited an energetic nation which was facing a serious threat of a forceful Mughal invasion on a daily basis. On the other hand, the main dilemma the English were facing in the decades of 1670 and 1680 was to reconcile with the mighty Mughals, the rulers of India, on the one hand, and the nascent spirit of the Maratha nation created by the genius of Shivaji, on the other. The English were put into such an awkward situation, especially on the west coast of India that they had to exercise the option of choosing either the Maratha or the Mughals in the struggle of power
between the two. If it was difficult for the English to maintain a neutral position, it was almost impossible for them to keep both of them in good taste. This does not mean, however, that initiatives such as the exchange of emissaries etc. were not taken by these parties. We come across references of such nature and also correspondences regarding removal/redressal of grievances by both the parties. In fact, there was a brief period when the English exhibited a keen desire to patch up with the Marathas and cement the bond of friendship based on mutual respect. This had happened at the time when Richard Keigwin seized power at Bombay. This was, probably, the smoothest period of the bilateral relations between the Marathas and the English. However, this spell was short lived. In reality, both the sides lived each day as per its merit and allowed their mutual relations to be dictated by a variety of circumstances. Let us have an overview of the relations between the Marathas and English when Sambhaji came to power.

As noted earlier, the first overture was made by the English who wanted to make use of the occasion of the accession of Sambhaji to the Maratha throne. The English factors made a request for the payment of Baksheesh, a customary tradition, but it could not work out in view of Sambhaji’s preoccupation in other matters. The English, however, pursued the matter keeping in mind their larger interests and sent their envoy to Raigad to secure orders for the Bakhshish as Sambhaji had gone to Raigad on 18th June, 1680. Sambhaji, however, was apparently armoyed with the English on the issue of their offering shelter, provisions and ammunitions to the Siddi at Bombay. Hence, he minced no words to openly express his anguish before the English emissary at Raigad. The English at Bombay were fully aware of the crux of the problem. Hence, they tried to take corrective measures in order to show their sincerity towards having a harmonious relation with Sambhaji. Since the management of Bombay was guided by the Company’s administrators at Surat, Bombay represented to Surat that the permission to the Siddi to shelter his fleet at Bombay was the main reason of the Maratha reluctance to come to amicable terms with the English at Bombay. Furthermore, in a goodwill gesture towards the Marathas, the Deputy Governor of Bombay flatly refused to entertain the Siddi when the latter wanted to use Bombay harbour in course of the Maratha-Siddi conflict in 1680. The Deputy Governor’s action could be justified in the light of the fact that it was not the case of annual wintering of the Siddi fleet.
On the other hand, Sambhaji, in order to en-cash the achievements of Shivaji and project the vigour and vitality of the Maratha state, decide to play with the psychology of the English, who were, after all foreigners. He stepped up his naval preparations and apparently mobilized them in the areas around the British coastal possessions. The ploy of Sambhaji seems to have worked indeed. The English Factory Records testify with awe and apprehension the Maratha naval strength in terms of equipped vessels and manpower committed to it. The diplomatic channels were also intelligently exercised by Sambhaji. The letter, referring to the previous treaty of 1680, communicated that ‘Sambhaji did not want to break the amicable relations between them in spite of their policy of giving shelter and other facilities to the Siddi.’ However, it also mentioned specifically that he (Sambhaji) would, without hesitation, wage war against Bombay if they do not stop the menace of the Siddi henceforth, to counter whom he had to maintain an army of 10 thousand unnecessarily.

The Maratha deputation fetched the desired result. The English immediately deputed Robert Thorvin and Capt. Gary, on 20th Dec 1680 to hold talks with the Siddi. The Siddi was apparently warned to desist from plundering and devastating the Maratha coasts or else the English would be compelled to treat him as an enemy. The Siddi was further asked to give an assurance in writing that he will not be a menace to the Maratha territory adjoining Korlai, Nagothana, Pen, Apte, etc. failing which he would be compelled to leave Bombay along with his fleet. What impact did it have on the Siddi is anyone’s guess. The Siddi continued to indulge in plundering activities and even created troubles for Bombay. However, Surat was sensitized to some extent. As a result, in a letter dated 29th Aug 1681, Surat instructed Bombay to take suitable steps against the Siddi, and also to strictly ensure that no Englishmen served under the Siddi.

It is interesting to note that Bombay desperately wanted the Siddi issue to be resolved before it was too late for them to have the Maratha sympathies. In fact, the vulnerability of Bombay Island is amplified in one of the English correspondences of that time. Bombay, which was already threatened because of the Maratha island fortress of Khanderi, was further endangered by Sambhaji’s attempt to fortify the Elephanta Island and another ‘rocky island’ near Bombay. Kamal Gokhale identifies this island as ‘Kulaba Kot’.

Sambhaji’s attempt to bring those off-shore rocks under control could be seen as a
purely tactical exercise to maintain pressure on the English in terms of 'deterrence' capability of the Marathas with respect to Bombay. This exercise brought the desired result anyway, because Bombay, in response, sought permission from Surat to further strengthen its fortifications. It was argued that this was necessary 'in case the Siddi was allowed to winter at Bombay.' On 19th Jan 1682, Bombay wrote, "We will be able to have amity and friendship with Sambhaji only if the Siddi do not stay in Bombay." This was the time when Sambhaji had laid siege on Janjira. It should be remembered that Bombay had to bear the brunt of the frustration of either side because of the inconclusive struggle between the Marathas and the Siddi. Bombay factors alleged that as a result of the Maratha-Siddi conflict, they had 'suffered losses to the tune of Rs. 4560/- within a period of 8 months..." The amount stated above does not seem to be inflated, because for the Siddi, it was his nature, and possibly the means of survival, to loot and plunder anywhere he liked. Whereas, the Marathas often suspected the English and attributed the cause of their failure against the Siddi to the British 'sympathy and clandestine support', in addition to their authorization to the Siddi to winter his fleet in the Bombay harbour. Hence, as reprisal, Bombay was more likely to be punished by the Marathas by way of capture of their small boats, and strangulation of the supply of the essentials to Bombay from the adjoining Maratha territory. It has been evidently mentioned in the Factory Records that the prices of the commodities shot up to 300% in the aftermath of Sambhaji's failure against the Siddi. The Portuguese seems to have added to the miseries of Bombay by preventing the export of food grains from their territory too. Surat, on the other hand, had other 'compulsions and commitments'. The ramifications of the Siddi-Maratha conflict on Bombay could not make any impact on the Company's administrators at Surat. Bombay was obliged to help the Siddi by way of allowing the Siddi men to keep their families and goods at Bombay so that they could be protected from the Maratha reprisal.

In the meanwhile, the first phase of Mughal expedition against Sambhaji was already initiated by Aurangzeb. The Marathas, in return, were trying to create as many inconveniences for the Mughal troops in the Deccan as possible. The Mughal troops were harassed and their supply lines were snapped. In order to maintain a continuous pressure on Sambhaji, the Mughals therefore asked the Portuguese too, to cooperate in the region
between Bombay to Thane. Sambhaji could very well calculate the consequences of such an eventuality. Hence, in order to prevent the English from committing anything of that sort to the Mughals, he dispatched his emissary to the English and proposed a friendly alliance between the English and the Marathas. Prahlad Niraji went to Bombay with necessary directions. At the same time Surat also issued instructions to Bombay to secure a firman for trade in the ports in Chandi and the transfer of the Maratha Subedar at Karwar, who troubled them. But, before anything could materialize between these two, a sizeable Mughal fleet having 110 Galvats and about 12 thousand crew made its way to Bombay with necessary supply and provisions for the Mughal forces pitched against the Marathas in the Deccan. Sambhaji could not tolerate that his efforts to bring the English to his side in his fight against the Mughals had gone waste. As a result, the English shipping was, once again, targeted by the Maratha navy as a retaliatory measure. We have the reference of one English ship, by the name ‘President’, being engaged and attacked by the Maratha vessels early in January 1683. The English records also allege that the Maratha vessels were aided by the Arab fleet in the attack on ‘President’. The English casualty was stated as 11 dead and 35 wounded whereas some Maratha galvats were also reportedly sunk in the English counter-offensive.

In the meanwhile, Sambhaji had also stepped-up hostilities against the Portuguese, who were providing assistance to the Mughal force and harming the interests of the Marathas. The Maratha attempts on Chaul, Anjadiv and Goa have been taken up for discussion in the next segment of this chapter. The English, who were keeping an eye over these activities, were quite terrified with the alarming success of Sambhaji against the Portuguese as he ravaged and succeeded in capturing Portuguese territory near Kalvan, Bassein, and Daman etc. in Dec, 1683. The Bombay factors lost their nerves after the capture of Karanja because it implied that the Maratha forces had not only come near Bombay, but had almost encircled the island. There was no way that Bombay could have defended itself, had the Maratha forces charged on Bombay in sufficient numbers. It was at that critical juncture in the history of Bombay that Richard Keigwin raised the banner of revolt, apparently against ‘the continued negligence of the state of affairs at Bombay’ by the Company authorities. Keigwin not only defended his position by holding Bombay in the name of the King of England, but also, as the Governor of
Bombay. His accession is marked by a near total departure from the earlier policy of the English towards the Marathas. He initiated negotiations with the Marathas so that peace and amity could be ensured. After all, Bombay was in grave danger of being taken away by the Marathas. The accession and rule of Keigwin thus, forms an unusual chapter of the Anglo-Maratha relations, and it would not be unwarranted to devote some pages to the characteristics of this period.

It should be kept in mind that Bombay was subordinate to the Surat factory for all practical purpose till the time the Company decided to shift their headquarters on the west coast from Surat to Bombay. Bombay faced the Marathas on daily basis mainly because of its geographical location (as the island was surrounded by Maratha territory from the land side). On the other hand, Surat sympathised with the Mughals and the Siddi largely because of economic and practical geopolitical considerations. The problems and priorities of Bombay and Surat were, therefore, different. Surat had the authority to take decisions in accordance with the Company's commercial interests. Bombay, in the meanwhile, was gaining prominence in the Company's affairs on the west coast ever since it was taken on lease from the Crown. Because of this, the administrators at Bombay wanted Surat to assimilate the ground realities at Bombay while formulating the policies with respect to the native rulers. The permission granted to the Siddi every year to winter his fleet at Bombay was the core issue which caused irritation to the Marathas as the Siddi was in the habit of carrying out raids on the adjacent Maratha territory using Bombay as base. Such raids were carried-out by the Siddi without the knowledge or approval of the Bombay authorities, which was not at all acceptable to them. The Siddi misdemeanours also invited retaliatory action from the Maratha side on Bombay in many ways as we have noticed in the foregoing discussion. The Bombay authorities, therefore, had kept Surat acquainted with all this. They and had also registered their protest with them on many occasions, but of no avail. Consequently, it led to mutual bickering between Bombay and the Surat authorities. The matter got to such a situation that Bombay started harbouring the thoughts that Surat authorities were neglecting the interest of Bombay. Bombay was, after all, Royal property held on lease by the Company. Hence, in order to draw the attention of the Royalty, Richard Keigwin staged a 'revolt' and held Bombay 'in the name of King'.
Bombay had undergone many changes in the decade of 1670s. At the beginning of the 1680s it was very different from the Bombay of Aungier’s time. We have already noted the attempt of the English to keep the new Maratha ruler appeased after the death of Shivaji. In 1681 Sir John Child succeeded with the title of ‘Captain-General and Admiral of India’. Surat was restored to the rank of a Presidency with a council of eight members, and Mansel Smith and after him Charles Ward served as Deputy Governors of Bombay from 1681 to 1683. Richard Keigwin was appointed Commandant of all the forces in the island, which numbered 505 men including 150 English. The Directors instructed Child to promote the sale of English manufactures in India, to maintain the status quo as to Henry-Kenry (Khanderi and Underi), and not to exceed the civil and military charges of Bombay beyond the maximum of 72,000 Xeraphins per year.\[^{69}\]

Sambhaji, after his failure to subdue the Janjira fortress, occupied the Elephanta Island and had commenced fortification works there. This was enough to alarm the English at Bombay who anticipated a Maratha attack on Bombay after their Janjira fiasco. Charles Ward, hence, geared up his resources to meet the Maratha challenge. However, the advance of the Mughal troops to the Konkan caused distraction to Sambhaji, and instead of belligerence on Bombay, Sambhaji reportedly sent his representatives in order to have an alliance with them against the Mughals. However, no agreement could be reached on this issue.\[^{70}\] Though Bombay was still facing the problems such as empty treasury, unsolicited visits of the Siddi, poor defenses of the island, the challenges posed by the interlopers/pirates – both European and Indian, and the troubles created by the Portuguese.\[^{71}\] The salaries paid to the soldiers at Bombay were inadequate and there was a persistent problem of discipline amongst them. It was reported by the Bombay Governor Sir John child on 30\(^{th}\) Nov 1683 that two of the Company’s servants namely Bowcher and Petit had turned interlopers. The letter reads, “Petit, with 12 Englishmen, took possession of the ship ‘Prosperous’, refuses to deliver it up, and threatens to set fire to it...Petit, we hear, has offered her to the King (Aurangzeb) against Sambhaji Raja, which we must see to prevent, as it may be the cause of great evils, for the Raja will be highly displeased at us.”\[^{72}\] The above mentioned document further supplemented that Bombay did not want to displease Sambhaji at any cost.
Keigwin understood the implications of the Maratha predominance in the area around Bombay; hence, he made attempts to court friendship with Sambhaji. It was indeed a critical moment for Bombay as the very security of Bombay was threatened because of Maratha onslaught against the Portuguese in the adjoining areas. As the Marathas captured the island of Karanja, Bombay was sent reeling under panic. Keigwin, however, was not perturbed. To facilitate an understanding with the Maratha King Sambhaji and to settle the outstanding differences between the Marathas and the English, he rushed Capt. Henry Gary and Lt. Wilkins as envoys to Sambhaji. Apparently, an agreement was signed between them regarding mutual assurance of help. A treaty was negotiated between the two sides. The proposed treaty contained 30 articles regarding Bombay and 10 regarding Karnataka. Some of them relating to trade and commercial activities are as follows: (1) That the merchants, weavers or dyers that shall have any goods belonging to the English, the Subedar and Havaldar shall not molest them, but on the contrary, shall give them all aid and assistance. (2) In buying or selling goods of merchandise from the English by the merchants or inhabitants of my dominion, if any of the inhabitants become debtors to the English, the person shall be carried before the Subedar or any officer who is to do justice, and order the payment of the said debt, having no respect to any person and all the English shall do the same to my people. (3) That, if any vessels or Ghurab or boats shall by wind or storm is cast away in my dominion, it shall not be confiscated. I shall observe the same rule as my father did or according to the agreements that is between me and other Christians.

Some of the articles relating to Bombay were as follows: (1) That, what difference or molestation the English have received before, shall not be called into question nor to be taken ill from them and I shall do the same. It being past and now the peace being concluded, which accordingly shall be convened and if any small matter happened we shall not take notice of it and same are agreed. (2) That, the peace being made between me and the English, if any person shall raise any matter of difference, the same shall be examined, and the peace shall be not broken thereby, but, on the contrary, shall be conserved as it is and so we both agree. (3) That, having continued war between me and the Mughal, by which reason my people enter in and destroy his country the English having factories in some parts thereof, if any of the said factories be plundered or goods
taken away by the people, the Subedar or the Havaldar of the army shall restore them their goods again, and if any of their people or brokers shall be imprisoned, they shall be set at liberty without any molestation. (4) That, whereas several vessels, ghurabs, and boats belonging to me as also to the Mughals using the sea, if any of the Mughals’ vessels be laden by mine and shall find any goods therein belonging to the English with their marks, examining and finding the truth of it, they shall be restored and the same, the English shall do, if any of my people’s goods are taken, in any boats by them and so we agree. (5) There is war between the Portuguese and Dutch and my people shall neither help the English nor them by any means, and the peace between me and the English shall be performed without any difference. (6) Articles from the Fort St. George treaty viz. 3,6,7,9, and 11 accordingly apply to Bombay factors also. (7) That it being proposed by the English that the Subedar, when he will, shall not send ambassadors to Bombay and none to send but myself having any considerable matter I will send and if it be no small matter, the Subedar shall send the person with his letter to Bombay to send me the same. (8) That it being proposed by the English that they having differences with the Siddi and if occasion should happen, I shall assist them, which I promise to do. (9) That it was proposed by the English that their Phattemar should freely pass and re-pass with their letters without any hindrance by the people of the watch or any other, the Phattemars that shall bring or carry their letters, it being under their seal, being examined shall not be hindered."

It seems that Sambhaji not only confirmed his friendship, but also promised to pay the English 12,000 pagodas on account of the losses suffered by them due to Maratha military action at Rajapur and Hubli in the past. He also granted permission for the establishment of English factories at Cuddalore and Thevanapatnam, and allowed them exemption from customs duty in the Carnatic. Sambhaji wanted to play the role of a master-strategist during the course of negotiations as it was entirely on the strength of this understanding that Sambhaji tried his luck against the Siddi once again. Albeit, he failed to achieve anything substantial this time too. On the other hand, Keigwin continued to exhibit his sincerity towards the cause of Bombay-Maratha ‘friendship’. It is illustrated in the Factory Records that in March 1684 Siddi Qasim, along with his fleet (which had arrived back from Goa), desired to proceed to Bombay for the purpose of sheltering of his
fleet. But, he was checked in doing so by the Keigwin administration. He was, instead asked to carry on to Mazagaon. In this way, for the first time in history, the Siddi was not allowed to use the facility of Bombay for the purpose of wintering. To add to Siddi’s agony, the Siddi observed that there was a strict watch on the surrounding wall (on the Bombay fort) all the while he stayed there. Furthermore, he was conveyed by the English in no unambiguous terms that he can hope to get a supply of water only. Siddi Kasim was further incensed when he was not supplied with any provision at Underi. In Sept 1684, therefore, he went to Surat as it would have been impossible for him to stay in Bombay without any help. Keigwin’s initiatives (towards the Marathas) worked wonders and both the sides pursued their activities without any fear or apprehension of each other. On the whole, form the point of view of Anglo-Maratha relations, the short reign of Keigwin (even though illegal from the point of view of the British East India Company’s administrative set-up in India), was a special period for the Maratha King as well as the English. The English seem to have benefited in particular, as they could minimize the Company’s losses by way of peaceful commerce in the Deccan. Commenting on Keigwin’s period in office at Bombay, Anderson has written, “It is an episode of which we are not ashamed. Keigwin’s moderation and shining qualities, his sound internal and external policy, and his honesty of purpose, more than atoned for his unconstitutional conduct.”

Keigwin’s authority came to an end in November 1684. But, the East India Company learnt quite a few important lessons from the entire experience. The Company, which had largely been on the receiving end, as far as its relations with the native powers of India are concerned, immediately embarked upon a new policy with respect to them. As per the changed policy, trade was still to be the sole aim of the Company, but oppressions from the country powers were to be combated by force of arms. The Company still maintained, however, that its object was trade - not territorial aggrandizement. In 1684, the Court of Directors of the Company, under the chairmanship of Sir Joseph Ash, declared that though the aim of the Company was trade and not conquest, it was necessary to have forts for the protection of their stocks. With this end in view, orders were sent to construct a fortified wall round Madras and have a fort in Bengal. The fact remains that the English King James II was a considerable stakeholder
in the Company and was willing to do all he could to advance its interests. Hence, in 1686, the Chairman of the Court of Directors of the Company highlighted the plight of the Company in the following words, "...daily affronts, great indignities, and often slighting... honour of the King and country that now lies bleeding..." Now, with the King as patron, it was not difficult to switch over from a policy of peace and persuasion to that of authority and assertion. It was at the same time that, for the reasons of security, the Company felt the need to shift its headquarters on the western coast from Surat to Bombay. The factors which influenced the decision were not too many. The ongoing Mughal-Maratha war had resulted in severe losses to the Company’s trade for which no compensation was coming from any quarters. Moreover, the Mughal officials were in the habit of making unjustified and exorbitant financial demands on the Company traders for their personal gains. Their factory at Surat was totally encircled in the Mughal territory and did not stand any chance to defend against an eventuality of a Mughal aggression. The precarious position of the Surat Factory was repeatedly exploited by Shivaji in the recent past too. Moreover, the Siddi, under the Mughal patronage, were perennial source of trouble to the English. They often forced the Company administrators at Surat to get their demands fulfilled. On the top of that, Aurangzeb had recently enhanced the customs duty at Surat and Bombay from 2% to 3.5 - 4%.

How accurate was the Company in comprehending the politico-military situations in India, and how far was its decision to redefine its relations with respect to the Indian native powers was justified, is not very difficult to guess. But, the fact remains that in 1685, the Company was still in no position to face the Mughal military might either in the eastern or in western India. It could not afford to initiate a full-fledged military campaign against the native powers on land with only a handful of trained European soldiers on their pay-roll. As a matter of fact their prime requirement was to strengthen their defenses (in India) in such a manner that their position was unassailable. From that point of strength they needed to increase their military capabilities so as to be a match to any of the native powers. The Company, therefore, as a preventive measure, and also in accordance with the directives of the Court of Directors issued in 1684, ordered for raising fortifications in Bengal immediately. The works of fortifications at Bombay had already commenced a few years back in view of the recurrent Maratha threat. However,
the island of Bombay was still vulnerable in many respects and it was being exploited
duly by the Company’s enemies. In the English Factory Records, there are numerous
references of the Portuguese collecting taxes and customs duty at Thane or Karanja on
the essentials meant for Bombay. On the other hand, the Marathas used to append to the
miseries of Bombay by occasionally denying the supply of wood, oil, fuel and food to
Bombay from their territory. Hence, on the western coast, it was prudent for Bombay to
avoid any serious conflict with the Mughals or even the Marathas, till the time ‘Bombay
was made so formidable that the appearance of it may fright the Mughal government and
Sambhaji Raja.’

It is fascinating to note that Bombay administrators were reluctant to allow the
Siddi to winter at Bombay even after it was restored to the Company following the
surrender of Keigwin. The Bombay factors made it known to Surat vide their letter dated
18th July 1685. They also wanted to recover export duty on tobacco from the Siddi
trading at Bombay. It is doubtful whether Bombay’s wishes were granted by Surat in
this respect. Its interaction with the Marathas, however, continued without any
perceptible change from the Keigwin period. There were some disputes regarding the
collection of excise duty on food grain and wood procured by the Company from
Maratha territory. To find an amicable solution to this dispute, the Company’s
administrators at Surat took initiative and sent a representative to the Marathas. The
representative was sent along with two rifles to further oblige the Peshwa who had made
a demand of them previously. It should be noted that on a prior occasion, similar demand
was rejected by the British on some flimsy pretext. The desire of the Company’s
government at Bombay to keep Sambhaji placated can further be guessed by the fact that
in the year 1686, the Company’s Court of Directors in London issued specific
instructions to Surat to establish a friendly relation with Sambhaji, secure permission to
trade in his territory and promptly fulfill the latter’s demand of ‘gun-powder, guns, small
ammunitions, shots etc.’ on annual basis. The documents further suggest that the supply
of these articles to India was ‘doubled’ so as to accommodate the Maratha demand on a
regular basis. Furthermore, as noticed in the earlier section, not only was the Siddi, once
again, denied any help against the Marathas when he was raiding the Maratha territory of
Chaul in 1686, but also, as a gesture of goodwill and trust, Bombay offered its help and
active service to the Sambhaii for the defense of the island fort of Khanderi against a possible Siddi onslaught. Both the sides, however, were keen to utilize the amicable understanding to further their respective goals. Envoys were exchanged regularly. Late in 1687, another agreement of mutual cooperation was signed between them. According to the terms of this settlement, the English agreed to check the activities of the Siddi directed against the Maratha in return for money and food grain. As noted earlier in this chapter, a British naval contingent consisting of 1 large ship and a number of boats and Galvats were subsequently deployed in the creek of Korlai to keep a vigil on the movement of Siddi vessels in the adjoining area. This arrangement could also be seen as the desire of Sambhaii to have a strategic naval alliance with the English, as he was badly in need of time, energy and resources to deal with the determined Mughal onslaught in the Deccan. He, on no account, could have ignored the grave challenge posed on two different fronts, viz. the Mughals army on land and the Siddi on water. Hence, this naval alliance, howsoever temporary, could be seen as a significant achievement of Sambhaii’s military policy.

Once Sambhaii was hard pressed by the encircling Mughal forces in the Deccan, he had very little time to devote on any other affair of the state. The English were repeatedly approached for ammunitions etc. but they could hardly meet the ever growing requirements of the ‘fast sinking’ Maratha Swarajya. The English, however, did not severe their relations with the Marathas. On the other hand, after the death of Sambhaii, especially when Bombay itself was threatened by the Siddi invasion, the English sought to conclude a permanent military cum friendly alliance with the Mughals. We shall take a note of this in another section of this chapter. Let us now examine the main features of Maratha relation with the Portuguese during the reign of Sambhaii.

(C) SAMBHAJI AND THE PORTUGUESE -

The Portuguese were comfortably rooted on the Konkan coast since long. They had maintained their strong-hold over the Konkan waters by making the best use of their organized fleet. However, of late, their unique position in the Konkan waters had been challenged by various contenders in the surroundings. The Dutch and the English had
already made a severe dent in their share. Shivaji had also given them nightmares by constructing a competent flotilla and had held the Maratha flag flying high in the Konkan waters. As noted earlier, his vessels moved at ease and even made prize catches of the Portuguese vessels in the vicinity of the Portuguese bases. The Portuguese were seemingly on the path of decline in the East at the time when Sambhaji inherited the Maratha Swarajya. Still the Portuguese could not be taken lightly as their navy was still strong enough to take on with any of the native contenders on the Konkan coast. Through their naval fleet they exercised control over the coastal waters as well as the various pockets on the Konkan coast they had occupied with the passage of time. Bassein, Chaul and Goa were their nodal centers along with few more fortified locations on the western coast of India through which they managed their ‘Estado da India’.

Sambhaji’s interactions with the Portuguese appear to be more ‘happening’ particularly in the backdrop of the short span of his reign as the Maratha monarch. In fact, soon after succeeding to the throne, Sambhaji had opened up the channel of diplomatic correspondence with the Portuguese (at Goa). He expressed his desire to have a peaceful and friendly relation with them. The Portuguese Viceroy of Goa also reciprocated in a befitting manner by immediately declaring the cessation of all hostilities against the Maratha country. Gifts were sent for the new Maratha King and the Portuguese desire to have a ‘perpetual, firm and reliable peace’ was also conveyed along with. However, very soon cracks appeared in the bilateral relations over a host of issues. It became evident that there was more than mere projection of military/naval might and sovereignty over the coastal waters of the Konkan that brought the Marathas and the Portuguese at loggerheads. These issues ranged from the desire for peaceful and free navigation/passage of the vessels in the Konkan waters to the capture of strategic points (by both the parties) on the coast and elsewhere. It also included, more specifically, the issue of political interference of the Portuguese in the internal affairs of the Marathas by way of providing clandestine support to the recalcitrant elements of the Maratha Swarajya viz. the Desais of Kudal and the Sawant of Wadi etc. The situation was not different from what existed during the reign of Shivaji in any significant manner.

Sambhaji’s policy towards the Portuguese may be portrayed as the one essentially guided by the concern to uphold a respectable position vis-à-vis the Portuguese in the
Deccan as well as in the Konkan waters. Right from the beginning, therefore, Sambhaji did not hesitate to make use of his naval and military might to achieve his objectives. He also understood it evidently that the edifice built by the European Trading Companies on the western coast and elsewhere in India was supported by the strength of their respective navies. The European overseas mercantile enterprise was backed by their specialized naval crafts which were appropriately equipped for long voyages as well as fights on the high seas. But, Sambhaji was also confident of the naval capabilities of the Maratha Swarajya. Hence, as regards the matters pertaining to the projection of the Maratha naval might, he tended to justify, carry on with and even expand the policy as laid down by his illustrious father and predecessor Shivaji. This was bound to bring him in confrontation with the other contenders in the vicinity. We have already had a brief overview of the Maratha encounters and experiences with the Siddi and the English. A few of the crucial events defining the Portuguese-Maratha relations during Sambhaji’s period could be discussed under the following heads.

**The tussle for Anjadiv and action at Chaul:** Nothing could define the naval priorities of Sambhaji much better than his desire to get hold of Anjadiv, a desolate island in the vicinity of Goa. This attempt could well be understood in terms of the need to have more naval bases to support the naval establishment of the Swarajya. The English factors at Karwar report that Sambhaji had already started collecting necessary materials with the intent of fortifying the island.\(^86\) It seems that the Portuguese got inkling about Sambhaji’s designs on Anjadiv. Hence, in a swift movement the Portuguese landed a big contingent of soldiers at the island before Sambhaji could actually go ahead with his plans. The Portuguese action came as a surprise and implied a setback for Sambhaji’s naval enterprise. Sambhaji’s envoy also lodged a protest with the Viceroy of Goa, only to be rebuffed by the reply that the island lay in their jurisdiction.\(^87\) It is interesting to note that the Portuguese quickly commenced fortifications of the island after securing it by way of landing and even completed in a couple of months. The Portuguese, of course, did not want to take any chances. They had before them the examples of the island bases like Khanderi, Underi, Suvarnadurg, etc. They could well comprehend the nuisance value of such bases if they were possessed by ‘unfriendly neighbours’. The Portuguese, therefore,
thought it prudent not only to deny the enemy any access to it but also to make it suitable for their own purpose. Hence, a fortification was erected round the island and a garrison was posted too. It is also believed that the fear of the Portuguese regarding the Maratha usage of the island was compounded by their apprehension that the Marathas might transfer the control of the island to the Arabs. The Portuguese, as such, were uncomfortable at the prospects of the Arab-Maratha friendship. Hence, the very thought of the island going to the Arabs, the most hated of their enemies, would have sent shock waves to Goa. The resultant action was bound to be rapid. In short, the prospects of free navigation for the Portuguese vessels and the concern of security of Goa dominated the concerns of the Portuguese administrators while ordering for the occupation and fortification of Goa.

As regards the Arab-Maratha relation in the period under consideration, a Portuguese letter of the year 1679 highlights the Portuguese anxiety. The extracts of this letter written on 23rd Feb 1679 by one Captain Joseph de Mello Castro are as follows, “I received Shivaji’s letter. The gist of what he says is that we should not molest the Arabs in the river. They are his guests and he is going to support them... There are more threats in the letter...” The contents of this letter do not leave us with any doubt, whatsoever, that the Portuguese occupation and subsequent fortification of the island of Anjadiv was also prompted by their genuine fear of the Arab-Maratha relations which appeared to be on full bloom during those days.

It is interesting to note that while the tussle for the possession of the island of Anjadiv was going on, Sambhaji had persisted with the diplomatic channels with them. As noted elsewhere in our discussion, Sambhaji had informed the Portuguese viceroy of Goa regarding the Maratha factories at Kudal and Bicholim that had started manufacturing gun-powder. He also intimated the Portuguese administration of Goa about the possibilities of Maratha vessels transporting the raw materials like sulphur, saltpeter etc. from Karnataka and Malabar. In view of the above, Sambhaji had requested the Portuguese Viceroy of Goa to ensure free navigation of his vessels in the vicinity of the Portuguese bases. The Viceroy of Goa seemingly agreed to the request of Sambhaji which was conveyed to him through his letter dated 28th July 1682. In the same letter, however, the Viceroy had also lodged his protest on the capture and confiscation of
Portuguese cargo, bound for Cambay, by the Maratha navy near Chaul. The Viceroy, in the end, expressed hope that the Marathas would keep into consideration the Portuguese gesture (of allowing the Maratha vessels to sail unmolested) and reciprocate in the same spirit regarding the captured Portuguese cargo vessel. This letter had the desired effect on the Marathas as the Peshwa Nilkanth Moreshwar immediately ordered for the release of the confiscated cargo with a warning to the concerned Maratha Subedar, under whose jurisdiction the said incident had happened, to refrain from harassing the Portuguese in future.90

The desire to have a hassle-free mutual relation by both the sides was, to a great extent, prompted by naval and other economic considerations. It must be reiterated here that the Europeans in India were still not interested in assuming the role of political powers through territorial conquests. Their activities were largely confined to trading activities and voyages overseas through which they maintained their continued linkages with their respective mother nations. In India, therefore, they were in favour of cordial relations with the native rulers. The Portuguese bases on the western coast of India were in the vicinity of the Mughal and Maratha territories. As the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb had declared war on the Marathas, it was difficult for the Portuguese to select and openly side with either of them. However, they had to make a definite choice, albeit in a clandestine manner, more than often in case of the Mughal-Maratha clash. One such situation occurred right in the beginning of the reign of Sambhaji.

While the Anjadiv episode was going on in 1682, a huge contingent of Mughal troops headed towards the Deccan to reduce Sambhaji. Aurangzeb had also asked for the Portuguese cooperation in all possible ways in this expedition. Though the Portuguese viceroy of Goa could get a formal request for the same only late in 1682, he had, as a preemptive measure, briefed his Captains in north-Konkan to allow the Mughal fleet (from Surat), carrying troops and provisions, to pass through the Portuguese waters at Thane and Bassein.91 This was no small a favour bestowed upon the Mughals, who needed to be quick in their offensives, on the Marathas. The Mughal action against the Marathas was further facilitated by the permission (granted by the Portuguese) to proceed through their territory and even procure grains and other necessities in their territory. By doing so, the Portuguese acted in a prejudiced manner towards the Mughals and, at the
same time, acted against the interests of the Marathas. It should be kept in mind that the fortunes of the Maratha Swarajya rested on the final outcome of this conflict. Sambhaji, therefore, to forestall the Mughal advance through north-Konkan, decided to erect a fort at Parsik - at the entry near Kalyan-Bhiwandi. But the Portuguese not only foiled the Maratha attempts to do so but also wrested Parsik from them and fortified it instead. The Portuguese eagerness to get hold of Parsik and create a fortification of their own should not be seen as mere attempt to bail out the Mughals, but also as a well considered step towards the accomplishment of the bigger goal of securing their own interests by way of occupying all the strategic points essential for free navigation of their vessels in the Indian waters.

A Maratha post at Parsik would have brought discomfort to the Portuguese navigation and other types of movements, hence the Portuguese wrested its control from them. This action served two purposes of the Portuguese. The first, apparently, was the expression of their commitment to the Mughal cause; the second, more importantly, but concealed, was their own naval and strategic considerations. It is interesting to find that, despite Mughal insistence, the Portuguese Viceroy had very politely refused to declare hostilities on the Marathas, citing the existence of amicable relations with the latter at that point of time. This was the Portuguese ‘diplomacy at its best’, as the Portuguese proved a point with the Marathas as well as the Mughals regarding their commitment for peaceful and friendly relations. The Portuguese action, however, was bound to cause frustration in the Maratha camp which was denied the control over two strategically crucial areas in military and naval terms. Sambhaji, therefore, retaliated by plundering, pillaging and burning many a large part of the coastal possession of the Portuguese in the upper Konkan. The anti-Portuguese Maratha actions have been recorded by the British factors too, in their factory records. The Portuguese also inflicted damages on the Maratha shipping and a low intensity naval conflict began between the two. In the meanwhile, the Mughal offensive against the Marathas on land had also started. The Portuguese Viceroy wanted to make the best out of the situation. Going by the multitude of the Mughal troops, he anticipated Maratha defeat at the hands of the Mughals. Hence, on 12th Apr 1683, he wrote to the Mughal emperor highlighting the Portuguese favour granted to the Mughal contingent intended to facilitate the Mughal action against. In the first instance
he reminded Aurangzeb of the free passage given to the Mughal envoy (through the Portuguese territory); in the second he highlighted the arrangements made (by the Portuguese) for the Mughal requirements i.e., procurement of food grain and other essentials; and in the third, he assured Portuguese naval assistance in this campaign as six Portuguese vessels were kept ready to join the Mughal fleet. For all these favours, the Viceroy also demanded, as reward, the transfer of ‘all the territories taken in conquest (by the Mughals from the Marathas) in the Konkan’. The Portuguese dream, however, did not materialize as the Mughals failed to reduce Sambhaji. The Viceroy, therefore, had to send congratulatory message to Sambhaji on his ‘victory’ against the Mughals.

But, Sambhaji could well comprehend the dubious role of the Portuguese in the Mughal-Maratha conflict. He was sore at them. In fact, while he was fighting with the Mughals, he had simultaneously initiated military offensives on the Portuguese and carried them to different parts of the Portuguese territory. In the northern Konkan, Tarapur and the adjoining forts were attacked. The Portuguese Chaul was also attacked and besieged late in 1682. Later on, the Portuguese headquarters of Goa was attacked in 1683. In this way Sambhaji was managing war on two different fronts in a competent manner. As compared to the Mughals, the war against the Portuguese required an altogether different approach in terms of military strategy. This was mainly because of the nature of the Portuguese possessions, most of which were distributed along the coast adjoining the Maratha territory. Hence, against the Portuguese, Sambhaji decided to make use of the Maratha navy as well. In a tactical manner, the Maratha army was to complement the navy of the Swarajya. The Maratha army was pressed into action in an effort to put pressure on the Portuguese possessions on the coast from the land side. The chosen points of the Maratha attack were the naval strongholds of the Portuguese in the vicinity of the Maratha territory. In a simultaneous military action, therefore, the Portuguese possessions on the west coast were attacked by Sambhaji. The Persian Akhbarat dated 20th of June 1682 reports that the Marathas had surrounded the fortress of Chaul at that time. But they were repulsed by the Killedar of the said fort. The main grievance behind the Maratha action on Chaul, it is believed, was caused by the refusal of the Portuguese Viceroy to allot a strip of land to them at Chaul (which could be used as a secure place on the coast by them). Sambhaji’s contention was that since similar
permission was granted to the Siddi in the past, hence it was unfair to deny the ‘friendly’ Marathas a similar privilege. The desire to have yet another holding which could be used as military/naval base on the Konkan sea board could not be disregarded for this action of Sambhaji. Once again his attempts to augment the genuine requirements of military/naval defenses of the Maratha Swarajya were frustrated. Soon he got a pretext and made a daring attempt of laying siege to the Chaul. Chaul was thus besieged so that the Portuguese could be coerced to allow the Marathas to have yet another foothold in Chaul.

While the siege of Chaul was on, the Maratha forces quickly devastated a large part of the Portuguese possessions in the north-Konkan. The Jedhe Chronology notes that Sambhaji had besieged the Firangan (indicative of the area under the Portuguese control). The contemporary Portuguese documents as well as the British Records of early 1683 inform us that the Marathas had ravaged and burnt several villages falling under the Portuguese territory. The Jaipur Akhbarat adds that Sambhaji had captured two of the Portuguese forts by the 8th of Feb 1683. In the month of April 1683, the Portuguese strongholds situated in the area from Daman to Bassein were attacked. Villages were burnt, ships were taken away and even the priests were captured as per the Portuguese records. The Portuguese retaliated too by inflicting damages on the Maratha shipping and also by putting the Maratha envoy under arrest. As these skirmishes were going on, the actual Maratha assault on Chaul took place. The English factors write that the Marathas attacked Chaul on the night falling between the 22nd and 23rd July, 1683 with a force comprising of 2000 horses and 6000 infantry. The English letter was addressed to the East India Company’s headquarters at London. The factors also mentioned that they anticipated the success of the Marathas as the siege was pressed by a considerably large force. This particular Maratha action, intended to physically capture the fort, was conceived keeping in mind the forces actually held on ground. The actions included scaling of the walls of the fort with the help of ladders, and then the actual combat inside the fort. The reference of the Maratha fleet, therefore, does not come at all. This does not mean that the navy was not pressed into service. Considering the point of attack of the Marathas, it could be assumed safely that the navy must have been kept alert for strategic purposes. As the siege continued successfully for more than a
couple of months, there is a possibility that the Maratha vessels were deployed at strategic points in the surroundings of Chaul so that the approach of any enemy vessel to relieve the besieged garrison at Chaul could be checked. It is a matter of speculation, though, as to why there is no reference of any Portuguese vessel (either for the purpose of fighting or otherwise) going near Chaul. The Portuguese navy was not pressed into action even after the Peshwa landed with 7000 men in the month of September 1683, with the intention of reinforcing the besiegers of Chaul. On the contrary, the Maratha action led to the exodus of almost four thousand Portuguese from Chaul to Bombay. It should be kept in mind that, for the Portuguese, the only possible option to make good their escape from Chaul to Bombay was via the sea! Strangely enough, the Portuguese administrators of Bassein and Goa rather requisitioned for the Mughal naval help finding that the situation at Chaul had reached a critical point. It should be remembered here that the Siddi had been allotted some land at Portuguese Chaul in the past; hence, the Siddi came forward for the rescue by reportedly sending 400 men to the aid of the Governor of Chaul. Though this might not have been enough to relieve the besieged Portuguese garrison, the help kept coming in various ways. The contemporary Portuguese documents record that Siddi naval vessels were further pressed into service for the transportation of a Portuguese contingent of Bassein. This was a specially constituted contingent by Manuel Lobo De Sylveria, the General of Bassein, to relieve the garrison of Chaul. The said contingent was transported by Yakut Khan (along with his own soldiers) to Revadanda by sea. Yakut Khan, displaying his tactical acumen, also anchored few of his fighting vessels in the river of Karanja. As a result, Sambhaji's naval fleet, comprising of 76 galvats which were stationed at Nagaon, could not reach Karanja. They were denied entry into the open sea. This masterful act of Yakut Khan which rendered the Maratha naval contingent at Nagaon ineffective, was well conceived. By doing so, not only did he avoid picking up any direct conflict with the Marathas, but also warded off any possibility of a meaningful use of the Maratha vessels based at Nagaon. The limitations of the Maratha navy came to the fore, once again. It was not yet prepared to take up the Mughal challenge. An important aspect of the naval warfare practiced at that time got highlighted, viz. the policy of naval blockade. By mere guarding of the mouths of rivers and denying
access to the sea, the enemy’s fleet could be suffocated. The crucial lesson learnt was: till the time the channels and sea lanes are secured, the navy could not play the desired role.

Alongside the brilliance of Siddi’s naval strategy and limitation of Sambhaji’s navy, the most intriguing part of the entire episode is the inclusive absence of the Portuguese naval action against the Marathas. Let us now examine the factors that constrained the Portuguese navy to keep aloof from the action field in spite of the pressing urgency. A quick sift through the contemporary documents present the picture that the Maratha action was not just rapid but was widespread too. Sambhaji had undertaken simultaneous attacks on various Portuguese possessions. As a result the Portuguese were kept guessing as to what to defend and what to leave. Sambhaji had thus proved his worth as a competent ‘General’ as per the philosophy of the great military thinker of China Sun Tzu who lived in the 6th century B.C. Sun Tzu had said, “The General who knows what to attack and when to attack is better as the enemy would not know what to defend and where to defend…” On the same night when the Maratha troops were landed at Chaul, Sambhaji also attacked the Revadanda fort, the walls of that city and also the Korlai fortress. As the Peshwa was rushed to Chaul with additional contingent in Sept 1683, Sambhaji also threatened the very Portuguese headquarters at Goa. In the meanwhile, the Maratha troops were capturing and ravaging the northern possessions of the Portuguese. A Portuguese letter addressed to the Viceroy reads, “The enemy (Marathas) … has inflicted severe damage in the Bassein district. Kalyan, Sayban (Sion), Mannor were captured by the enemy along with the Aseri fort again. The enemy is fighting to capture Karanja, Mahim and Tarapur forts and has taken possession of the territory from Kasba Bassein to Madrapur… while the islands of Belapur and Sashta are being successfully defended by the Portuguese…” By the month of December 1683, the Marathas had extended their control over Mahim, Quelme (Kelve-Mahim), Duntarah, Sarregaum, Suparah, and seven forts and Sabage town. They landed at Karanja and had kept 200 soldiers in readiness at Nagothana. The Viceroy of Goa was left without clues as regards the method to contain the Maratha onslaught. It is said that the Viceroy of Goa, under such circumstances, arranged for some ships to be kept ready under the command of Gen De Costa, to sail to the north for the defense of Chaul. The Viceroy, however, could not dispatch ships in face of a threat of Maratha invasion on Goa itself.
He had to contain himself with the deployment of a small ship with ammunition to Chaul.109

The Viceroy, at the same time, worked on a different plan to counter the Marathas. In order to relieve Chaul, he needed to divert the attention of the Maratha besiegers from Chaul. He was looking for some more allies who could be used against the Marathas. In fact, he found a few ‘promising’ allies also in the form of the Desais and Sawants of south-Konkan, who were always in the look-out for any opportunity to break-free from the Maratha control. On the assurance of the help of such recalcitrant Maratha elements, the Viceroy of Goa planned to lay siege of the Maratha fort of Phonda (just a couple of miles away from Goa). Commenting on the Portuguese action, A. R. Kulkarni, also suggests that the main cause of the Portuguese audacity at Phonda was the support and collaboration of the Desais with them.110 The bait of the Viceroy worked and Sambhaji had to rush to the rescue of Phonda. The entire incident is described by a one Father Pierre Joseph d’ Orleans. He writes, ‘Dom Francisco de Tavora, the Viceroy of India (Goa), not being able to relieve Chaul, since he was too far off, decided to make a diversion by besieging Phonda, one of Sambhaji’s fortresses, a place only a league from the Goa island. Sambhaji, to whose interest it was to retain a place so close to Goa, raised the siege of Chaul and marched to the relief of Phonda which was already partially destroyed…’111 Manucci, on the other hand, has an interesting story to offer to us regarding the ‘actual’ intent of the Viceroy behind laying siege to Phonda. He writes that Sambhaji had deputed two spies to the Viceroy, who told him about the great treasures in the fort of Phonda, to tempt him to leave Goa with a large army for its conquest.112 Manucci probably wanted to justify the urgency of Sambhaji to attack and capture Goa which was undertaken while the Portuguese siege of Phonda was on. Whatever the considerations of the Viceroy might have been, the outcome of his actions, for sure, was far from encouraging from the Portuguese point of view. Sambhaji indeed showed eagerness in retaining a military base so close to Goa for strategic purpose. He, therefore, supervised the counter-operations at Phonda from Rajapur. He started with quite a big military contingent comprising of 8000 horses and 1500 infantry.113 In the meanwhile, early in November 1683, the Portuguese bombardment on the Phonda fort had commenced.114 The Desai of Kudal was actively assisting the Portuguese. The arrival of
the Maratha reinforcement, however, made the task of the attackers difficult and they had to retreat immediately. In this commotion, it is said that the besiegers left behind their baggage of ammunitions. Fortunately for them, the Portuguese navy, which was stationed in the vicinity to keep an eye over the situation, showed up for rescue and the retreating party sailed in boats to make good their escape. The importance and role of the naval vessels, even in an essentially non-naval conflict, in conveyance and transportation of troops was thus, highlighted once again. The Portuguese troopers gained a timely and safe refuge through water and saved themselves from being captured by the Maratha army.

Elsewhere, the battering of the Portuguese possessions continued. We have noted the success of the Peshwa in the north-Konkan. Karanja was occupied and the occupation of this island by any other power than the one possessing Thane could have adverse impact on the safety and security of Thane itself. The success of the Marathas excited the English factors so much that they started calculating in terms of Sambhaji being in possession of Thane and Salsette held by the Portuguese. The situation indeed became precarious for the Portuguese who could not do much to safeguard their possessions against the determined Maratha onslaught. So relentless and simultaneous was the pressure from the Marathas that the Portuguese Viceroy of Goa who, it is believed, had arranged for some ships under the command of Gen De Costa for the purpose of the defense of Chaul and other Portuguese possessions in the north, could not dispatch the ships to Chaul. He had to be contented with the deployment of a small ship with ammunition to Chaul because the threat of the Maratha invasion was looming large over Goa itself after their encounter at Phonda. Goa, the seat of the Portuguese Viceroy of India, needed to be defended at all costs. The Viceroy's apprehensions were not totally unjustified. After tasting success at Phonda, the Maratha morale was high. They looked determined to make one more serious attempt to 'chase the foreigners out of India'. With this purpose in hand they rushed towards Goa.

**Invasion of Goa:** From the Phonda side Goa was separated by a channel of river; an island called Saint Stephen is located just opposite to the city of Goa. Unfortunately, from the point of view of the Portuguese, the river channel was fordable under normal
circumstances and one could have walked across the channel to reach Goa. The problem (for the Portuguese) was more so because the area comprising of Bhatagram and Phonda, situated on the nearer side of the river, were under the control of the Marathas. Keeping this in view, the Portuguese had constructed a fort at on a hill in St Stephen so that a vigilant watch could be kept on this crossing. Watch-towers were also built on the banks of the river on the other side to keep the movements through this channel under proper observation. This was a good ploy to prevent the enemy’s incursion from this side. But Sambhaji succeeded in deceiving the vigilant Portuguese and managed to land some Marathas on the island of St. Stephen on the night of 24th of Nov 1683.\textsuperscript{117} The timing was perfect on two accounts. First, the river channel was nearly dried (hence easily fordable); second, the darkness of the night was used to carry out the surprise operation. The surprise was followed up by speedy action to take control of the island. By the next morning the Portuguese defenders, including the Viceroy of Goa, came out to regain the control of St Stephen. The Marathas were more determined and could manage to thwart the counter-offensive launched by the Portuguese Viceroy in person. It is reported that the Marathas captured the horses of the Portuguese as the latter fled using boats. The boats, once again, proved handy for the Portuguese as they could save themselves from the pursuing Marathas. Though, the Maratha heroics of St. Stephen do not find mention in any of the contemporary documents, it seems probable that this island was occupied as a prelude to the invasion of Goa. As noted above, the territories beyond the island were under the Maratha occupation. The success at Phonda and Bilochnim had brought the Marathas nearer to the Portuguese headquarters at Goa. Sambhaji’s daring attempt on Goa (immediately afterwards) has been recorded by the Portuguese and the Marathas alike. As per the records, Sambhaji led the Maratha attempt on Goa. The story (of Sambhaji’s urgency to capture Goa) goes like this: As Sambhaji wanted to attack Goa, he pursued the fleeing Portuguese. The tide in the river rose at that hour. Taking advantage of the tide, the Portuguese broke the bunds of the rice fields on the outskirts of Goa town. This inundated the fields with river water, thus in effect, increasing the width of the river. It is believed that Sambhaji was prevented from attacking Goa by the rising tide as the horse he was riding, was being forced down by the current in the stream of the high tide. Seeing this, Khandoji Ballal jumped into water, without any thought of his safety and
rescued his Master. He was generously rewarded by Sambhaji for this brave deed. Chitnis has also given a faint reference of this event.

The story narrated above gives us an insight into yet another vital aspect of the maritime and naval activities/warfare in the 17th century. The lesson is about the effect of the tidal occurrences on the creeks, bays and coast etc. Sambhaji, in the spurt of the moment (as his men could capture St Stephen), had failed to take into consideration the natural phenomenon of the tidal occurrences. He carried on with his military adventure totally unmindful of the rising tide thereby risking his own life. This was, at least, not expected from a ruler commanding an extended coastline. It should be kept in mind that he had inherited a reasonably effective naval establishment which was well versed to tactically utilize the tidal effects as well as the shallow surroundings of the coast for its operational maneuvers. Anyway, the end result was that Goa was saved from a direct Maratha invasion. The 'intervention of the tide' further granted the Portuguese the much needed time to arrange for the re-strengthening of the defenses of Goa. This included the strategic deployment of the naval vessels too, in the surroundings of Goa, as the Portuguese could no longer afford taking any further risk against the Marathas. It is believed that the Portuguese had positioned their fleet at the mouth of the Mandovi river and near the forts of Agwad, Chapora and Murgaon so that the entry of any Maratha naval vessels to Goa could be made impossible. The Portuguese succeeded in their plan as there was not reported attempt of the Maratha vessels forcing their way to Goa. Moreover, the deployment of troops across the fordable channel further restricted the Marathas to make another daring attempt through that way. The only way to reach Goa was by fording the river channel but that also seemed a remote possibility in view of the enhanced concentration of the Portuguese troops across the channel on the mainland. Thus, Goa was secure from the Maratha aggression. The situation of Goa at that point of time, in the words of the French factor Francis Martin, was summed up as under, "The condition of the Portuguese in Goa had become very precarious. The Viceroy was defending the territory to the best of his capacity. He was trying to prevent the enemy from entering the island of Goa. The Portuguese were awaiting help from the Mughals and were fully dependent on the same."
The safety of Goa was vital for the very survival of the Portuguese Estado in India. The difficulty the Portuguese had faced while countering a surprise attack from the Maratha on Goa was too obvious to be ignored. It had exposed the loopholes in the Portuguese defenses of Goa when the enemy was too near to it. The Viceroy too understood this handicap. Hence, he did not want to take any further chance. We have the reference of the Mughal vessels approaching Goa, apparently loaded with supplies - meant for the Mughal troops fighting the Marathas in the lower Deccan. The convoy was being commanded by Admiral Siddi. As it approached near Goa and sought permission to sail through the Mandovi river (skirting the city of Goa), the Viceroy refused to do so after a careful consideration. As the sailing through Mandovi was likely to endanger the safety of Goa city, the Mughal armada was permitted to pass through Kaysuv instead. In this way, it is evident that the Viceroy did not want to risk the safety of Goa in the wake of the recent happenings. After all, the Mughals were also a ‘potential enemy’ even though the two had acted in unison against the Marathas.

In the meanwhile Sambhaji, who had been holding ‘Kumbhar Juve’ belonging to the Firangis, decided to retreat in haste after the failure of the Goa adventure. He could anticipate that the Maratha troops could be cornered by the Mughal army and the Portuguese fleet from the surroundings if they stayed there for long. Moreover, Sambhaji knew that the Mughal fleet was also approaching Goa with all the provisions for the Mughal troops fighting against the Marathas in the vicinity of Goa. Hence, he retreated very swiftly and skilfully to Raigad to avoid the Maratha forces being trapped by two enemies simultaneously. In this way, the arrival of the Mughals also possibly saved Goa from another Maratha attack. It is interesting to note that the Mughal troops were also recalled by Aurangzeb soon after. The condition was hence ripe for the Marathas and the Portuguese to negotiate peace. Interestingly, Nicolo Manucci, the Italian adventurer who participated in the Deccan campaign of Aurangzeb, also accompanied the Portuguese emissary to the Maratha King and, admittedly, had a chance to meet Sambhaji in person.
(D) POST - SAMBHAIJI PERIOD

The Siddi Attack on Bombay: The western coast of India witnessed naval and supplementary actions for the possession and re-distribution of Konkan in the months following the capture and execution of Sambhaji by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. A sanad was issued to the Siddi of Janjira which granted him even those territories which he had held previous to the rise of Shivaji. To realize his control over them, the Siddi took the districts of Suvarnadurg and Anjanwel, and in 1689, the forts of Rajpuri and Raigad. But, before the Siddi could extend his hold over the Maratha territory, he was detailed for an important naval assignment by the Mughal emperor. He was asked to lead the Mughal fleet to carry out an offensive on Bombay. Bombay, it should be remembered, was recently upgraded as the headquarters of the British East India Company in India. Though there were many reasons to justify the Siddi led Mughal raid on Bombay, it seems that the Mughal emperor was encouraged by to undertake such an expedition immediately as an extension of his ‘final’ success against the Marathas. As the role played by the British Company in the Mughal-Maratha conflict was never viewed beyond suspicion by both the sides, Aurangzeb took this opportunity to ‘teach a lesson’ to the British Company. The Mughal emperor also needed to ‘settle accounts’ with the British Company in view of the latter’s misadventures against the Mughals on the Eastern Coast. Hence, the Siddi admiral was instructed to blockade the port of Bombay and attack it simultaneously. The Siddi fleet moved swiftly from Danda Rajapuri and Surat to take position. The British at Surat, however, had an inkling of such an act of hostility from the Mughals. Hence, they were on alert. It is said that the British valuables and the Surat office had been, as a precautionary measure, ‘transferred’ to Swally marine in anticipation of any misdemeanor from the Mughals. In fact, when the Mughal offensive was launched, the Company’s governor ran his good office from Swally itself. The British East India Company looked equally resolved to give a ‘befitting reply’ to the Mughal military adventure, if any, on Bombay. The Bombay Governor John Child promptly issued a warning to the Siddi that if he moved his fleet from Danda-Rajapuri, on the other side of the harbour, it would be attacked. Child had made his intent known to the Company’s headquarters at England in the following manner, “better to fight it out than purchase a peace that will not only be dishonourable and base and mean, but bring
with it great evils and such continual uncertainty to your trade that it may be insupportable." However, as the subsequent events turned up for the English Company, it seems that the Sir John Child did not prove to be as selective and meticulous with his actions as he was with his words, even though he had committed almost the entire resources at the disposal of Bombay. If, on the one hand, Child was too confident of the Company's vessels and its naval strength as compared to his Indian adversary, on the other, he was also totally unmindful of the fact that the very defenses of Bombay still needed a great deal of up-gradation. All the entry points (through sea as well as land) to Bombay needed to be completely guarded if at all Bombay needed to defend itself from any external aggression. To be fair, except for the fort of Bombay, there was nothing on Bombay, including its shores, which could be considered as defendable. The Siddi displayed better tactical disposition. He applied the principle of ‘Concentration of Force’ and heavily outnumbered the Bombay garrison and militia by landing thousands of his men in Bombay. These men were brought in numerous native vessels, big and small, and so were landed at numerous points on the island of Bombay. As a result Sion, Mahim and other outlying points of Bombay were easily captured by the Siddi men. The island of Bombay was virtually surrounded. To make the matters worse, the garrison suffered from the action of deserters, who proved to be “more formidable foes to the defenders than 100 black enemies”, since they gave their new associates the advantage of their military skill, “teaching them the art of mining and sheltering themselves in trenches and basket works”, with such effect, says Ovington, that they were “able in time to bombard the fort with massive stones instead of iron balls, while our shots from thence was scarce able to annoy them.” The Mughal adventure did not succeed totally; the hardships suffered by the British during this period at Bombay were no less. Once again, the navy/naval ships saved the day for the Company and they continued with their normal activities on the western coast after a short while.

The above mentioned incidents once again brought to the fore a few crucial points with respect to the naval warfare which could be summarized as follows: For the British, the first lesson was that is was still impossible for them in India to survive without a good holding on the coastal territory, at least; the second - mere possession of a well equipped navy was not enough a criterion to hold their ground against a strong, land based force –
that too, with a workable flotilla. On the other hand, for the Mughals, it could be seen as a reminder that till they improve their means to effectively tackle the British/Europeans on the water, it was difficult to coerce them thoroughly. In any case, the Mughals, or rather, none of the Indian rulers with coastal possessions, would have liked to chase out the ‘merchant/trading bodies’ of Europe from the Indian waters in view of the lucrative commerce they brought along.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that Aurangzeb did not restrict his offensives against the British alone. The Mughal emperor, as we notice, was keen to take advantage of the momentum of his ‘victorious’ forces and establish the Mughal control as far as possible on the Konkan sea-board. The Portuguese, hence, were the next to be targeted. It was not difficult for Aurangzeb to find satisfactory reasons for initiating a military action against them. The Siddi, thus, once again got an opportunity to re-establish and extend his hold over the Konkan; this time - at the expense of the Portuguese. Bruce mentions that the Siddi attacked Bassein and threatened Salsette in the year 1692, and for the next couple of years continued to ravage the Portuguese territories at ease. The most ‘coherent’ pretext for the Mughal Action on the Portuguese, interestingly, was the Portuguese sympathy and their ‘secret helps’ to the newly acclaimed Maratha King Rajaram. It is believed that as the Mughal forces tightened their grip over the Maratha territory after fall of Sambhaji, Rajaram’s family was sent by Ramchandrapant Amatya by sea from Rajapur to Honaver and then by land across the Carnatic to Jinjee. The latter was allegedly allowed (as a fugitive Maratha prince) by the Portuguese to pass through their territory, enabling him to make good his escape from the clutches of the Mughals. This had happened despite the Mughal letter written to the Viceroy of Goa as early as May 1689 requesting the latter to be vigilant regarding the escape of Rajaram through his territory. The Viceroy of Goa reportedly sent a letter of compliance to the Mughal official Nawab Bahadur Khan on 12th of May 1689, stating that he had ‘immediately sent an order to Desai Khem Sawant’ in this regard. That Aurangzeb anticipated the possibility of the fleeing Maratha prince using the sea route to escape from the Deccan is also substantiated by the fact that he had communicated the same to the Portuguese authorities at Goa. A Portuguese correspondence dated 3rd Sept 1689 reads, ‘...you (the Mughal authority) ask me to post vigil on land as well as on sea...’
to catch Ramo Raze (Rajaram) who wants to flee to Karnataka with a treasure which is also to be captured... On this I had posted the necessary vigil...so that he might not have a chance to escape..."\(^{131}\)

In the meanwhile, the Maratha power had found another base at Jinji, on the eastern coast. Rajaram, the younger son of Shivaji and the brother of Sambhaji, had been accepted as the new Maratha Monarch by the Maratha nobility\(^ {132}\) after the execution of Sambhaji at the hands of Aurangzeb. Though the Maratha politics remained largely subdued as compared to the activities it had witnessed in the preceding three decades, the Maratha movement, nonetheless, remained alive for its ‘ever-cherished cause’ of Swarajya. A large portion of the Maratha coastal and inland possessions was occupied by the Mughals.\(^ {133}\) The new Maratha monarch Rajaram, though practically deprived of the coastal belongings now, did not waste time to set his house in order. He appealed to the Portuguese to continue with the good relations with the Maratha Kingdom as it had existed during the time of his predecessors. This justification of this appeal could be understood in the background of the Portuguese practice of forcing the Maratha navigators in the Konkan waters to purchase the Portuguese Cartaz (supplementing the Portuguese claim over the sovereignty of the sea) after the fall of Raigad in 1689. Though Khobrekar has contested that during the time of Shivaji, the Portuguese never succeeded in forcing the Maratha ships to carry a Cartaz issued by them.\(^ {134}\)

The Portuguese, however, pretended to be friendly with both the Mughals as well as the Marathas. One of the Viceroy’s letters addressed to the emperor of Portugal gives us an insight of the shrewd Portuguese diplomacy during this time. It reads, “...of late he (Sambhaji) had been repeating this request (to renew the alliance of peace and friendship which this state formerly maintained with Shivaji). We have responded to it with the same demonstration of friendship (as we did in the case of the Mughals) in such a manner and with so great a care that both the vassals of the Mughal and those of Rajaram believe that this government is inclined to the interest of either...”\(^ {135}\) As a result, many of the officials of Rajaram, for fear of Mughal attack on the Maratha territory, had kept their families in the Portuguese territory.\(^ {136}\) It is a different matter altogether that Portuguese, at times, were complaining about the piratical and other hostile activities committed by the ‘Shivajees’. A Portuguese letter from the governor of Goa addressed to the newly
appointed Maratha Subedar of Konkan expressed that 'though Ramchandra Pandit, the Maratha regent, professed nothing but friendship for the Portuguese, he permitted his Galvats to infest their territorial water and make prizes of their trading crafts'. But, on the whole, the relations remained smooth.

II

REVIVAL OF FORTUNES UNDER THE SARKHEL: At the time when the Marathas, under the leadership of Rajaram, were trying to regain their foothold on the mainland Deccan, elsewhere in the Konkan, Kanhoji Angre worked meticulously as the Maratha flag bearer on the Konkan coast and its adjoining waters. He had, with him, some sea-worthy vessels with the help of which he was trying to project his 'legal' authority in the matters of coastal navigation. He bluntly refused to acknowledge the Portuguese claims over the sea. At the same time he had started compelling the ships to buy his pass\(^\text{138}\) failing which they were deemed 'legitimate prizes' and sent under escort to one of his ports.

To sketch a portrait of this illustrious 'Maratha Admiral' would be beyond the scope of this study. However, to have an account of the strategy and tactics displayed by him during his naval encounters with his adversaries would more than justify our purpose. To start with, suffice is to put on record that Kanhoji Angre (many times referred to as Conajee Angria in the contemporary European records) had the kind of upbringing required to excel in his profession. His father Tukoji Sankoji Sankpal\(^\text{139}\) was appointed at the post of Sarnaubat i.e., the Deputy Commander of Suvarnadurg,\(^\text{140}\) one of the coastal forts of the Maratha Swarajya. In the words of Malgaonkar, "Thus was established a tradition which bound future generations of Angres to ship and to the sea."\(^\text{141}\) It is said that Kanhoji Angre had natural inclination towards the seafaring and military activities and that there is a likelihood of his participation as a naval fighter in the Maratha offensive against the Siddi of Injira during the reign of Sambhaji.\(^\text{142}\) Kanhoji had distinguished himself as a committed warrior at a critical situation during the time when he was on the strength of the garrison on the Suvarnadurg fort which was
commanded by one Achaloji Mohite. It so happened that the Siddi of Janjira, in order to wrest Suvarnadurg from the Marathas, made a strong attack on it, duly supported by his naval fleet. It is said that Achaloji Mohite had fled away and most of the Maratha garrison, including Kanhoji Angre, who had gone out to fight, were captured by the Siddi men. Kanhoji, however, made good his escape, and returned back to the fort only to lead the remaining garrison to frustrate the Siddi's attempt on Suvarnadurg. It seems certain that this feat of Kanhoji was well in his mind when Rajaram, the new Maratha monarch, made the grant of the Subah of Konkan to Kanhoji Angre (probably by the year 1696). The robe along with title was also conferred upon him accordingly. In the newly constituted council of ministers, Kanhoji Angre's name surfaced as the Deputy to the Maratha Sarkhel (Admiral) Siddhoji Gujjar. The later, as the head of the Maratha naval establishment, was given the overall responsibility of defending the coast from both land and sea. Interestingly, however, there was not one, but two deputies detailed to assist the Maratha Sarkhel; Bhawanji Mohite was the second incumbent to the post of the deputy. The spheres of influence of the two respective deputies were duly earmarked. While Kanhoji got the command of north Konkan along with the remnants of the Maratha fleet at Suvarnadurg and Vijaydurg, the command of south Konkan, with the formidable sea-fortress of Sindhudurg, was vested in Bhawanji Mohite. Subsequently, the Kulaba province, which was held by one Bhawanji Gujjar Maratha, was also transferred to Kanhoji Angre to enable him to discharge his duties effectively. Thus, Kanhoji got, by 'royal command' an independent charge of a hundred-and-fifty miles of wide open coastline. However, as far as the fleet is concerned, he must not have inherited more than eight or ten ships including Galvats and/or lesser vessel. The ground reality at the time of Kanhoji Angre's commissioning in the Maratha nobility has been aptly summarized by Malgaonkar in the following manner, "His (Kanhoji Angre's) fighting force was this collection of battered old ships and the ragged garrison of half-a-dozen coastal forts. Some 3000 men had to be fed regularly, even if they could not be paid regularly. By royal command too, the money for all this was supposed to come from the land dependent on the numerous island forts of the Marathas. In actual fact, of course, these forts were either in Mughal hands or dominated by their forces. The morale of his
men – if commanders thought in terms of morale in those days – must have indeed touched bottom.”

Kanhoji Angre set out on his task and applied himself in his resolve to exercise sovereignty over the sea. He made it clear that it was mandatory for everyone plying in the vicinity of his sphere of activity to purchase his pass lest they should be taken as prize by his vessels. This was the only way to earn revenue as well as to compel the others to accept his authority over the matters of navigation in the Konkan waters. He knew that it would not be easy for him to do so, but he took the chance and largely succeeded too. In this process, though, he made more enemies than friends but he was sure of his capabilities. As has been put by S. N. Sen, ‘…his prowess was soon rewarded with rich spoils and his neighbours copiously, though involuntarily, contributed to his coffers…but the very process involved hostilities with his neighbours among whom the English and the Portuguese were the most prosperous and powerful. The Siddi of Janjira was the avowed enemy of his King and therefore his legitimate prey’. Kanhoji Angre was well aware of what was happening on the western coast. He had a fair understanding of the comparative strength and weaknesses of the various players in the region. In particular, the weakness/helplessness of the Mughal vessels on the high seas was not unknown to anyone. The way Abdul Gaffour’s ship, and, later on, the Royal Ship ‘Ganj-i-Sawai’ had been made prizes of by smaller/insignificant (in terms of volume, size or strength) European vessels - amply demonstrated the advantages of the European technology. Kanhoji was cautious of his limitations, the biggest being the lack of effective firepower, hence he tried to avoid any confrontations with the English or even the Portuguese initially. We do not have any incidences of his fierce engagement with the Siddi’s navy either in the initial phase, that is, till the time he was confident of the strength of his fleet. He had the natural advantage of being familiar with the numerous bays and coves, in addition to the support provided by the guns of the coastal forts. But those advantages could, at best, be utilized for defensive purposes with the kind of vessels he had inherited from his predecessors. Hence, Kanhoji Angre was cautious while choosing his task on the sea. Malgaonkar describes the early maritime activities of Kanhoji Angre in the Konkan waters as that of ‘coastal policing’ (i.e., pouncing upon ships that did not carry his pass and forcing them to pay ransom) rather than purely naval activities. With the money he
obtained through such activities, he not only augmented his fleet but also improved his
land force. He wrested some more forts on the coast so that his coastal possessions could
no longer be vulnerable in case of an attack originating from the land side. A significant
step was taken in the year 1695-96 when he shifted his headquarters from Suvarnadurg to
Kulaba for all practical purposes. The defenses of Kulaba were accordingly strengthened
in a befitting manner. This implied that he was now confident of his power and
standing in the affairs of the Konkan, because being in Kulaba not only meant being too
close to the English navy, but also implied coming dangerously close to the arch-rivals,
the Siddi of Janjira. The shifting was done with calculated strategic considerations too.
Sen comments thus, “With the headquarters at Kulaba, Kanhoji was in the happy position
to command and control the high road of sea-borne trade that literally passed by his door.
With Bombay, Bassein and Surat on the north, and Chaul, Janjira and Goa on the south,
the Kulaba fleet could keep a vigilant eye on all vessels sailing from the north to the
south and vice-versa while the intermediate ports offered safe asylums in case of
emergency and danger.”

While Kanhoji Angre was in the midst of all that was happening in the coastal
waters of Konkan, Bhawanji Mohite, the officer-in-charge of the southern Konkan,
appearently remained dormant at his headquarters Sindhudurg. In the meanwhile the
Marathas, under the leadership of Rajaram, were fighting hard and gradually regaining
the lost ground in the Deccan. Rajaram made a comeback to the Deccan in 1698. A
reshuffle in his cabinet was eagerly awaited in view of the death of Siddhoji Gujjar, the
Maratha Sarkhel. Kanhoji was sure to be promoted to the coveted post of the Maratha
Admiral. His expectations were not belied as he was elevated to the post of Sarkhel but
Bhawanji Mohite was also allowed to retain the independent charge of the south
Konkan. Hence, it is safe to presume that Kanhoji was appointed to the number one
position of the Maratha navy with the title of Sarkhel in the year 1698. Now he was
equipped with the ‘legitimate’ authority and was more confident than ever in dealing with
his opponents.

The new Sarkhel looked keen on recovering all the territories occupied by the
Siddi on the Konkan coast in the interregnum following the fall of Sambhaji and shifting
of the base of the Maratha Swarajya to Jinji under Rajaram. Hence the stage for a
showdown with the Siddi was duly set. On the other hand, the Siddi of Janjira also felt uncomfortable with the very thought of the enemy operating from so near a base. He could not come to terms with the idea that his ‘area’ was being encroached upon. Kulaba was too close to Janjira. Hence, the Siddi of Janjira, Yakoot Khan, led a naval expedition on Kulaba. His strategy seemed to be simple. It was to force a naval blockade around Kulaba, starve the garrison and compel them to submit. The timing was perfect, as the action was undertaken once the rains were over. The English Company’s records from Bombay provide us with the necessary details of the Siddi action. The English factors record, “The Siddi lies before Caulaby (Kulaba) and Cundry (Khanderi), though hath grand force yet Marathas find a way to gallbats (Galvats) from one place to another…” For, the Siddi, however, the things were better said than done. Kanhoji Angre proved to be a better strategist in this encounter with the Siddi on the following accounts:

1. He had done his basics by stocking the fort with the necessary provisions to hold on its own for a season (Similar strategy was adopted by the Siddi with respect to their island fort of Janjira);
2. He did not commit his vessels to repulse the Siddi (and neither did Siddi dare to come closer to the wall of the fort which had guns fitted for its defense).
3. Kanhoji used to ply smaller vessels in order to get the necessities, as and when required (This practice was similar to the one adopted by Shivaji when Khanderi was besieged by the Siddi and the English.)

While Kanhoji was resisting the Siddi pressure at Kulaba, the Mughals had renewed their pressure on the Marathas. As a result, the Marathas were also fighting near Satara with the Mughals. Unfortunately, during the period of crisis, Rajaram died of pneumonia in March, 1700. Once again, the entire Maratha machinery was jeopardized. But, Tarabai, the widow of Rajaram emerged strong at that hour of crisis. She proclaimed her infant son Shivaji as the new ruler and declared herself as the ‘Queen Regent’. Kanhoji Angre did not waste a moment in acknowledging the authority of queen Tarabai and was reconfirmed in his position. Tarabai, the regent, not only faced the mounting military pressure from the Mughals, but also had to attend to many internal issues; hence Kanhoji was virtually free to take his own course of action in the Konkan waters, albeit - in the name of the Maratha sovereign. His cherished desire of getting the independent charge of
Maratha naval establishment was realised finally in the year 1707 when Tarbai 'promoted' him to the overall command of the fleet.\textsuperscript{160} It should be remembered that this was the time when Shahuji, the son of Sambhaji, on being released from the Mughal captivity after the death of Aurangzeb, was staking his claim on the Maratha throne.

In the years following the death of Rajaram, nothing special happened in terms of naval conflicts which could give a definite idea regarding the strategy and tactics of Kanhoji Angre in the naval warfare. This does not mean that these years passed off quietly. The struggle with the Siddi continued both on land as well as on the sea. In fact, in the year 1701, Tarabai had committed a 20 thousand strong detachment of Maratha fighters under Ramchandra Pant to attack the Siddi territory. In this engagement the Portuguese seems to have sympathized with the Siddi.\textsuperscript{161} The Siddi retaliated by laying siege of the fort of Kulaba, once again, and carried off many Maratha vessels from there. The English Records mention that, in terms of men and money, the Siddi did not fare well in this endeavour too. The Siddi had requested the English for the services of an English surgeon to attend to the wounded men during this engagement.\textsuperscript{162} In the year 1702, a Calicut boat with six Englishmen was seized by Kanhoji's patrolling boats. Though, the English Company deputed some officials to secure the release of the Englishmen, it had no effect on Kanhoji.\textsuperscript{163} In 1703, Kanhoji seized a Dutch warship of thirty guns. The English were apparently, furious about it.\textsuperscript{164} The English, in return, captured a native craft with cargo coming from Aden. The reason for the confinement of the said ship was because of its 'Maratha connection'. The ship was registered at Rajapur and was carrying a pass (dastak) issued by Kanhoji Angre.\textsuperscript{165} Kanhoji did not retaliate, but chose to keep quiet instead, for the time being. The reasons were not too difficult to trace. He was well aware of the strength (in terms of the seaworthiness and fire power) of the English or the European armed ships. He also understood that the only manner in which his vessels could get even with the bigger European ships was by way of having a hand to hand combat on the enemy's ship-deck. To do so, landing/boarding of the bigger ships, which were more fast and maneuverable (most of the times) in the blue water, was a prerequisite. In this 'unequal' show of strength, obviously it was going to be the qualities of leadership - more precisely the handling of the ships and the crew by Kanhoji, which was
going to make the day for him. And for that he needed to be sure that he made the best use of the familiarity with the geographical surroundings in his tactical dispositions.

Well aware of his own limitations, Kanhoji had kept himself preoccupied preparing and strengthening his naval establishment in such a manner so as to effectively meet the ‘superior’ challenge originating from the Europeans. At the same time, he was gradually getting used to putting his head over his heart while dealing with his adversaries. He had learnt the lesson of dealing with different situations as per its merits. He had been successfully putting to test - his tactical nuances to deal with critical situations. The best thing he did in the opening years of the 18th century was never to get carried away by the enemy’s provocations. He tried to get along with the European powers without offending them in any noticeable way. For example, with the Portuguese he was at peace at the beginning. He wanted a market for his prizes and the Portuguese government was prepared to accommodate him while he found suitable customers in the merchants of Chaul, as appears from a letter of the Portuguese Viceroy dated the 8th Nov, 1703.\textsuperscript{166} However, it seems that the peaceful relations between the two existed no longer by the time Kanhoji had assumed the independent charge as the Maratha Sarkhel. A letter of the Portuguese Viceroy, dated 11th Dec 1708, addressed to the King of Portugal reports that ‘the Portuguese state (of India) was engaged in a war with Kanhoji Angre.’\textsuperscript{167}

As regards the English, technically speaking, the English, unlike the Portuguese, were never in the race to claim ‘sovereignty over the sea’. Hence, in the first instance, there was no theoretical cause for enmity between Kanhoji and the English Company. At the same time, however, it should also be kept in mind that the English never entertained any idea of sovereignty over the Indian waters by any other authority too. Theoretically, it implied, therefore, that the Portuguese too, were not outside the purview of this rule. Hence, the position of the English Company was somehow neutral towards this strife, but it was not willing to compromise, in whatever way, its independent clout in the matters of navigation in the Indian waters. Now, this was a difficult proposition for Kanhoji who found nothing wrong in projecting his ‘legitimate’ authority over the coastal waters of Konkan. Still, Kanhoji chose not to offend the English Company, by and large, in the matters of the use of the coastal waters. This attitude of Kanhoji has been well reflected in the official deliberations of the Bombay Council. One such deliberation notes, “He
(Kanhoji Angre) had publicly declared that he had ‘ordered all his masters of vessels that whenever they met any of our ships, not to interrupt them, but quietly to pass and make them a Salaam’, which, we believe, was more through fear then any respect of friendship." It would be absurd, however, to jump to a conclusion that it was for sheer fear and awe of the English that Kanhoji had adopted a ‘conciliatory’ approach towards them. He was, of course, aware that the English ships of that period were the best in all respects – the best rigged and carrying the best guns and shots – but, on the other hand, he was equally well aware of the vulnerabilities of the island of Bombay (from sea as well as from land). Sometime in the year 1704, Kanhoji seemed to have demonstrated his ability to put Bombay to inconvenience by virtually blockading the island. ‘He concentrated a few of his Galvats at the mouth of the Pen River, close to Bombay: just that, and nothing more. No shots were fired, no rude notes exchanged, no ships seized and no villages plundered. His mere presence was now enough to block off Bombay’s communications with the mainland. All shipping between Bombay and the mainland was paralyzed. Then, after doing sentry duty at Bombay’s door for a week, he withdrew his squadron and sailed off on a cruise.”

It was a triumph of sheer tactics. In terms of military strategy, Kanhoji was actually buying time. He needed time to strengthen the defenses of his coastal forts and improve the striking capabilities of his fleets up to a satisfactory level, if at all he needed to exercise his authority in the coastal waters of the Konkan. While such preparations were going on, Kanhoji had cleverly kept the English occupied in conversations and negotiations. He repeatedly kept urging the Company officials not to misuse their immunity (from buying Maratha passes for coastal navigation) by allowing the Indian owned ships to be counted with the Company’s ships.

Let us now talk about the Dutch and the French. The Dutch factories were located at Surat and Vengurla, as if, at the two ends of the Maratha coastal possessions. As discussed elsewhere in this thesis, the real interest of the Dutch lay outside India, but on the western coast of India, they needed to navigate through the Konkan waters. Hence, there were strong possibilities that they would be running across the Marathas more than often in the coastal waters of the Konkan. But the Dutch, as usual, were competing with the other European Companies for monopoly and supremacy and, apparently, overlooked the native or local factors. Kanhoji seems to have been cautious but for the incidence
when he captured a Dutch vessel fitted with guns. The French had a factory at Rajapur and were in line with the Marathas since long. We have already taken notice of their ‘outwardly friendly inclination’ towards the Marathas during the time of Sambhaji. The French had provided loan to him so that he could continue his struggle against the Marathas. Even Rajaram was favourably disposed towards the French when he was to sell Jinji/Pondicherry.\(^{170}\)

The most hated enemy of the Marathas in the Konkan (both on land as well as on water) was the *Siddi* of Janjira. Shivaji, followed by Sambhaji, had devised numerous ways and means to get rid of him but fell quite short of mark. After the execution of Sambhaji, Aurangzeb declared the *Siddi* to be the master of most of the Maratha territory in the Konkan. This also included the fort of Raigad which was closely associated to Shivaji. Hence, for the Marathas, there was more than a solitary reason to vie for the life of the *Siddi* of Janjira. *Siddi* was really in an enviably strong position in terms of his defenses.\(^{171}\) His fleet was also effectively armoured and comparatively sturdier. He did not have to bother about the finances, for he was on the regular payroll of the Mughal monarch as his ‘Admiral’. Malgaonkar comments, “the Siddi had two strong backers: Aurangzeb, the Great Mughal, who gave him an annual subsidy of four lakh of rupees to maintain his fleet; and his new-found friends from abroad whom he referred to as ‘hatmen’, who kept him supplied with the best powder and shot, and who permitted his ships to use their ports freely.”\(^{172}\) The situation, therefore, was not easy for Kanhoji. He realized that in case of hostilities, the *Siddi* would join the English, and he (Kanhoji) was in no position to face the fury of their combined fleet, particularly in his early years. Hence, he avoided to be drawn into a pitched naval battle with the *Siddi*. In case of the *Siddi*’s repeated attempts on Kulaba, he chose to be on defensive and frustrate the *Siddi*’s adventures on his naval posts.

By the time Kanhoji Angre got the independent and overall command of the Maratha navy, he had *a grand strategy to overcome his limitations*. The ship-building enterprise was revamped to suit the specific requirements in the light of the challenges from bigger, sturdier and faster vessels. The biggest impediment in this regard was the demand outgrowing the supply. *There was a severe shortage of suitable timber to keep pace with the ambitious plan of adding quality vessels to the fleet.* He had, at times, to
resort to unjustified practices to obtain timber for his ship-building centers. There is a reference in the English records that Kahoji deliberately seized a reasonably fair quantity of timber meant for the Company's usage and used it for his own purpose. Resorting to such acts, however, would not have served his purpose in any significant manner. But, the main problem with Kanhoji was that he was racing against time. He had to achieve too much in too short a period to be able to exercise his absolute authority as the controller of the Konkan waters. He had undertaken a massive program of forestation wherein teak was planted on a large area including both the banks of the Bankote River which had been cleared for the same purpose. He was farsighted, as he had a definite plan to exercise the Maratha sovereignty on the coastal waters and far off too. But his plan required a period of not less than two decades to give results. He was still young and had made a positive beginning. Kanhoji further imitated the policy of Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha Navy, in the way that he also invited the European expertise to help him design and equip his vessels. It is mentioned that a Portuguese person named Manual Moraes de Caravello was employed by Kanhoji as an adviser on the design and construction of ships. In fact he gave employment to a number of foreign technicians: gunners, makers of gun barrels and gunpowder, experts in judging horses and many others, but above all, ship builders. Besides Manual Moraes de Caravello, another name also crops up prominently - that of Manuel de Castro - a soldier of fortune who was said to be an expert gunner - or so he said.  

Kanhoji Angre thus visualized the Europeans as the biggest competitors in the Konkan waters, hence was gearing-up to meet their challenge accordingly. He must have watched the European ships closely from the island fortress of Suvnadurg where he had grown up and learnt his first lessons of seafaring. He must have wanted bigger and better designed ships for himself so as to be able to compete with them. The hiring of the European experts in ship-building industry must have helped him in bridging the gap between the European and the Maratha standards, at least. Kanhoji was specifically looking for the fighting ships with superior seaworthiness as well as effective armament. His 'policing vessels' were operating within the sight of the Maratha coast. They were, thus, plying on the shallower waters and always were under the protection of the guns of their coastal forts. The naval tactics were kept simple. Raid the enemy ship, particularly
those within the sight of the coast, with ferocity and lure them to chase the Maratha vessels. In this process, the entire effort was directed to entice the enemy ships too close to the coastal guns or too near the shallow waters. If the enemy ship was successfully brought in the vicinity of the coast, it would not get enough wind for its sail and would slow down. Once the maneuvering of those ships became difficult the Marathas fighters would quickly board them by dismasting and surrounding them from different sides. Otherwise, there was always a possibility of those ships hitting the submerged rocks or sand bars to the advantage of the Marathas. Kanhoji would have sought to end the dependency of his ships on the coastal forts and coastal guns so that they could venture far into the blue sea and secure the freedom of navigation. Hence, Kanhoji’s grand strategy was to have equivalence in the matters of oceanic navigation in addition to a complete control over coastal navigation.

But this was to be realized in stages. To start with, he needed to strengthen the defenses of his coastal forts and fit on them larger guns to ward off the enemy ships. He worked on it and chose Kulaba as his headquarters because of the obvious advantages it offered as a naval base. Finding crew for his vessels was never a problem as the entire coastal area was replete of the class of hereditary fisher-folk and other castes who could be harmonized, animated and utilized well in the seafaring activities. The biggest advantage with Kanhoji Angre was that, unlike his predecessors, he had a firm base on land too. In other words, he had a fair amount of territory on land (mostly alongside the Konkan coast) under his possession. He also commanded a reasonably ample number of troops, well versed in the art of war. We have already noted that the only way the Maratha could have got better of their European opponents with bigger and faster ships on the water was by boarding them (after dismasting them), followed by a close quarter duel that required sheer bravery along with basic fighting skills. Hence, Kanhoji possessed the obligatory requirements to tackle those who refused to recognize his claim over the Konkan waters.

Kanhoji was still not confident to venture into deep sea and exercise his authority on the vast ocean which would have been befitting to his position as the Maratha Admiral. Not that he lacked courage or application to do so, but he was hesitant to make deep strides into the sea also because of the more practical concerns and pressing
commitments. He faced many challenges and limitations which constrained him from realizing his cherished dream of the undisputed lord of the Konkan waters. The limitations, as we have mentioned above, were mainly in terms of resources (viz. possession of sea-worthy vessels; fire-power, etc.) whereas the challenges were numerous viz. the animosity of European and the Mughal navies. Moreover, the challenges to his authority, in terms of the fear from the land side, were not fewer either. The life and order in the Deccan had been chaotic after the execution of Sambhaji by Aurangzeb. The Maratha sardars were free to take their own course of action to uphold and salvage the Maratha pride. Discipline in the ranks, as it was under Shivaji, had faded away owing to a weaker central command. In fact, under the Regency of Tarabai, feudalism had rather resurfaced in the Maratha administration. Tarabai had little choice but to allow the Maratha Sardars a loose string so that her son’s claim could be recognized and upheld in the politically volatile situation following the death of Rajaram in the year 1700. The Maratha Sardars, as a result, could be seen pre-occupied with guarding their selfish interests only too jealously to have allowed any room for the cause of the Swarajya or a Maratha confederacy. On ground, therefore, the Marathas never appeared to be a unified body. Even the very term ‘loyalty’ became very-very subjective. The coming back of Shahuji, the son of slain Maratha King Sambhaji, to Deccan under such a situation further added to this chaos. Shahuji’s projection of his legitimate claim over the Maratha throne created a stir in the Maratha politics. Many leading Maratha Sardars were put in a dilemma and many changed sides to buttress the claim of Shahuji, but Kanhoji remained loyal to the cause of queen Tarabai. The rivalry between Shahuji and Tarabai was in full swing in the dying years of the first decade of the 18th century and was finally settled in the year 1713 in favour of Shahuji. While the Maratha politics witnessed a near turmoil, Kanhoji was busy laying his hands over as much area in the northern Konkan as possible. He was justified in doing so because the area was ‘awarded’ to him by Tarabai, the Maratha Regent. Most of his action was directed against the Siddi, as Aurangzeb had made the Siddi the master of Konkan after the execution of Sambhaji. Kanhoji, therefore, had to strive hard to achieve a balance as regards his military commitments on the coast and elsewhere. The Siddi was always looking for any opportunity to make a good fortune by raiding and pillaging the coastal possessions of the Marathas.
During the Maratha civil war, there appeared a critical juncture, where Kanhoji seemed well prepared to execute the orders of his master to oppose and fight the forces of Shahuji for the Maratha throne, the cementing of the ‘old friendship’ with Balaji Visvanath, a Brahmin from the Konkan paid rich dividends to Kanhoji. The meeting of the ‘old friends’ brought about a sweeping change in the power equation of the Maratha politics. Kanhoji was persuaded by the Brahmin, who had also come to him in the capacity of Peshwa (Prime-Minister) of the newly crowned Maratha Chhatrapati Shahuji, to join the Chhatrapati’s side with added benefits. Kanhoji was too shrewd to let slip this opportunity out of his hands. He joined the camp of Shahuji and got more than he had expected. What he got in this bargain was not just a bigger possession on the coast but also (and more importantly) the assurance of his friend Balaji Visvanath who firmly stood by his side, providing him the much needed logistics for his daring military ventures in the years to come. Commenting on the Peshwa-Kanhoji Angre understanding, Ketkar remarks that “the Peshwa, by conferring a legitimate political status (of the Maratha Admiral) on Kanhoji Angre, very skillfully got a brave Sardar to the cause of Shahuji. Out of the territory awarded to him (worth an annual income of Rs. 34 lakh), a large portion was under the control of the Siddi.” It was Kanhoji’s trust in the Peshwa that he could concentrate on his duty as the Maratha Sarkhel without having to bother about the military threats originating from the land. With a single mind he took the Europeans ‘head-on’ in the coastal waters - even when they formed a military and naval alliance against him. The Peshwa was always ready with troops to bail out Kanhoji in case his landed possessions were threatened by the enemies like the Siddi of Janjira. The military cooperation to the Maratha Sarkhel was continued in the same spirit even after the death of the Peshwa, by his son and successor (to the post of Peshwa), Balaji Baji Rao. Kanhoji Angre, therefore, was in a position to establish his firm authority and exercise Maratha sovereignty on the coastal waters of the Konkan as he entered into the services of the new Maratha sovereign Shahuji. Let us now study the strategy and tactical aspects highlighted in course of Kanhoji in few of his crucial naval engagements against the Europeans and the Siddi of Janjira.

Instances have been quoted regarding the daring exploits of Kanhoji Angre in the Konkan waters even before he had risen to the rank of the Sarkhel of the Maratha navy.
Most of them refer to his prize catches of some important or precious vessels of the European enemies, and portray a helpless condition of the victims against Kanhoji’s navy. These references, however, generally lack any valuable information regarding the strategy or tactical formulations put into use by Kanhoji’s fleet during such naval encounters. It is, therefore, a matter of speculations. However, it cannot be denied that Kanhoji must have acted on precise information about the movement of the enemy vessels. After processing the information he must have worked on achieving a surprise on the enemy. The element of surprise must have substituted for the need of a pivot weapon (in this case – effective fire power) for the Marathas and the fate of the opponent was certainly doomed. Further, the element of surprise could not have worked fruitfully unless accompanied with speed and intensity with which the surprise blow was to be delivered. The numerical superiority (in terms of vessels as well as men) must have been another vital element of his naval warfare in the initial phase. In that case, Kanhoji Angre must be complimented for his organizational and commanding skills because, under such circumstances, the effective coordination and maneuver of his vessels was required the most. Another inference which emerges out of the cases of his early, and equally successful, exploits was that he must have purposefully avoided a pitched battle with his enemies in the open/deep sea. He must have chosen to operate in the area within the sight of his coastal forts and guns so that in case of danger his vessels could always make good their escape in the numerous shallow bays and creeks. In the absence of any document appraising us about the strategy and tactics involved in the early naval activities, these inferences can, at best, serve as general-assumptions keeping in mind the nature of warfare practiced by the Marathas in general (to overcome their own limitations whatsoever).

(A) HIGHLIGHTS OF KANHOJI ANGRE’S ENCOUNTERS WITH THE SIDDI OF JANJIRA - The Siddi invasion on Bombay in the year 1689-90 had proved that they could achieve quite a lot in the oceanic matters on the west coast of India provided the monetary and other support from the Mughals continued un-interruptedly. At the same time the whole episode had reconfirmed that the British were still not in a position to ignore or displease the Mughals either at Surat or at Bombay. The English,
therefore, had to be content with adopting a friendly attitude towards the Mughal admiral Siddi whenever the latter asked for any favour from Bombay. At that point of time, this was the most practical decision taken by the English because the Marathas were not in a position to grant any favours to Bombay as a regular Maratha government had disappeared. With the rise of Kanhoji Angre on the Konkan seaboard the position of Bombay once again became bumpy by the closing years of the 18th century. Kanhoji was competing with the Siddi on sea as well as on the land and Bombay was apparently inclined towards the Siddi. The English, however, were shrewd enough to officially adopt a neutral posture during the fight between the Siddi and the Marathas in the Konkan waters.

After the execution of Sambhaji, the Siddi had occupied the Maratha strongholds of Raigad, Dabhol, and Ratnagiri etc. which were awarded to him by the Mughal emperor. Through his military expeditions, he had further occupied Revas, Thal and Anjanwel from where he harassed Maratha ships and sent raiding parties inside the Maratha territories. During the period of interregnum, the Siddi further extended his conquests by occupying the fort of Padmadurg or Kamsa situated at some distance from the Siddi stronghold of Janjira. It is said that the Siddi sent the golden key of the fort to the Mughal emperor in 1710 for which the latter privileged him by sending him the robe of honour. The Siddi is stated to have wrested the fort of Suvanadurg too from the Marathas, soon after. Riding on the wave of success, the Siddi reportedly laid siege to the Maratha coastal fort of Kulaba in March 1701, but was forced to retreat with great loss. He accused the English of helping the Marathas with ammunition. It was probably because of the Siddi invasion that Kanhoji decided to re-strengthen the defenses of Kulaba, his naval headquarters. Kanhoji Angre, immediately surfaced near Bombay with his fleet, however no battles were fought between them. On the contrary, Kanhoji could forge a peaceful understanding with Bombay in the year 1703. As per the English records, both the parties agreed for a ‘mutual restitution of boats, goods and prisoners’.

The political situation in the Deccan changed noticeably in the period following the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. Shahuji was released by the Mughals and he projected his claim as the legitimate ruler of the Deccan. The Mughal Empire was also unstable because of the court factions and internal strife. The position of the Siddi was not as
secure as it was a couple of years ago. His channels of communications with the Mughal emperor were broken. Under such a situation, the Siddi thought it prudent to side with Bombay for all practical purposes. It is explicable that the Siddi had also arrived at some sort of conformity with Kanhoji Angre too, regarding the exercise of power over the Konkan waters and the control of some coastal possessions.

On the other hand, the position of Kanhoji Angre was greatly exalted as he signed the Treaty of Allegiance with Shahu’s representative, the Peshwa in the year 1713. “The consequences of the treaty”, writes Khobrekar, “are of great importance. It involved Shahu Chhatrapati and the Maratha state in the conflicts between Kanhoji and his enemies – the Siddi, the English and the Portuguese.” No sooner than this treaty was signed, a joint military expedition was undertaken by the Maratha Peshwa Balaji Viswanath and Kanhoji Angre against the Siddi. The Siddi possession on the main land was targeted and hard pressed. Finding no hope of help from any quarters, the Siddi - Surul Khan, applied for peace and was obliged to sign a treaty with the Marathas on 30th of January 1715. As per the terms of the treaty, the Siddi reluctantly relinquished his control over a few forts which also included some in the coastal area. In this way this treaty gave an upper hand to the Marathas in the affairs of the Konkan and naturally strengthened the position of Kanhoji Angre with respect of the Siddi. The Siddi was humbled and remained dormant for the next 10 years or so in the affairs of the Konkan as we do not come across any major naval engagement between the Siddi and the Angres during this period. The usual minor skirmishes, including the pillaging and looting activities erupted from time to time. The peace with Siddi came as a welcome relief for Kanhoji Angre as he could concentrate and channelise his energy against his European detractors. It is interesting to note that in the decade following the peace pact between the Marathas and the Siddi, as many as four determined attempts were made by the English and Portuguese on the various strongholds of Kanhoji. The British attacked Vijaydurg (Gheria) twice; Khanderi was also attacked by them; a joint Anglo-Portuguese expedition was undertaken to reduce the Angre stronghold of Kulaba. But, none of them could accomplish the desired objective. The fame of Kanhoji Angre’s invincibility was gaining currency very fast.
Siddi had been a mute spectator in all these events and his fear on the sea was practically fading away from the memories of the Konkan people. To add to his misery, the Siddi’s position further suffered (in theoretical terms) on account of the grant of the right to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of the Deccan to the Marathas by the Mughals in 1719. The grant of these rights implied that the Marathas had become the de-facto rulers of the Deccan area and that the Mughal claim over the Konkan ceased to exist. Hence, nothing was happening the way the Siddi wanted them to happen. The overall situation appeared gloomy for him and he was getting impatient to re-establish his authority and fame by any means. He could hear the death-knell for his authority in the Deccan and on the Konkan waters too. He was waiting for the opportune moment to strike at the Maratha territory.

The rupture with the Angre seems to have occurred in the year 1722 and the Siddi was taking aim at Kanhoji’s possessions on the coast and elsewhere. Kanhoji was fully aware of the difficulties of fighting on two fronts simultaneously. Hence, as the British sources would make us believe, he solicited for King Shahu’s meditations with the English at Bombay. The process of negotiations allowed Kanhoji the breathing time so that he could attend to the Siddi challenge. The Siddi was equally calculative. He had also maintained amicable relations with the English and wanted to utilize their good office and support at the opportune moment. The British did acknowledge this in their internal correspondences. One such letter reads, “The Siddi...has at sundry times sent off, to our vessels, provisions and refreshments ...and been otherwise very courteous in his advices in relation to Angria...” Bombay had always kept in mind the ‘functional utility’ of the Siddi vis-à-vis the Marathas. The Siddi could be gainfully utilized to keep a check on the threat to Bombay originating from the Maratha side, and even to neutralize it. Hence the Siddi enjoyed the hospitality of Bombay and was high in confidence. In fact not only the English or Portuguese, but all those powers that had enmity with the Marathas, were trying to make use of the Siddi in the best possible way to offset the Maratha threats. For example, the Nizam of Hyderabad was also found courting the Siddi when the former was hard pressed because of the Maratha incursions in the Karnataka region.
In 1724, the emboldened Siddi Yakut Khan made a determined attempt on Kulaba and laid siege to this fort by placing armed ships around it. He is said to have put into service 12 palas, 2 frigates (galvats) and a hundred other armed ships. Kanhoji, however, had some other plans at hand. He, therefore, is said to have made a deal with the Siddi by offering him a large amount of money. For some times the problem was averted, but the Maratha-Siddi relations deteriorated soon afterwards. The Siddi-Angre relations further worsened because of the infamous ‘elephant episode’ and both the side committed atrocities against each other. As fallout of this event, Kanhoji Angre had also managed to convince Shahuji to initiate a joint military expedition against the Siddi. The Chhatrapati accordingly sent his Pratinidhi with a military contingent to the Konkan. But before doing so steps were taken to ensure that the Portuguese could not influence the outcome of the war by secretly helping the Siddi with men and materials. This expedition of the Marathas, however, could not bring the desired result. Kanhoji Angre also died in the meanwhile, which further encouraged the Siddi to regain his position in the Konkan. The Peshwa, however, in collaboration with the successors of Kanhoji Angre, took the field personally and the Siddi was brought to task in 1733.

(B) KANHOJI ANGRE, THE PORTUGUESE AND THE BRITISH - The seat of authority of the British Company on the western coast of India was temporarily shifted to Surat in the wake of the Siddi invasion of Bombay in 1689. However, in 1692, Bombay was again made the chief seat of government with the orders to repair and increase the fortifications of the island. The war with the Mughals had taught the English Company an important lesson. They needed to refrain from open warfare with the native powers. At the same time, so far as possible, amicable relations were to be maintained with the Mughals as well as the Marathas. The Company also decided to pursue a strictly peaceful policy, and revive trade which had been the biggest casualty because of the war. Apart from the fortifications, the naval strength under the command of the Bombay Island was enhanced so that its safety requirements could be met. Moreover, the Company was also coping up with its trading rivals from England in the Indian waters. Hence it could not afford to get involved with any Indian rulers in the dying years of the 17th century.
On the other hand, Kanhoji Angre had consolidated his position in the Konkan in the last decade of the 17th century. He had grown confident of his capacity on the Konkan water ever since he was elevated to the position of the Maratha Admiral in the year 1698. The company had fortunately adopted somewhat neutral approach towards the Angre-Siddi conflict. It seems that Kanhoji did not meddle with the Company’s vessels initially. But as the size of his ships grew, he grew bolder and from 1702, his doings began to excite the Company’s apprehensions. Kanhoji started making prize of the English vessels not carrying his pass. Though, in December 1703, an understanding was arrived at between the two parties and a mutual restitution of boats, goods, and prisoners followed. However, peace did not last long and late in 1704, one Mr. Reynolds was deputed to find him and tell him that he could not be permitted searching, molesting, or seizing vessels in Bombay waters: to which he returned a defiant answer, that ‘he had done many benefits to the English, who had broken faith with him, and that the Marathas had successfully resisted the Mughals for 40 years; and that now as they lived by their sword they would seize boats belonging to the Mughal emperor or to any of his ports or to the Malabar coast, unless they carried Angrian pass’.

As per the Portuguese sources, even by the year 1707, Kanhoji had ‘only eight or ten armed ships’. However, even with those vessels Kanhoji could make daring attacks on the European shipping. In 1707, his vessels reportedly attacked one of the English Company’s ships, the Bombay frigate, and blew it up after a brief engagement. This was also the year of Aurangzeb’s death which was followed by a chaos in the Mughal system. Kanhoji took advantage of the situation and it is said that in 1710 he made an attempt on the fort of Khandari which was actually being held (by the Marathas) in the name of the Maratha King. In the contemporary English documents it is mentioned that ‘Khandari belonged to the Maratha Raja who was at peace with Bombay’. It is also mentioned in the British records that in September 1703, the Portuguese had leased the island of Elephanta (to the Marathas) for a payment of 700 Xeraphins per year. This must have been a cause of concern to the Bombay authorities; and Kanhoji’s seizure of the island of Khandari must have proved their worst nightmares true. On the other hand Kanhoji’s action on Khandari could be understood in the light of naval strategy. He seems to be working on the idea of a chain of island forts near his headquarters at Kulaba. No doubt,
having such strategically located forts under his control would have greatly contributed to
the offensive-defensive capabilities of his naval fleet. In 1712 Kanhoji’s vessels made
a bold raid on the armed yacht of the Governor of Bombay, together with the *Anne* Ketch
from Karwar. A month later two English ships (on voyage from London to India) were
attacked near the coast of Goa by a Ghurab and a Galvat of Kanhoji’s fleet. The
Portuguese were also not spared; it is reported that the fleet of Kanhoji Angre had
captured the greater part of a Portuguese ‘*armado*’, and disabled a thirty-gun man-of-war
that was conveying it. Following this audacious action of Kanhoji, the Portuguese
authorities of Goa approached the English at Bombay for the purpose of a joint attack on
Angre. It is interesting to note that the Bombay Governor Aislabie not only rejected the
Portuguese proposal but, on the contrary, signed peace with Kanhoji when approached by
the latter.

By applying for peace with the British, Kanhoji acted like a shrewd statesman. He
knew that peace was the need of the situation in Konkan. He had to act judiciously and
speedily in view of the Maratha civil war between Shahu and Tarabai. Tarabai had almost
lost, and Kanhoji was faced with a military action on land led by the Peshwa of Shahu.
Kanhoji could not have fought on two fronts effectively. Hence, before the English could
join hands with the Portuguese against him, he proposed peace. Kanhoji, however, was
shrewd enough not to sign or commit anything so quickly. He kept on prolonging the
discussions with the English either with additional demands, viz. for being supplied with
powder and shots (by the English) on payment, or regarding the restitution of
prisoners, goods etc. In other words he bought time, and utilized this time to negotiate
with the Peshwa of Shahuji. Eventually, Kanhoji Angre gained significantly by switching
over his loyalty from Tarabai to Chhatrapati Shahuji. Kanhoji, hence was in a much
strong position than ever before as a result of this understanding with Shahuji. He was
given the control of the maritime forts like Khanderi, Kulaba, Vijaydurg, Suvarnadurg
and Jaigad in addition to the coastal forts surrounding them like the forts of Devgad,
Kanakdurg, Fattehdurg, Govagad, Yashwantgad etc. He was free from any threat to
his coastal/landed possessions as the Peshwa, also his old friend, was there to take care.
Kanhoji, therefore, could devote his time and energy to project the Maratha sovereignty
and exert the Maratha power on the sea in the right perspective.
In the meanwhile, Charles Boone had taken command as the new governor of Bombay in 1715. By that time Kanhoji had consolidated his authority as the Maratha Admiral. He was trying to enforce regulations regarding the matters of navigation and projection of power on the Konkan waters which suited the Maratha interests the best. Boone, on the other hand, had come with a definite agenda to improve the Company’s administration and trading fortunes. After having assessed the prevailing conditions, he immediately worked upon the improvement of the defenses of Bombay. The fortifications of the island were strengthened and orders were placed to construct armed vessels for the defense of Bombay. He had heard about the shrewdness of Kanhoji Angre, and when he came across the Maratha admiral in person, the English-Angre tussle started. The English, at times in league with the Portuguese, made repeated attempts to dislodge Kanhoji Angre from his advantageous position in the Konkan waters. The English were the first to break away from the practiced norms. During the governorship of Boone, they attacked Vijaydurg and Khanderi, the two strongholds of the Maratha admiral. However, as they failed to evict Kanhoji from these forts, they cajoled the Portuguese to be a part of a joint military expedition on Kulaba, another stronghold Kanhoji Angre, which also served as the headquarters of Maratha naval establishment. By that time, the Portuguese, somehow, had also realized that Kanhoji needed to be dealt with firmly in the interest of the Portuguese settlements on the Konkan coast. The Viceroy of Goa, Conde de Ericeria is said to have admitted thus in 1720, “Kanhoji Angre became powerful because of the negligence on the part of the Portuguese...” The estimated naval strength of Kanhoji as projected by the Portuguese in 1721 was ‘6 Palas with 16 to 18 canons fitted on them, 30 galvates and 6000 sailors’.204 This estimate of men and vessels was definitely far less than the potential strength of Kanhoji. Anyway, till his death in 1729, Kanhoji not only practiced navigation on his own terms, but also compelled the Europeans as well as the Siddi to acknowledge his authority over the Konkan waters. Let us now have a brief overview of the European attempts on the strongholds of Kanhoji Angre and study their relation with regards to the naval strategy, tactics and even limitations experienced by the parties involved.
Charles Boone's decision to attack Vijaydurg seems to have been hastened by the unprovoked acts of hostilities committed by the vessels of Kanhoji Angre of late. In the beginning of 1716, he had made prize of a company's boat in sight of Bombay harbour, and of another belonging to a private merchant. Four private ships from Mahim, valued at 30,000 Xeraphins (as per Portuguese estimates) were also captured by him on the pretext that the Company was passing them off as English ships, whereas they were meant for private business. To add to the English anguish, Kanhoji Angre's ships trading with Bombay often refused to pay harbour dues. On being asked to explain the 'piratical acts', Kanhoji not only sent defiant replies but also retaliated by capturing more English ships namely *Otter* and *Anne*. The crisis was further precipitated when in December 1717 Kanhoji's vessels forcibly took one of the Company's boats carrying timber into Kulaba and removed timber pieces from it. "The removal of timber", writes Malgaonkar, "gave the Bombay Council cause for far more anger than the capture of their ships and the English passengers. For this time, the vessel carrying the timber did in fact belong to the Company and as such, Kanhoji Angre could not claim that she was an Indian ship trying to pass off as an Indian ship." Such actions of Kanhoji Angre had left the Company's administrators with limited choice.

However, Bombay did not take any immediate action as it was not in a position to finance and wage a naval war. Moreover, before striking at Angre's strongholds Boone wanted to have the Portuguese on his side, but the Portuguese governor expressed his inability to do so in view of the threat of the pirates from Muscat. The Bombay council, in the meanwhile met repeatedly to decide on the course of action to be taken against Kanhoji Angre. By April 1718 the Bombay council had come to the conclusion that mere skirmishes with Angre's ships and the plundering of a few coastal villages was not likely to bring about the desired result, hence it resolved to take a direct military action against Kanhoji Angre and his naval bases. It was decided that a naval expedition against the Angre stronghold of Vijaydurg would be undertaken in the month of May-June the same year. Boone, ever since his arrival in India, had consistently worked upon to improve the fighting strength of the Bombay fleet. As Biddulph John puts in, "within a few months of his arrival, the 'Britannia' (with eighteen guns), built at Karwar; the
‘Fame’ (with sixteen guns), built at Surat; and ‘Revenge’ (with sixteen guns), built at Bombay; were flying the Company’s flag... A few months later, the ‘Victory’ (with twenty four guns), was launched, and two years after his arrival, Boone had at his disposal a fine fleet consisting of nineteen frigates, gharabs, ketches, galvats, and rowing galleys, carrying two hundred twenty guns, besides a bomb vessel and a fire-ship... At the same time, Biddulph’s sarcasm could not be concealed when he describes the preparations made by Boone to tackle Kanhoji Angre and others ‘pirates’. He writes, “It was easier to build ships than to get sailors to man them, in view of the miserable pay given by the Company, and the attractions of service under native chiefs. Many of the crews were foreigners, who were ready enough to take service under the Angre, if the inclinations took them, and the bulk of the crews were Indian lascars.”

The reasons for selecting the coastal fort of Vijaydurg as the target of the British attack were too obvious. With the advantages of its strategic natural location, this fort housed all the facilities of ship-building and maintenance of the fleet. In other words this fort served as the main depot of the Maratha naval establishment where a large number of vessels were hauled up ashore each rainy season. In fact, the recently captured English ships viz. the ‘Success’, ‘Otter’, ‘Robert’, and others were also detained at the very same fort. Boon’s idea was, therefore, to destroy the fort along with the vessels, stores and other facilities. The month of May-June was deliberately chosen to deliver the offensive because, by that time the monsoon would have almost set in, and under normal circumstances sea-borne activities were avoided during that season. Moreover, as per the usual practice followed by the Marathas, the soldiers would also be allowed to proceed on leave and engage in agricultural and other productive activities at their native places. Hence, conventionally, the rainy season was the lean season for the Marathas from military point of view. On the other hand, by undertaking such a venture during that part of the year, Boone, in military terminology, wanted to surprise the enemy completely. He was shrewd enough to wait till the time he was convinced that most of the Maratha ships had made their way back to the shores of Vijaydurg for annual wintering.

A critical analysis of the methods adopted to achieve the desired ends in this expedition makes it obvious that in Boone’s scheme, three things were to play the most determining role. The first element was the use of fire (since the entire depot/harbour was
to be set on fire so that all the Maratha vessels were burnt); the second was the actual landing of the English marines on the coast so as to take physical possession of the fort, and the third was the ‘maintenance of surprise’ as a general principle of warfare. The Company’s Chief Engineer, Major Vane, ‘had tried out all the mortars and grenade-launchers before they were fitted on the ships and had sent up the requisite quantities of ammunition on board... the fire ship was inspected and pronounced perfect.’ A reasonably large number of troops were readied to effect landing on the coast and fight for the fort. As regards the element of surprise, Boone wanted to take advantage of the distance separating Vijaydurg from the two other prime forts of Angre, namely – Kulaba and Sindhudurg. Boone must have wanted to accomplish his task before any help from Angre could reach Vijaydurg. It is not unexpected, therefore, to find that the Bombay council declared a war on Kanhoji Angre only after a week or so had elapsed from the time when the Company’s ships had sailed out (of Bombay) for Vijaydurg. “By that time”, as Malgaonkar writes, “according to planning, the attack on Gheria was already scheduled to be completed.”

A first hand account of the Gheria expedition is given by Alexander Downing who had also taken part in this expedition. As per his accounts, the following picture emerges.

1) The English ships were taken near the fort and up to the harbour in a line formation (the best defensive position in a naval engagement) with the intent of blocking up all the exit points from the harbour. From there a continuous cannonading was started to make a breach in the walls, so as to storm the castle. The shelling was done incessantly for two days, but it was found that ‘the place was impregnable’. Next, the ships with men were taken closer to the fort so as to storm the walls. But it was found that the castle walls were so high that ‘our scaling ladders would not reach near the top of them...’ Downing gives the impression that the estimates about the strength and accessibility of the fort fell quite short of mark. This compelled the English to adopt another strategy even though it was risky after the failure to reduce the fort by cannonading. The next courses of action consisted of making a landing on the shore and then try to storm the fort by sheer force of numbers.
2) While the efforts were being made to batter the walls of Vijaydurg, a simultaneous endeavour was made by the British fire-ship to reach near the pile of the ships of Kanhoji Angre, most of which were hauled up ashore or properly fastened to each other in the harbour in view of the ensuing monsoon. The idea was to set fire a few of them, so that the fire spreads to the piles of vessels kept together. The planning of Boone seemed to be perfect and he waited till the time it was almost the onset of the monsoon so that maximum damage could be done to the vessels of Kanhoji’s fleet. However, Boone seems to have either underestimated the Marathas, or had no ideas, whatsoever, about their methods of providing safety and shelter for the wintering vessels. The Marathas, on the other hand, proved to be too meticulous as regards their bulwark to deal with any unexpected situation during the monsoon. Downing writes, “We endeavoured to get the fire-ship in, but could not; for on the east part of the fort, they had a cove or creek, where they had laid up a great part of their fleet, and had a strong boom across the same; so that we can not annoy them otherwise than by throwing our bombs and coehorns very thick into the garrison, which we did for a considerable time…” In this way the fire-ship was rendered ineffective owing to normal defensive measures. Hence, Boone, who had carefully planned to surprise the Marathas, was himself completely taken by surprise. His plan had misfired and he had to look for some other alternatives to get the better out of the Marathas.

3) Since a naval war with the Marathas was out of question, the next, and the only choice lying before the English was to try an amphibious assault on the fort. But, for that, landing of troops on the shore was a pre-requisite. The British armada had carried sufficient number of men for this purpose. The only consideration was to find a suitable place to land at the base of the fort which was full of submerged rocks. The knowledge of the tidal pattern/timing could have come handy to undertake such a task. There also existed the danger of a counter offensive from the fort either in the form of gun-fire or sudden dashes of military contingent to foil their attempt to come anywhere near the fort. The landing was accordingly made, though not of the entire marine force, but only a fraction of them. Hence, a clash for the physical occupation can be ruled out, from the British point of view. The plan, as it appeared now, was to skirt around the walls of the fort and to somehow reach the cove where the Maratha vessels were clustered together. It
is interesting to note that there was apparently no resistance from the sentinels and the fort guards of Vijaydurg when the landing was made or even when the British marines were skirting around the walls of the forts. One of the probable reasons, as we have noted earlier, may be inadequate garrison strength owing to the rainy season. Another and more probable reason appears to be the confidence about their defensive preparations. The accounts of Downing further helps to substantiate these theories. He writes, “After the second day (of firing on the fort walls) we landed our forces, taking the opportunity of the tide... We got them all on shore, and marched up the country, without molestation; only now and then the castle would let fly a shot or two, which did us small damage. We attempted to march the army down to their shipping and to set them on fire; but when we came within a mile of the place, the land was swampy, and so very muddy by the spring tide flowing over that we could not proceed. On our retreat, they galled us very much by firing from the castle... we drew off our forces and went up to Bombay to repair our frigates and take care of our wounded men, of whom we had a considerable number.”

The entire exercise to reduce Kanhoji’s stronghold of Vijaydurg thus failed miserably. Boone and the Bombay council were proved impractical in their planning as they could not get through even the simplest of the defensive preparations of the Marathas. On the top of that the English casualties were quite high even though there was no counter-offensive measure taken by the Marathas. But Governor Boone was impervious. He quickly planned another action on Kanhoji; this time the target was the island fortress of Khanderi which commanded the passage to the Bombay harbour.

(D) BRITISH ACTION ON KHANDERI (NOVEMBER, 1718) - After a careful examination of the circumstances under which the Khanderi expedition was undertaken (including the nature and timing of the expedition), one is compelled to reason that Boone had planned the Khanderi expedition as supplementary to the Gheria expedition, and that both expeditions were conceived together. In fact, the Khanderi expedition could be seen as a sequel to the Gheria expedition. While Gheria expedition was commenced just when the monsoon was to set in, that of the Khanderi was initiated immediately after the rains had stopped. The entire duration of monsoon, it seems, was utilized by Boone to give a final shape to the planning and preparations. Emissaries were also sent to the
Portuguese as well as the King Sambhaji of Kolhapur to form an alliance against Kanhoji Angre. Though, the Portuguese avoided any commitment on this matter citing a ‘smooth state of affairs’ with Kanhoji, the King of Kolhapur responded in affirmative. The latter, however, could not have contributed even in the remotest way to this expedition. In the meanwhile, Bombay had been feeling confident about its military strength and fighting capabilities. By the end of September, 300 more soldiers had arrived from England, and they brought with them large quantities of war-like stores and ammunitions. Bombay had many gun and bomb ships of various sizes ready to participate in the action Malgaonkar and Biddulph have given a detailed list of these vessels (which could be called the ‘standing navy’ of the East India Company at Bombay). We are provided with some additional information regarding the organization and formation of the British naval force on the eve of the Khanderi expedition. It is believed that ‘every one of these ships had two or more galvats as their permanent auxiliary vessels, and each galvat held ten English sailors and forty to fifty Indian sailors. The bigger ships held as many as 200 men, out of whom about forty to fifty were English sailors. The total manpower of the fleet in officers and other ranks was upwards of 2,000 and this did not include the marines or the landing parties."

On the 1st of November 1718, the whole squadron of ships from Bombay sailed for Khanderi. The very next day they anchored off Khanderi bringing about a near siege of the Maratha island fortress. The entry/exit approaches to the Khanderi harbour were also blocked. A relentless bombing over the fort, particularly its southernmost part which was duly strengthened by Kanhoji Angre a couple of years ago through additional fortification works, was carried out by the bomb-ships of Bombay. However, it was found that the bombs were falling short of mark as the bomb-ships did not venture too close to the fort for fear of submerged rocks and also because of the fright of the fort guns which might have retaliated once the ships moved within the range of the guns.

First engagement: While the English cannonading on the fort was on, Kanhoji came up with the retaliatory assault in a tactical manner. He sent two of his ghurabs to lure the English ships. At the sight of the enemy ships coming out of the harbour, Boone, who was commanding the operation in person, signalled the frigates - Victory and Revenge - along with the ketch Hawke, to attack them. But, as it was found that the two
Angre ghurabs were closely followed and supported by fourteen galvats, Boone ordered his ships to disengage. This minor skirmish between the two navies brought different results to both the sides. For Kanhoji, he seems to have succeeded in his motive if it was to lure the English vessels to the range of the fort guns. It is reported that one of the attacking ships suffered ‘slight damage’ caused from the fort guns. It may also be assumed that Kanhoji would have wanted to relieve the pressure of bombardment on the southern part of the fort and for that he must have sent his ghurabs and galvats so that the enemy attention was diverted. Kanhoji succeeded in this bait too. On the other hand, the British would have seen this action as an attempt by Angre’s vessels to pierce through the naval blockade so that ammunitions and other necessities required (by the fort) to withstand the siege should be brought in. The English had every reason to feel happy as they had apparently foiled the enemy’s attempt to do so. However, a clever strategist should always bear in mind that ammunitions and essentials would not fall short on the very first day of a fort which was cut off from the mainland and was also playing the role of a base at a strategic location. On the contrary, it conveys a bad impression about the ability of Boone to handle the situation. The most intriguing aspect of the whole episode is the decision of Boone to disengage without even engaging the enemy ships despite having the numerical and technical superiority. This suggests that Boone was not willing to risk his ships through a head-on naval action with the enemy. This further leads us to believe that Kanhoji’s fleet and armoury, if not better, were, at least, equally effective with respect to the British fleet. Kanhoji should also be credited as his ships did not venture out of the striking range of its own fort.

Anyway, under such circumstances, as a naval engagement with the enemy was ‘ruled out’, Boone concentrated on the last option 223 which consisted of landing his men on the island so that the fort could be stormed through. The English rowing boats were given the task to circumnavigate the island and choose appropriate landing site. After the investigation of the island was complete, Boone came up with the idea of landing his troops at two different places, on the east and on the western sides of the island respectively. To engage an enemy, adopting defensive posture, on two different fronts was, in fact, a superior strategy, for which Boone must be given the due credit. This decision was taken in keeping in mind the direction of the wind too. Downing writes, “It
was finally arranged that the soldiers (marines) and the grenadiers should land to windward,\textsuperscript{224} while the sepoys,\textsuperscript{225} covered by the fire of ghurabs and galvats, should land at the opposite side of the island, to leeward.\textsuperscript{226} Since the frequency of the return fire from the fort had also dropped down, it was decided to carry out landing at the earliest.\textsuperscript{227}

Unfortunately on the 5\textsuperscript{th} of November, when the landing was to take effect, the chosen soldiers, who were to land on the leeward side, declined to land despite repeated persuasions and announcement of rich rewards. This was indeed a setback for Boone’s plan of action, but he could have done little under such circumstances. However, the grenadiers and marines landed on the scheduled spot, much to the relief of Boone. But, a steady array of fire from the garrison of the fort prevented them from making any further progress, and they were beaten back with the casualty figure of 18 killed and 50 wounded. It is interesting to note that this casualty resulted ‘more by force of stones hoven from the rocks than fire arms’. In the melee, an accidental burst of gun on one of the ships providing support fire to the landing party, compounded the confusion and the landing party quickly got away from the island fort. Unfazed by the setback, Boone planned another (second) landing at Khanderi. This time, at the eastern part i.e., at the harbour only, since all attempts to motivate and convince the Company’s sepoys failed.\textsuperscript{228}

It is reported that in spite of the promises of rich rewards, only forty (out of estimated 2000) of them came forward as volunteers. The grenadiers and the marines, along with the ‘volunteers’ were again pressed into act. The date of the landing was fixed for the 7\textsuperscript{th} of November. In view of this, the British bomb-ships began the support fire since morning.

As the landing party approached near the island and attempted landing, it was found that ‘a strong (tidal) current prevented disembarkation, and the boats were forced to lie off under a heavy fire, until the tide changed’. It is said that two of the English ships under the command of one Manuel de Castro, a deserter from the navy of Kanhoji Angre, tried to rush towards the shore but had to return back with heavy casualty.\textsuperscript{229} At 10 O’clock the boats pulled for the landing-place once again; but ‘the tide was still running so strongly’ that they were thrown into confusion, and many of the attacking party never landed at all.\textsuperscript{230} Yet, Boone was not disheartened, and despite the obvious impediments (tidal current as well as the continuous fire shots from the fort), he ordered his men to
land. The landing party quickly ran toward the gate of the fort, braving the shower of shots and stones. They rushed into batches and applied relentless pressure on the gate. Reportedly, an officer by the name of John Steele, ‘with his axe hewed at the gate, nearly effected an entrance, when the cowardice of two other officers, caused the attack to miscarry. One of them dropped down his sword, while the other came up to the gate and fired his pistol; but the bullet rebounded and struck him on the nose; upon which he ordered the drums to beat a retreat, and the soldiers got back to the boats…’

Boone’s fight for Khanderi was over, though a desultory bombardment continued for some days, and some shots were fired against Kulaba too. On the 14th, Boone returned to Bombay, ‘seeing that nothing could be effected’, and, on the 24th the whole English squadron made sail for Bombay, ‘after exhausting all their ammunition’. Much to relief of the besieged garrison, the blockade of Khanderi was thus finally over. Apprehensive of a fresh attack in the following year, Kanhoji opened channels of negotiations for a treaty of peace, through the good office of the Maratha sovereign Shahuji. This proved to be a good tactical ploy, for Kanhoji got the much needed relief to concentrate more on his defenses and striking capabilities. It should be remembered here that in military matters, the concept of peace does not exist; for peace is the time utilized to prepare well for the next war.

As per the English accounts, treachery and cowardice of the officers and soldiers appear to be the main reasons attributed to the failure of the Khanderi expedition. In the first instance, Manuel de Castro, was accused of treachery and was charged for being in league with Kanhoji. He was alleged to have allowed some of the Maratha vessels to slip through the Khanderi naval blockade (which he was reportedly looking after) and bring back the ammunitions and other necessary supplies for the fort. In the second, Rama Kamathi, a rich merchant of Bombay was also charged with conspiracy against the Bombay government. The cowardice of officers and soldiers has been highlighted while dealing with the course of action. The reason for lifting of the naval blockade after the culmination of the offensive on Khanderi has been ascribed to ‘the appearance of the Angre’s fleet from Vijaydurg, which had Bombay for a time at its mercy’. It was reported that Angre’s ships ‘now lay off the (Bombay) harbour, making it difficult for trading
vessels to go in or out. Three times the ‘Morrice’ got under way, and three times had to return, before she could start on her return voyage to Europe...233

A critical analysis of the entire episode in the Khanderi waters point towards a few valuable lessons learnt from the military point of view. Khanderi was fought as a defensive war from the point of view of the Marathas.

1) A naval blockade was brought about by the British to prevent any attempts by the Marathas to bring in the necessary supplies, whatsoever, for the garrison. Still, the British did not persist with the blockade, apparently for two reasons: (i) They were not sure that they would be in a position to prevent small Maratha vessels from bringing supplies to the island fortress.234 (ii) They were anticipating retaliation from a Maratha squadron from Kulaba or Vijaydurg; hence they had to finish their expedition as soon as possible. In this way, a prolonged naval blockade of the fort was out of question.

2) The British had the advantage of superiority of numbers (concentration of force) as well as technology. They had put into use nearly a hundred odd vessels of different capabilities to reduce this small island fortress. As compared to nearly 2000 of the Company’s fighters, the garrison strength of fort must not have been more than 1/4th of this. The fort guns indeed kept the English bomb-ships at bay, thereby preventing any significant damage to the fortifications. At the same time, the garrison could watch the enemy landing movements and could have taken counteractive measures, viz. directing the fire of the guns etc. towards the critical points. Had there been simultaneous landing on two different locations there would have been some different story to tell. But, that is what is called motivation and devotion to the cause a soldier is involved with. Kanhoji’s men were highly motivated under their commander Mankoji Suryavanshi whereas the story on the British side is the tale of corrupt, coward, inexperienced officers; and of soldiers who were more interested in their own fortunes rather than the cause.

3) Surprise, as an element of warfare, was used by the Marathas in this war to achieve the best result. It could be gathered from the British description of the expedition that the decision to land on the island was facilitated by the observation and the following conclusion that the Marathas faced severe shortage of ammunitions as the rate of return fire from the fort was quite insignificant. Even during the storming operation of the British troops during their first landing, more than gun shots, they faced stones which
were being hurled on them by the defenders of the fort near the gate. During the second landing, however, the fort guns started firing at a brisk pace, the impact of which was 'more demoralizing to the enemy than the actual damage caused by the guns'. During this time itself the besieged garrison charged out of the fort and launched such a fierce counter-attack that the English were not left with any courage to make another landing. In this way, the defense of Khandari could be likened with a brilliant tactical victory for which the defending garrison must be given full credit as they made up a case of inferior troops (in numbers) with inferior resources.

(E) SECOND ATTACK ON VIJAYDURG (SEPT-OCT. 1720) - In January 1719, an envoy from Shahuji had been deputed to Bombay to hold peace talks with Boone. While the talks were going on, both the sides exercised utmost restraint and avoided a path of collision between them. But the talks continued for long as the peace terms were being negotiated before being finalized. Boone was a shrewd administrator. Though he gave peace a chance, he seemed to be unsure of the implementation of the terms particularly from the side of the Marathas (Kanhoji Angre). Boone had, therefore, kept the other options open. In the first instance, he had started preparing for another showdown with Kanhoji Angre. It seems Siddi was also to be included in this campaign, but, for that, Bombay apprehended that Siddi would ask for money as well as a firm direction from the Mughals to do so. Bombay had embarked upon a very ambitious project of constructing a 'floating castle'. It was called the 'Phram'. It was designed with shot-proof sides to carry twelve 48-pounder guns. In other words, it was conceived as a floating battery. In the meanwhile, the Company's headquarters at London had sanctioned a sixty-gun ship St. George to be committed to the safety of Bombay harbour. By that time the construction of the protection walls around Bombay were also almost complete. To further strengthen his position against Kanhoji Angre, Boone tried to make common cause with the enemies of Angre. Boone was constantly in touch with the Siddi, and by sending him 'expensive presents' he was keeping him in good humour. Similarly, Boone also made repeated overtures to the Portuguese, but the Portuguese Viceroy did not seem enthusiastic about any alliance with the British which was, by nature, anti-Maratha. Boone also kept busy as he had ordered the construction of different types of
war-vessels to be used in his up-coming venture against Kanhoji Angre. Prospects of any peaceful settlement with the Maratha Admiral being very faint by the beginning of 1720, Boone concentrated on the second attempt on Vijaydurg.

By the time monsoon receded, Boone’s fleet for the expedition (destination kept secret till that time) consisted of the following vessels: ‘London’ (fitted with 40 guns), which acted as the flag-ship, ‘Victory’ (fitted with 26 guns) – a frigate, ‘Revenge’ (fitted with 18 guns) and ‘Defiance’ (fitted with 16 guns) – ghurabs, ‘Hunter’ – a galley, two galivats, a bomb ketch by the name ‘Terrible Bomb’, a fire-ship, and a number of fishing boats for landing troops. The troops for the expedition consisted of 350 soldiers and topasses and 80 chosen sepoys. In addition, some 2000 odd sailors, constituting the crew of the fleet, were also expected to facilitate and participate in the landing. Given, the number of the troops earmarked for the expedition, it is doubtful whether the English planned to take any of the strongholds of Kanhoji Angre on the coast through a direct/storming action. Kanhoji, on the other hand, in view of the stepped up preparations of the British, quite anticipated a determined British action on his possessions. However, he was unsure about the point of attack and was in a state of uncertainty. He had, therefore, enhanced the defenses of Kulaba by fortifying the island of Hirakot, which lay across the channel from Kulaba. Kanhoji Angre, unaware of the real intent of the English, kept the commanders of the other marine forts on high alert and waited for the British offensive. He had also requisitioned troops from the Maratha King for the protection of Kulaba. As a result, on the 30th of December, 1720, the Maratha Peshwa Bajirao had stationed cavalry strength of 7000 at Alibag.

On 5th of September, 1720, Boone appointed a committee for the management of the expedition. As the chairman of this committee, Boone, on 10th of September, appointed Mr. Walter Brown, a senior writer in the service of the Company, as the Commander of the operations. On 13th September, ‘Admiral’ Brown sailed with the Company’s squadron to Gheria.

**Action for Vijaydurg:** On way to Vijaydurg, the strength of the English fleet was to be reinforced with the addition of three vessels namely ‘Chandos’, ‘Pelham’ and the ‘Phram’. On the 18th, the Bombay fleet laid their anchors opposite to the Vijaydurg
fort. After taking position (nearly a mile away from the fort) as per Brown’s directions, the fleet started the course of action. A general bombardment of the fort, with a view to reduce it before storming, was undertaken first. But owing to the distance of the bombing vessels from the fort, the whole exercise of bombardment proved futile. The next day, therefore, the bomb-ketch and fire-ships were taken close to the fort and shelling was started again. As the luck would have it, it was discovered that due to faulty construction of the cannon barrels, they could not take sufficient discharge of powder for an effective range of fire. As a result, the shots fell too short of the target. Under such situations, Brown could not have done anything but to wait for the arrival of Boone’s prestigious project the *Phram*.

The *Phram* arrived on the 27th and was immediately dedicated to the task. But in the week preceding the arrival of the *Phram*, Brown tried to keep up the pressure on the fort’s garrison. On the 22nd, Brown decided to land a small contingent of his troops, led by one Mr. Gordon, on the coast with the assignment to occupy a building like structure on way to the fort. It is said that the other officers on the mission had objected to this particular scheme of Brown by arguing that it would be a folly to make such an attack before the arrival of the whole force. However, Brown persisted with his scheme. The garrison of the fort, on the other hand, monitored the enemy movement closely. After the enemy had made landing, a detachment from the fort swooped down upon them ferociously, and forced them to abandon their position with a heavy casualty. Brown, who was also watching the entire action, had to order two of his ships *Revenge* and *Hunter* to provide a cover fire to the retreating party so that further casualties at the hands of the garrison of the fort could be avoided. It should be noted that no such cover fire was provided to the landing party at the time of disembarkation. The Maratha garrison, therefore, took full advantage of this tactical folly committed by the British and made a daring attack on the British contingent from close range.

The landing adventure having failed, Brown was up for the next move so that the pressure on the fort was never relaxed. The very next day the bomb ketch was put to use once again, this time from a closer range. The shells missed the target as hopelessly as they did earlier. It was decided then to put off the whole operation till the arrival of the remaining ships of the squadron. But, the naval blockade of the harbour and the fort
continued with all the ships strategically positioned near the harbour waters. The logbook of the ship ‘London’ provides us with two significant pieces of information of the weeklong period of interregnum till the next course of action was undertaken. The logbook not only records the general story of drunkenness of the crew of the ships, but also records as to how the garrison of the fort utilized this opportunity to strengthen their defenses by erecting batteries. It records, “the boats (of enemy) full of armed men were constantly crossing the river...”, but nothing was done to intercept them. The long wait was finally over, and on the 27th the eagerly awaited ‘Phram’ along with the ‘Chandos’ and ‘Pelham’ joined the expedition. The ‘Phram’ was immediately deployed to the task of battering the fort. To the annoyance and bewilderment of all, it was discovered that the ‘untried machine’ would not deliver because of a ‘faulty design’ of the vessel. It was realized that the gun-ports were cut ‘too low’ to have allowed the shots to travel far. As a result the shots fell into the water as near as just 20 yards from the vessel. At the same time, the retaliatory fire from the fort prevented any attempt to take the ‘Phram’ closer to the fort. Undeterred, Brown immediately sent for the ship’s carpenters, who worked to make amends in the designing fault. In this way the momentum of action was lost, once again.

Brown had to devise new moves to make his plan work properly. He was confident that ‘Phram’ would soon be joining the thick of the action after the necessary changes were carried out; hence he planned yet another landing to physically assault the fort. Brown announced a reward of rupees forty per head to those who volunteered for landing. As a result some 59 men from the ship ‘Chandos’ volunteered along with nearly 180 from the other vessels of the squadron. The landing action was meticulously planned and it was decided that the landing would take place at two different places (for the purpose of distracting the enemy). One group would consist of 340 soldiers under the command of Major Stanton and the other comprising of 239 volunteers under the command of Captain Woodward. On the 29th, the ‘Phram’ joined the squadron after undergoing necessary repairs. It was put under the charge of Lieutenant Wise. The action commenced on the same day with the flagship London hovering around to direct the operations.
The ‘Phram’ moved strategically closer to the fort and started showering shots on the fort as well as the harbour. The other fire ships of the squadron added to the effect. The return fire from the fort was coming in a good speed. The exchange of fire continued throughout the day with two notable results. In the first, the shots from the English squadron (‘Phram’) were successful in destroying a number of Angre’s ships that had sought refuge in the river. The second noticeable event was that, though planned, no landing was attempted or made on the 29th. The landing might have been deferred either because of the heavy shelling from the fort or because of the presence of the Maratha vessels in the harbour as well as in the river. The events of the day convinced Brown that ‘Phram’ needed to be more accurate and effective if they wanted to carry out the operations as per a calculated strategy. Hence, Brown instructed the ‘Phram’ to move much closer to the fort so that the fort walls could be targeted. The ‘Phram’ accordingly moved closer towards the harbour taking cover of the darkness of the night. The firing was renewed the next morning; however, Lieutenant Wise was apparently in an ‘inebriated’ condition to have taken part in the proceedings. As reported, ‘the sailors took it upon themselves to fire the guns, each in their own way’. The nearness of the ‘Phram’ to the fort further endangered its safety as the retaliatory fire from the fort began in the morning. Reportedly, two of the shots from the fort fell on the ‘Phram’ causing deaths and injuries to the crew on board. The casualties were further appended by the bursting of a gun on board ‘Phram’. The explosion fired the gun on the opposite side of the deck which was loaded with grape and pointing over a boat full of topasses. ‘The flame from the gun ignited their cartridge boxes, and the poor wretches were terribly scorched and injured.’ In the meanwhile, the sustained fire of the other English ships in the inner harbour was successful in destroying a number of Angre’s ships that sought refuge in the river; ‘one of 500 tons, one of 200 tons, and 10 smaller ones were set on fire and burnt’. This was all the action of the day which had found mention in the entry of the logbook of the flagship ‘London’. By the evening, the ‘contented’ English squadron made a retreat from the advanced position (the blockade of the harbour, nonetheless continued) and the next few days were spent in resting and repairing the damage suffered by the ships.

“At this critical time when Brown was faced with the dilemma of making another attempt on Vijaydurg or to wind up the expedition”, writes Malgaonkar, “an excellent
The excuse for abandoning the expedition without loss of face presented itself. The Sawant of Wadi, (whose loyalties to the Maratha Swarajya were not beyond doubt even during the reign of Shivaji) came up with a proposal of a joint attack on the Angre’s territory in collaboration with the English squadron. He promised to commit ‘5000 infantry and 2000 cavalry’ to carry out an attack on Angre’s territory provided the English simultaneously attacked the coastal fort of Jaigad, which was some 16 miles southwards to the fort of Gheria. In this way, it could be distinguished that the plan of the Sawant was to engage Angre on two different fronts and to gain the maximum out of the action. The anxiety of Brown could be guessed from the following action: (a) he accepted this plan immediately; (b) he also wrote to Boone and sought permission to execute this plan; (c) he, in anticipation of Boone’s concurrence to this plan, dispatched a part of the Company’s fleet under his command towards Jaigad on 7th of October. This plan, however, also had to be aborted in the mid-way and the fleet had to be ordered to return to Bombay. The main reason for the ill fate of this plan was the non-availability of the Sawant’s troops for the ‘joint and simultaneous’ action as proposed by him. It is said that the English fleet kept waiting in front of Jaigad fort. Brown reached there in person on the 18th of October only to find that there was no corresponding action from the side of his ally, the Sawant. Still, Brown, probably in the fit of overzealousness, ordered for the commencement of bombardment of the fort of Jaigad. For two consecutive days the bombardment was carried on with no effect on the ‘not so strong’ fort. Brown’s suggestion for a landing there was thoroughly rejected by the other officers. Under such circumstances, realising the futility of the whole purpose, the squadron gave up the action and sailed back for Bombay.

It is interesting to note that before sailing for Jaigad, Brown had made a last effort to convince the officers at Vijaydurg to attempt a fresh landing at the shore to take the fort. However, the officers would not agree to any such proposal despite the best efforts of Brown. The officers’ reluctance to agree to any such enterprise might have been prompted because of the absence of a part of the fleet which was dispatched towards Jaigad on the 7th of the month. Brown, therefore, was obliged to raise the siege of Gheria and move to Jaigad. But the case at Jaigad was also far from being conducive and the entire expedition had to be terminated on the 21st of October.
Once again, there was enough reason for Kanhoji to stand tall. Unlike the previous time, the Marathas were anticipating a British action because of the recent preparations at Bombay. Kanhoji’s loyal officer Rudraji Anant, who was also the governor of the Vijaydurg fort, had managed the war quite well. The important lesson which emerges out of this entire episode is that more than anything else, it was the faulty machines of the English, the insubordination of the officials and soldiers alike and a poor guidance to the expedition that caused the British the embarrassment. As such, there was only one occasion when the English soldiers came into direct contact with the Maratha soldiers after landing, otherwise there was no man to man confrontation or even naval skirmish during the events stretched out to nearly two months. There was a need for the English to indulge in some kind of serious introspection as to what ailed their spirited preparations and why they failed to transform them into glittering success. Boone, fortunately, found an immediate excuse for the entire debacle as he forwarded his report of the events by pointing out that ‘Angre’s ships were faster and more maneuverable’. Boone had also placed orders for the construction of three fast, light ships, each of about 160 tons, for service under the Bombay council. Happily for Boone, the Company administrators (at London) appeared to be convinced with the logic and had assured that a squadron of the British Navy would be sent out to assist the East India Company at Bombay. Boone, thus, got a new lease of life and was encouraged to prepare another plan to bring down the authority of Kanhoji Angre in the Konkan waters.

(F) THE BATTLE FOR KULABA (DECEMBER 1721) - This battle was thrust upon Kanhoji Angre by a military and naval alliance of British and Portuguese establishments in India. This battle is interesting on many counts, some of which may be enumerated as follows. In the first instance, the British and Portuguese committed both their naval squadrons as well as their armies on land to achieve the objective (capture of the naval fort/base of Kulaba). In terms of sheer tactics, the combined European onslaught tried to achieve numerical superiority, so as to get an edge over their opponent. Thirdly, Kanhoji, who was besieged at his fort Kulaba, could not put into use his naval vessels against the enemies who had, as a pre-requisite, enforced a naval blockade of the
Kulaba fort. Despite all these limitations, the result of this battle went against the enemies of Kanhoji Angre.

Kanhoji had re-strengthened Kulaba as his naval headquarters early in the 18th century. In addition to the presence of a squadron of his naval fleet, the long-range guns and canons placed at the bastions of the fort of Kulaba added to its defenses. The adjacent fort of Hirakot was also equipped and its defenses were also strengthened recently as Kanhoji anticipated an attack on Kulaba – his naval headquarters. As per strategic considerations, the location of Kulaba was bothersome to the Portuguese and the British alike. As it was lying ‘too close’ to the British Company’s headquarters at Bombay, the threats emanating from Kulaba in combination with that of the island fortress of Khanderi, were terrifying for Bombay. On the other hand, the Portuguese establishment at Chaul was virtually sandwiched between the strongholds of Kanhoji Angre on the Konkan Coast. In addition, Kulaba stood somewhat equidistant from Kanhoji Angre and the Portuguese Chaul. Hence, the very purpose of the alliance between the Portuguese and the English made sense if it was to exert military pressure on Kulaba from both the sides simultaneously - through a joint action.

The Europeans, in broader sense, wanted to divert the attention of Kanhoji Angre on two fronts, viz. land and water. Their battle-plan, in the first place, was to strangulate the supply and any possible help to Kulaba through a naval blockade of the fort of Kulaba; and on the land, the plan was simply to ensure that no supply or enforcement reached Kanhoji Angre at Kulaba from the Maratha King. The timing of the assault (full credit must be given to the Europeans) could not have been much better as the troops of the Maratha King, led by the Peshwa, were busy fighting the Nizam of Hyderabad. The Europeans, therefore, were confident that their most avowed enemy on the Konkan coast was not in a position to get any supply or reinforcement from his Maratha Sovereign. Hence, they anticipated a ‘cornered’ Kanhoji Angre, to surrender and come to terms with them.

Boone had been skillful in proposing the plan of action to the Portuguese Viceroy. The Viceroy, in turn, was not only convinced of the outcome but also seemed quite enthusiastic about it. He assured that, in addition to a contingent of Portuguese fleet, approximately 3000 his troops would take part in this action. A similar number was
committed by the English and it was decided that the two forces would assemble at (Portuguese) Chaul, form where they would march together for Kulaba. Before the commencement of this expedition, the British (naval) strength was further augmented by the arrival of a squadron of British navy (sent by the Company’s Directors at London) under the command of Matthews. Boone was now confident, more than ever, regarding the outcome of the action.

The expedition took off on a positive note. The combined European forces soon surrounded the Kulaba fort from the land side. Displaying superiority of tactics, the Europeans divided their forces in such a manner that the English contingent grouped right in front of the fort and the Portuguese contingent, a little distance away. From their disposition, it was evident that the English would take the lead in the offensive against the fort and the Portuguese were to ensure that not only was the English action facilitated by their presence but was also subsequently followed by them. On the other hand, the naval squadrons of both the nationalities had secured the adjoining waters of the Kulaba fort in such a way that the small contingent of the Maratha fleet stationed at Kulaba had absolutely no chance of coming out and take field. However, it is surprising to note that incessant and intensified bombing of the fort was not carried out by the European fleet. The plausible explanations could be: (a) that the range of guns of the Kulaba fort were long enough to keep the enemy ships at bay, and prevent them to carry out such a kind of bombardment that could have damaged the fort walls; (b) that it was not deemed necessary by the Europeans to do so because of their confidence on the land-force which was to do the main job (of storming the fort). If option (b) of the above was the consideration, it could well be taken as a serious tactical error on the part of the Europeans because that would have, at least, diverted the attention of the comparatively insufficient garrison strength of the fort.²⁴⁶ Anyway, the presence of the European fleet in the vicinity also ensured that any naval assistance to the Kulaba fort was virtually ruled out till the time the land forces accomplished their mission. At the same time, there was nothing left for Kanhoji to guess regarding the next step of the European action.

The European action started on the 24th of December with the English party, approximately a thousand of them, taking the lead by way of a direct assault on the fort gate. The time of the assault has been recorded as 4 p.m. which suggests that the tidal
factor was also taken into consideration so that the plan succeeded. Colonel Braithwaite led the assaulting party to the main gate of the fort where they braved the heavy firing from the defenders of the fort. Simultaneously, attempts were made to scale the walls of the fort with the help of scaling ladders etc. However, all the attempts of the English were frustrated by the defenders, and after an hour’s determined efforts, the assault party lost courage and retreated in haste with a heavy casualty. In the process of retreat, they left behind their field guns, ammunition and equipments. Kanhoji exhibited brilliant tactical insight at that juncture and immediately asked Pilaji Jadhav to charge on the Portuguese detachment which had been a curious onlooker of the British action. The Cavalry charge of Pilaji Jadhav was so sudden and furious that the Portuguese contingent did not even get the time to react, and they fled from the field instead of giving a fight. The Maratha cavalry chased them and got as many of them as possible, under the blades of their swords. Elated by the proceedings, Kanhoji took another bold decision at that point of time. He sent a detachment from the fort’s garrison to deliver another blow, this time on the English contingent which was in the process of regrouping as they had made a retreat from the advanced position. Without much difficulty, the Maratha party was able to convert its assigned task into brilliant tactical success. The English troops were mercilessly harassed and chased away in the darkness of the night. By the next morning, quite unexpectedly, the environs of Kulaba, with the exception of the waters surrounding it, were free from the enemy presence.

The English blamed the Portuguese for the failure of the expedition. Kanhoji Angre, who was very much present at Kulaba to launch counter-offensive, also understood the implications of a combined attack. He took advantage of the so called differences between the English and the Portuguese, and immediately approached the latter with generous terms of peace. The Portuguese Viceroy, in turn, responded positively to the Maratha overtures, and had apparently asked the British too to come to terms with Kanhoji Angre. It has been argued that the Viceroy’s considerations for the ‘prospects of peace and amity with the Marathas’ were more a result of news of the arrival of a strong Maratha force under the command of the Peshwa for the rescue rather than sheer generosity or for the sake of the ‘treaties of the past’. Whatever the considerations be, the end result was a Portuguese-Maratha treaty signed between the
Viceroy and the Maratha Peshwa. The terms of this treaty were ratified by both the parties on the 22nd of January, 1722. The very nature of this treaty was ‘offensive-defensive’ as both of them agreed to help one another against enemies who were not at peace with themselves. Moreover, the Portuguese also agreed to supply and sell ammunition and artillery to the Peshwa at fair price. It could be noted that both Kanhoji Angre as well as the Peshwa benefited from this treaty in their own way. On the other hand, for the English and more specifically for the governor Charles Boone, the failure of the Kulaba expedition left him with no excuse. He had repeatedly failed against Kanhoji Angre and it was going to be difficult for him to justify his actions as the Governor of Bombay to the Directors of the Company at London. His term as the governor also came to an end and he sailed back for home as a dejected man.

The Maratha accord with the Portuguese, and the departure of Governor Boone from Bombay, necessarily slowed down the spate of European hostilities on Angre, but such a situation did not last long. The new governor of Bombay William Phipps, found a new ally in the French Company. The two companies quickly resolved their mutual differences and not only agreed to honour the passes issued by each other to the vessels plying on the Malabar coast, but also promised ‘not to assist the enemies of each other with ammunitions, guns or provisions directly or indirectly’...

On the other hand, the Dutch, duly prompted by the Sawant of Wadi, made an attempt on Vijaydurg in 1724. It is said that a fight had broken out between the troops of Angre and the Sawant near the latter’s territory. As the Dutch factory of Vengurla, which was nearby to the Sawant’s territory, was also affected and threatened with an attack, the Dutch decided to attack Angre’s stronghold Vijaydurg instead. The Dutch surrounded the fort of Vijaydurg with seven ships carrying 30-50 guns each and two bomb-vessels. It is also said that the Dutch attempted a landing too to storm the fort but they were beaten back by the garrison of the fort. The Dutch retreated after some time and no more action was witnessed by the two sides. Kanhoji Angre, in the meanwhile, tried to improve the relations with the new governor of Bombay, William Phipps. He sent a letter to Bombay offering peace and it was well reciprocated by the Bombay authorities.
1 For a list of the naval commanders during Sambhaji's time, see also Gokhale Kamal, *Sambhaji*, p. 320; Bendre V.S., *Chhatrapati Sambhaji*, pp. 288-89.

2 ERS-II, no. 521, p. 318.

3 Pissurlencar, P., *op. cit.*, p. 79; see also, Gokhale Kamal, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

4 Hatalkar V. G., *op. cit.*, pp. 27-32 (Chapter IV).

5 ERS - II, no. 469, pp. 277-78; no. 471, pp. 279-81; no. 481, pp. 293-94, etc.; SPS, no. 2213.


11 Ibid., p. 84.


13 Ibid.


16 Quoted by Gokhale Kamal, *op. cit.*, p. 82.


18 Quoted by Gokhale Kamal, *op. cit.*, p. 79 (vide fn. 27).


20 Ibid., p. 109.

21 Quoted by Gokhale Kamal, *op. cit.*, p. 79 (fn. 31).


25 Quoted by Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., p. 77 (fn.20).

26 Orme, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

27 Quoted by Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., p. 79 (fn. 29).


29 Orme, op. cit., p. 117-118.

30 Quoted by Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., pp. 80-81 (fn. 34).

31 Akhbarat, quoted by Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., p. 81 (fn.35).


33 Quoted by Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., p. 81 (fn. 41).

34 Orme, op. cit., p. 118; See also Sarkar J., Aurangzeb, Vol. IV, p. 312.

35 Ibid.

36 Sarkar J., House of Shivaji, p. 223.


39 Ibid., p. 110. Bombay reported damages worth Rs. 4500/-, between Nov. 1681 to July 1682 caused by the Maratha fleet operating from Khandari. Incidentally there is no corresponding action originating from the Siddi base of Underi. See also, Sarkar J., Aurangzeb, Vol. IV, p. 311.

40 The Portuguese were apparently uncomfortable with the Arab fleet. The contemporary Portuguese sources occasionally refer to this ‘unholy alliance’ between the two which was fearsome with respect to the Portuguese interests. See, Bendre V.S., op. cit., pp. 228-29.


43 Fawcett, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 112. The same information is also supported by the Persian source Akhbarat dated 4-11-1682, quoted by Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., p. 85.
Quoted by Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., p. 95; See also, Khobrekar, op. cit., p. 91. Incidentally, it is believed that Kanhoji Angre, who later on became the most famous Maratha Admiral, had joined the naval services under Sambhaji in the year 1685. Ketkar D. R., Sarkhel Kanhoji Angre, p. 24.


Shivacharitra Sahitya, Vol. IX, p. 79.


This information is based on some unpublished British correspondences quoted by Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., p. 98.

The practice of giving employment to such deserters was followed even during the time of Shivaji. Siddi Misri was one such prominent deserter who participated in many naval expeditions from the Maratha side. See Malgaonkar M, Kanhoji Angre, p. 64.


ERS, Vol. II, no. 519. See also, SPS, nos. 2287, 2292.

Ibid. In this letter, the fear is expressed that ‘if the Siddi still continues in that port (Bombay), he (Sambhaji) will be very severe’.

ERS, Vol. II, no. 521. Bombay writes to Surat that ‘the Raja’s Armado, consisting of 50 sails of ghrubs and galvats, all fitted at Rajapur and having on board between four to five thousand men...very suddenly will be coming northward...for the raja is very much enraged that we should harbour Siddi...’

Sambhaji had deputed his most able and shrewd diplomat Awaji Pandit to Bombay on 20th Nov, 1680, with a letter for necessary discussions with the English. See, Orme, op. cit., pp. 97-98.


Ibid., p. 79.

60 Quoted by Bendre V.S., op. cit., p. 339. See also Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., p. 80.


63 On 20th Jan, 1683, Sheikh Mohammed, Aurangzeb’s envoy, came to Goa with a letter of Aurangzeb. The Viceroy, though agreed to allow the Mughals to pass through the Portuguese territory and sell them food-grain; he refused to declare war on the Marathas because of the existing terms of friendship between them. See, Pissurlencar P., op. cit., pp. 79-80.

64 Orme, op. cit., p. 115.


66 Orme, op. cit., p. 115. See, also Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

67 Ibid., p. 126; The English records mention that Sambhaji had captured, in particular, Mahim, Kolva, Dantorah, Sargaon, Supara, Karanja and Elephanta from the Portuguese. See, Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., p. 89; and. Bendre V.S., op. cit., p. 235.

68 Orme, op. cit., p. 126. Orme mentions that Sambhaji’s troops landed (by galvats) and captured Karanja on 24th Dec, 1683.

69 Ibid., pp. 96-97; See also, Desai W. S., op. cit., p. 28.

70 Orme writes that Sambhaji immediately made peace with the British when he came to know about the intension of Aurangzeb to take Bombay as well as Bassein, Daman etc. In addition Sambhaji also requested Bombay not to allow the Mughal fleet to land at Bombay. Orme, op.cit., p. 115 and 120.

71 Ibid., p. 112. It is believed that the Portuguese exploited the situation of crisis created by Sambhaji who, after the failure of his Janjira campaign, prohibited the supply of provisions to the
island of Bombay. The Portuguese, too, stopped the export of provision from their ports to Bombay. As a result, the prices of the necessities in Bombay rose to almost 300%.

72 Quoted by Desai W. S., op. cit., p. 30.


75 Desai, W. S., op. cit., p. 33.

76 Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., p. 93 (vide fn. 83).


78 Desai W. S., op. cit., p. 36.

79 Ibid.

80 Ovington, op. cit., p. 92.

81 See, for example, EF (1665-67), p. 51, 293 etc.

82 Quoted by Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., p. 94.

83 Ibid. The representatives to Raigad were asked to convey that the rifles and pistols required by Sambhaji were out of stock.

84 Quoted by Bendre V.S., op. cit., pp. 308, 362-63.


86 A Portuguese letter dated 29 April 1682 reads, “An interpreter has just informed me that Sambhaji has sent stones and lime to Anjadiv and has ordered that no money should be spared to erect a fort…” quoted by Pissurlencar P., op. cit., p. 77. Interestingly, the English factors at Karwar also report that Sambhaji had already ‘started collecting necessary materials with the intent of fortifying the island’. Quoted by Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., p.106; See also Sarkar J., *Aurangzeb*, Vol. IV, p. 315.

87 Pissurlencar P., op. cit., p. 78; See also, Danvers, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 366.
Because of the proven connivance of the Portuguese with the Mughals when the latter initiated their military offensive against the Marathas; particularly the capture of Parsik from the Marathas and the permission to allow the Mughal fleet with provisions through Thane and other parts of the Portuguese territory.

Jedhe Shakawali-Karina, op. cit., p. 315. The Shakawali records that it was captured in the month of Margashirsha (i.e., Nov-Dec), 1683.

Pissurlencar P., op. cit., pp. 80-81.

Quoted by Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., p. 110


Bendre identifies this fort as ‘Morro Fort’ probably because the Portuguese used to call it Morro Cheul. Bendre V. S., op. cit., p. 233.


Kakodkar P. R., op. cit., p. 92; see also Gokhale Kamal, op. cit., p. 113.

Ibid., pp. 93-95.
See, Pissurlencar P., *op. cit.*, p. 82 (fn. 22); Yakut was the same person who had transported provisions for the Mughal troops in the Deccan when they were sent against Sambhaji. The Portuguese record also alleges that the Siddi ‘lent’ 400 men for the same purpose.

Pissurlencar P., *op. cit.*, p. 82 (fn. 22).

Pissurlencar P., *op. cit.*, p. 87 (fn. 56); See also, Gokhale Kamal, *op. cit.*, p. 114 (fn. 50).


Quoted by Gokhale Kamal, *op. cit.*, p. 114 (fn. 50).


*Shiva Charitra Pradeep*, p. 32; See also, Orme, *op. cit.*, p.123.


Ibid., p. 244; See also Orme, *op. cit.*, p. 123.


Manucci also provides us with valuable details of the Goa campaign. See, Manucci N., *op. cit.*, pp. 272-75.


The Viceroy might have realized that for the successful implementation of the Mughal campaign (against the Marathas) in the Deccan, it was necessary (for the Mughals) to maintain their supply through the sea in a convenient manner. However, had the Mughals been allowed to use Goa as a naval base, Aurangzeb might have liked to keep it for himself - thereby seriously undermining the safety of the Portuguese headquarters of the *Estado*.
Pissurlencar P., *op. cit.*, p. 88. Pissurlencar quotes a contemporary document to explain the sudden retreat of the Marathas. He says that the Marathas feared that they would meet the same fate as that of the Bijapuri forces which had captured the 'island of the dead' in 1570 but were totally destroyed by the firing from the Portuguese fleet which had surrounded the island, thereby making any escape impossible.


124 *Kaifiyat, Yadi* etc. p. 3; see also, Duff Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 231, Nairne, A. K., *op. cit.*, p. 79.

125 On the east coast, the English Company had entered into a severe conflict with the Mughals apparently because of illegal exactions (from the Company establishments) by the Mughal officials. The English, in retaliation, had sacked Hugli in 1686, fought at Hijli and committed atrocities at Balasore in 1688, before finally making peace with the Mughals. Probably, as a means of revenge, Aurangzeb ordered the Siddi to attack the British establishment at Bombay. See, Sarkar, J., *History of Aurangzeb*, Vol. V, pp. 246-255.

126 Wright Arnold, *Annesley of Surat and His Times*, p. 128.

127 Ovington, *op. cit.*, p. 94.


131 Kakodkar P. R., *op. cit.*, pp. 272-75.


133 Sen, S. N., 'Half a Century of Maratha Navy', JIH, Vol. XI (Part I-III). p. 256. It has been suggested by Sen that shortly after the flight of Rajaram to Jinji, a Maratha vessel
circumnavigated Cape-Comorin and safely conveyed ladies of the royal family to their new abode.


136 See, Kakodkar, *op. cit.*, p. 159. This was used as one of the pretexts for the Mughal action on the Portuguese possessions in the north by Aurangzeb.


138 Apte, B. K., *op. cit.*, p. 201-03. Apte gives details about two types of passes – *Dastak* and *Kaul*. While a *Dastak* was a pass permitting the ship (possessing it) to sail within the jurisdiction of the issuing power, a *Kaul*, on the other hand, allowed the holder to move on all the seas, on the authority of the issuing government. The *Kaul* enabled to identify the nationality of the ship. It seems that a ship possessing a *Kaul* was not necessarily exempt from purchasing a *Dastak* of a foreign government.

139 *Kaifiyat, Yadi etc.*, p. 2; the surname Angre is derived from the name of the family’s hereditary village Angarwadi near Pune.

140 *Ibid*, Tukoji was subsequently elevated and made a commander of 200.

141 Malgaonkar M, *op. cit.*, p. 12; Malgaonkar has written a brilliant account of the life and achievement of Kanhoji Angre.


143 This description is largely drawn on the basis of *Kaifiyat, Yadi etc.*, pp. 2-3.

144 *Ibid*, p. 3.


146 *Kaifiyat, Yadi, op. cit.*, p. 3; He not only strengthened their defenses but also assimilated a sizeable number of vessels as a part of his navy and began to exercise his authority over the
waters of Konkan; Dhabu, D. G., *op. cit.*, has listed as many as 51 different types of boats/vessels being used during the Angre period.

147 Malgaonkar M., *op. cit.*, p. 78.

148 *Kaifiyat, Yadi, op. cit.*, p. 4.


150 Ibid., p. 65.


154 Ibid., p. 79, 83.


156 Malgaonkar M., *op. cit.*, p. 81; though Mohite was not accorded any such title.

157 See, Dhabu, *op. cit.*, Chap. 2, pp. 11-12.

158 It seems probable that the Siddi fleet must have charged from Mazagaon where it wintered during the monsoon. See, Banaji D. R., *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.

159 Quoted by Khobrekar V. G., *op. cit.*, p. 127; See also Malgaonkar M., *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85.


162 Ibid.


164 The relationship between the British and the Dutch governments were friendly at that point of time in Europe. Hence, it was expected that the respective trading companies would also follow a cordial relation between them overseas.


Rajaram, however, sold Pondicherry to the Dutch even though the French were ready to pay as high a price as 25,000 pagodas for it.

Mainly on account of the possession of the island fortress of Janjira as well as the hospitality extended by the English - who never allowed the enemies of Siddi to chase him down to Mazagaon where the Siddi usually wintered his fleet every year.

Shipping and ship-building industry flourished in India in the 16-17th century. Many large and sea-worthy ships owned by big merchants or the royal families made rounds to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea region. For more information on ship-building activities in India, see, Qaisar, A. J., 'Shipbuilding in the Mughal Empire during the 17th Century Shipbuilding...' IESHR, Vol.2, June 1968, pp. 149-170.

The proximity of the site from Bombay, the mainstay of the British enterprise in India, added to the strategic value of this fort. It was built quite strong with massive ramparts including seventeen bastions, where heavy guns were deployed to ward off the enemy. One of the gates opened towards the coast side which was well out of reach during high tides. The other gate (towards south) opened in the sea and had a fixed landing stage.

For example the people belonging to the Koli, Bhandari and other seafaring castes could be well utilized for naval services. See, *The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island*, Vol. I, (Chap IV).
The Siddi had no options but to come to terms with the Marathas/Kanhoji Angre in view of the peace which was signed between Kanhoji Angre and the English at Bombay in the year 1713. Kanhoji, as a result, was free to direct his energy toward the reduction of Siddi.

Though the Portuguese were apparently not pleased with this treaty and had offered their help to the Mughals against Kanhoji Angre; See Khobrekar, op. cit., vide fn. 83, p. 129.

It should be remembered that Siddi was the vassal of the Mughal emperor and he still retained the prestigious Maratha fort of Raigad ever since he captured it from the Marathas after the death of Sambhaji.

The Bombay letter mentions that the Siddi, for his kind treatment to the Bombay vessels and to maintain friendship with him, ‘may be given a present of three yards of scarlet cloth, a pair of pistols and gilt sword.’


Pissurlencar P, op. cit., p. 150.

Ibid.

Quoted by Desai, W. S., op. cit., p. 56.

255
It is because of such actions that Kanhoji had been referred to as rebel, ‘independent of the Maratha Raja’ by the British.

So important was this fort to Kanhoji’s scheme of things that when an agreement was arrived at with the Peshwa, Khanderi was also included in the list of the 26 forts and other fortified places transferred to him by the Chhatrapati Shahu, whom he had transferred his allegiance to. For the list of the forts transferred to Kanhoji Angre, see, Dhabu, *op. cit.*, chap. 2, p.16.

The English Company had just concluded a futile war at Vengurla and with the Karwar Raja; See John, Biddulph, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-98; See also Malgaonkar M., *op. cit.*, Chapter 33.

On 7th of May, it was decided that an expedition against Vijaydurg would comprise of 20 galivats, manned with sepoys, to retake, if possible, the captured vessels, ‘if they were attacked,
to repel force by force, and if possible plunder his country." Refer, John, Biddulph, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

214 As per traditions followed in Maharastra, when the sea became quite rough at the onset of the monsoon, the sea going vessels were pulled ashore for repairs etc. Moreover, because of the heavy and incessant rains, it was not possible to undertake any sea voyage/operation of fruitful nature. Once the rains subsided (by the month of September-October), the Marathas would venture again into the sea preferably on the auspicious day of *Narli Purnima*. Even Ovington, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82, takes note of this festival. 123. The *Narli Purnima* is still celebrated in the coastal Maharastra.


216 While Malgaonkar mentions that there were 2500 men, Desai, [*op. cit.*, p. 66] quotes 4000 men, who made great effort to reduce Gheria.


218 The ships hauled ashore or even those standing in the harbour were usually covered with dry palm-leaf matting to save them from being drenched in the monsoon shower. Such thatches were naturally inflammable.


222 It should be remembered that the harbour of the fort lay in the concave looking structure which was towards the eastern side of the fort.

223 The first being the reduction of the fort through continuous cannonading, and the second being a direct naval engagement.

224 It was the eastern side where the harbour was located and also the side which led to the main gate of the fort; Malgaonkar [*op. cit.*, p. 209] writes that over 300 men were to be landed there.
With the strength of a battalion, numbering 558, commanded by Capt John mills; quoted by Malgaonkar, *op. cit.*, p. 209.


This decision was based on the assumption that the garrison faced a ‘critical shortage’ of ammunition.

Boone is reported to have asked his sailors to ‘volunteer’ for landing. Rich rewards viz. 40 rupees in cash [nearly equal to 5 pounds at that time] compensation for the loss of a leg or arm @ 30 pounds; employment for life under the company; the married men were promised, if killed, that their widows should receive 30 pounds, 10 pounds extra for each child. For a detailed discussion, see, John, Biddulph, *op. cit.*, pp.124-125.

Ibid., p. 125. Some fifty ore sixty men were killed or wounded before the landing was effected.

Some boats also capsized throwing the landing party into water.


In fact, they blame the de Castro let the Maratha boats with necessary provisions to reach Khanderi.


It is interesting to note that the Phram was not ready when the expedition sailed for its destination. This implies that the expedition was taken at hand without proper preparations – an
example of the overconfidence of the British, and at the same time, gross miscalculation of the strength of Kanhoji Angre.


238 Hirakot was a coastal fortress, which was adjacent to the fort of Kulaba. Possession and proper fortification of this ‘twin fortress to Kulaba’ would have surely deterred the enemy from making any daring attack on Kulaba. See, Ketkar D. R., *op. cit.*, p. 27. Ketkar believes that the fort of Sarjekot was constructed in 1699, whereas Hirakot was fortified in 1700 A.D. by Kanhoji Angre after a naval war with the Siddi of Janjira.
as 1673, two new vessels built at Bombay were taken by governor Aungier to boost the strength of the ‘Bombay Marine. References of repair works being carried out at Bombay are also aplenty in the English records.

That fight was over the interpretation of the Mughal firman to the Maratha Monarch which virtually made the latter the de-facto sovereign of the area earlier held by Shivaji. It also gave the right to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of the Deccan Subah.

It is estimated that the garrison strength of the fort must have been about 1,000 infantry and 700 cavalry. In addition a detachment comprising of 1,500 cavalry and 1,000 infantry, sent by the King Shahu had already arrived. This contingent, led by Pilaji Jadhav, was deployed outside, near the northern side of the fort.

Incidentally, Boone’s ship started on its voyage to England on the same day when the treaty between the Peshwa and the Portuguese was finalized i.e. 9th January, 1722.

Foster, Maratha Series, Vol. II, p. 36.