Introduction
INTRODUCTION

The island of Bombay is an ancient property of English East India Company; it hath hitherto been, of all her settlements, the most conducive to the greatness of the nation in Asia; yet, through the splendour of achievement, great acquisition of the territory, and immense harvests of wealth in Bengal and the Coast of Coromandel, it hath been in some measures overlooked and as if in a corner of world, unnoticed.

-Pechel, S., An Historical Account of the Settlement and Possession of Bombay by the English East India Company..., London, 1781, 1

Bombay figures in the writings of the ancient travellers as one of the ports of the Thana Coast, playing a leading part in the foreign commerce of Western India. The island city of Bombay originally consisted of seven scattered islands around the coast of Aparanta (konkan). It was known to Ptolemy as Heptensia. These islands consisted of Kolobhat, Aamannis Isle, and the central island of Bombaim, Machagaan, Varlee, Sewree, and Newala.¹ John Fryer, an English traveller, who visited the Bombay island in 1670's reported that there were seven islands, he referred to the islands of, Salsatte, Bombay, Trombay and others.² But the area of the island, or of the separate islands, was not known in the seventeenth century, but the length of the island was estimated to be eight miles, and its circumference about twenty miles.³

Bombay thus was not a single island, but a cluster of seven separate islands, different in sizes, shapes, and geological features. The southernmost island, long and narrow, was called Kolaba, and immediately to its north was the small triangular Old Women’s Island. Further north lay the largest of the islands, shaped like the letter ‘H’. Its original name was ‘Mumbai’, derived from Mumbadevi, the patron goddess of its early Koli inhabitants, and it was later corrupted to Portuguese ‘Bombaim’ and English ‘Bombay’. North of Bombay was Mazagoan island to the east, and Worli Island to the west. The two northernmost islands were Mahim to the west and Sion-

¹ S.M.Edwards, Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island (here after, G.B.C.I), Bombay, 1909, 1, 2.
³ Ibid, 68.
Wadala-Sewri to the east. Originally each of these islands were known by their individual names, but gradually came to be called Bombay collectively.\textsuperscript{4}

Political power in Bombay changed hands many times. This island belonged to the Silhara dynasty till the middle of the 13th century,\textsuperscript{5} and then it came under the Sultanate of Gujarat.\textsuperscript{6} It was in 1508 that the Portuguese Governor Francis Almeida sailed in to the island and his countrymen called it Bombahia (good bay).\textsuperscript{7} Bahadur Shah of Gujarat was forced to cede this island to the Portuguese in 1534.\textsuperscript{8} Later it was given to the English as a part of the dowry by the Portuguese in 1661.\textsuperscript{9} It was in 1668 Bombay was transferred to the Company by the English Crown.\textsuperscript{10}

The transfer of Bombay to the Company in 1668 and its subsequent rise after was a watershed in the politico-economic history of the Western Coast. The politico economic significance of the acquisition of Bombay was great since it was the first territorial possession of English in India on the West Coast. It acted as a bulwark against and also an escape from the Mughal authorities and later from the Marathas (who emerged as the greatest power after the fall of the Mughal imperial authority in the early 18th century). It could also be used as a base against the Dutch and the Portuguese in times of emergency. Thus great concern and interest was shown by English East India Company to develop Bombay as a politico-commercial center with its own production by encouraging merchants like Parsis and Armenians to settle on the mainland, strengthening fortification, establishing mint, judiciary encouraging shipbuilding etc. which became possible under the aegis of governors like Aungier, (1670-77), Bonne (1715-22) etc.

\textsuperscript{4} G.B.C.I, I, ch.1.
\textsuperscript{5} G.B.C.I, II, 8-17. For details about the early history of Bombay, refer Da Cunha, \textit{Origin of Bombay}, Bombay, 1900.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid, 17-24.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid, 30.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid, 30. For detail about Portuguese rule in Bombay see Da Cunha, \textit{Origin of Bombay}.
\textsuperscript{10} E. E. Sanisbury, \textit{Court Minutes of East India Company}, Oxford, 1938.(here after Court Minutes) 1668-70, xiv. Referring to the seven island Aungier in his report to the Company in 1673 he wrote that the number of island which were seven had become four because of breaches and overflow of sea at several places. These four islands were Kolaba, Mahim, Worli and Bombay. Fawcett Charles, Art. “Report by Gerald Aungier on Bombay”, \textit{JBBRAS}, Vol. VII, 1931, 13.
The company had long realized the importance of this island as a naval station. Since it was under English sovereignty it could be fortified without offending any coastal powers and the Mughal Empire. In case of any troubles from their Indian or European rival it was easy to maintain their servants by keeping firm hold on Bombay.

While favourable location of Bombay along the Western Coast equipped her for its development as a port. But the geographical relationship of Bombay with western and central India was not very close. Bombay is situated on the Western Ghats and surrounded by the mountain ranges of Sahyadri's. This topography has hindered her inland communication with the central and northern India. In fact till eighteenth century the trade routes linking northern and central India with Bombay terminated almost three hundred kilometers away from Bombay. The routes coming from Surat also stop short of Bombay at Bassein.

This made Bombay dependent on for most of her activities on the seas such as for trade, provisions to the town etc. Thus it was imperative for her to build a powerful marine, increase garrison and fortify the town. This was also important in the context of her surrounding neighbours. For these reasons Court of directors directed the Bombay council to fortify the island. Forts were built at Mazagoan, Sion, Worli, Sewri and Mahim in later seventeenth and eighteenth century.

The West Coast especially the Konkan coast during this period was the playground for many small principalities and chiefs. The Portuguese had their bases at Daman, Diu, Bassein, and Salsette. Further south was Bombay under the English. Coastal strips of Alibag, Revendana, Janjira, Bankot, Suvarndurg and Dabhol were under the jurisdiction of Sidi. In the Ratnavali district of the south of Konkan, the Kudal of Savantwadi possessing Ratnagiri, Rajapore, and Vengurla and Malvans were political entities. Angria's had control over the Kolaba stretch. Marathas were making

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11 For details see Chapter 1.
13 Geographically West Coast stretches from Sind in the north to Malabar in the south.
14 For details about the description of these political powers refer Gazetteer of India, Maharashtra State, Ratnagiri District (Bombay, 1962, revised edn.) and Gazetteer of India, Maharashtra State, Kolaba district (Bombay, 1964, revised edn).
their presence felt almost over every stretch of western coast during this period especially after the fall of imperial Mughal's.

The defence of island was thus of prime important for Bombay and would not have been possible without the fortified settlement. The development of this town depended much on the security it provided to her inhabitants, which in turn could contribute to the growth of the town.\textsuperscript{15} Security was also important to attract various merchant classes to this island if she ever desire to be the commercial entrepot on the coast. The protection offered by these fortified settlement to the Indian merchants significantly altered the traditional relationship between them, during this period. This became evident in 1660s during Marathas’ raids on Surat that the Indian merchants came to see the English settlements as heavens for themselves and their property.\textsuperscript{16}

Apart from offering a safe asylum to many merchants the English maintained their fortified settlements in these hostile environs to raise revenues from the inhabitants. The commercial fortified English settlements hence were increasingly becoming part of the mainstream commercial life of the coast with indigenous mercantile classes identifying their interests with the former.

To provide safe asylum or encouraging merchants to settle on this island though was of utmost importance for the making of this town but what was more important for any town would be to sustain this population by maintaining the supply of grains, meat and other provisions of daily life. Supply of provision for any town mainly depends on its own production or her ability to procure them from her hinterland either through land or seas.

The other important aspect for any town would be to develop the system of administration pertaining to various spheres such as civil, judiciary or defence. It is these instruments of administration which provide any town her unique features. When the English took possession of the island it was merely a fishing village with

\textsuperscript{15}The main inhabitants of Bombay were Kolis, Bhandaries, Portuguese Christians, Mahar, Kunbies, Angris, Prabhus, Paravas and Parsis etc. for detail about the population of Bombay refer G.B.C.I, I, ch.III.

\textsuperscript{16} For example during Shivaji’s second raid on Surat, the son of a wealthy merchant of Surat asked for the permission to migrate to Bombay from the English, Forrest, G.W, Selection from the letters, dispatches and other State papers, Home series, Bombay, 1887, 1 ; i (Here after F.H.S.) .
Portuguese manor house. The landed tenure of Bombay under the Portuguese was
feudal. All land belonged to the King of Portugal and was leased out to individuals as
a reward for meritorious service in war, or to religious orders. The tenants were liable
for paying a quit-rent and for rendering military service or furnishing troops whenever
demanded by the King.\textsuperscript{17} Thus all the land in Bombay was leased out on a long term
basis, and the largest parcels of land were controlled by the Franciscan and Jesuit
priest who occupied most of the northern part of the Island. In the early 1660's, the
most important landholders were the Jesuits of Mahim, the Lord of the Manor of
Mazagon, and the Lady of the Manor of Bombay, who were said to have “engrossed
into their hands above three parts of the whole island.”\textsuperscript{18} Since Bombay was the first
English territorial possession on the subcontinent it acquired all the more importance
to her. Bombay had all laws, codes, and land tenures in Portuguese, it became much
bigger challenge to Bombay to introduce her laws on the island to make it an English
town.

The town planning for any town acquires much importance so was the case with
Bombay. When the English took possession of the island it hardly had anything
substantial to call it a town. At the time of the cession, Bombay only had the Manor
House described as “a pretty well Seated but ill Fortified House...About the House
was a delicate Garden, voiced to be the pleasantest in India”.\textsuperscript{19} It was entirely left
upon the subsequent governor to give shape to Bombay. The town of Bombay like
Calcutta, Madras was to be developed on those lines.

Bombay initially had an unhealthy climate, which took a heavy toll of the European
lives and gave rise to the dictum “two monsoons are the age of the man”.\textsuperscript{20} Bombay
also had a disadvantageous position compared to other English settlements i.e.
Madras and Calcutta. But for the Court of Directors the significance of the island lay
in its independence, territorial sovereignty and development of its maritime power (in
this the Bombay Marine played a significant role in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century). The complete
territorial control the British exercised over this island needs to be seen as the most

\textsuperscript{17} G.B.C.I, I, 308-9.
\textsuperscript{18} EFI, 1665-67, 289.
\textsuperscript{19} Fryer, op.cit., 63
The rise of 'Bombay' as a fortified settlement, along with Calcutta and Madras is a prime example of an Indian colonial port city. It is indeed not surprising that all the three fortified settlements were founded by E.E.I.Co. These cities represented essentially a shift away from the regional, political and economic system that were based on the link between the island centre and fort which complemented each other, to other systems, where the port combined political, administrative and overseas roles. Since they functioned in alien and hostile settings, they were to be duly fortified to render themselves capable of self-defence.

HISTORIGRAPHICAL WRITINGS
James Douglous, *Bombay and Western India, a series of stray papers*, London, 1900, the book traces the history of Bombay after its possession by the English in 1661. Though the book is interesting but its sketchy in approach as it only gives the narration of events with minimal analysis. The book leaves much scope to be desired as it hardly touches upon the problems faced by the English in terms of health, food etc.

J.H. Gense, *How Bombay was Ceded*, Bombay. The book deals about the various deliberations, problems that went through between the Portuguese and the English for transfer of Bombay. Gense deals thoroughly with this period between 1661 to 1665. Since he is concerned with mere transfer of the island to the English, the book is very much political in nature. There is the major weakness of the book.


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21 Bruce Annals, II, 554-555.
period in Bombay, which often is overlooked by other authors. However the major
drawback about this interesting book is that it lacks continuity of themes.

exhaustive study on judicial system of Bombay, 1661-1726. Book deals with various
issues related to Bombay within the larger frame work of judicial system. The book
gives in great detail the working of court at Bombay, various trials at Bombay. The
book ends with the establishment of Mayor Court in 1726. The book though
exhaustive but sometime it’s monotonous because of the authors more often quoting
the original text of English document.

dealing with Bombay and Sidi’s. The book focuses on early English attempts to
capture Janjira, Sidi’s visits to Bombay in 1678, 1688-89 etc. The book also deals
with the changing fortunes of this island vis-a- vis Sidi in the 18th and early 19th
centuries. The book is very interesting in understanding the Bombay’s political
relations with Sidi’s from seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.

The book is a monograph and deals beautifully with Bombay and Malabar in 1720’s,
the country trade of Bombay and Surat in 1730’s and Bombay presidency in war time
in 1740-50. The book however does not deal with Bombay town per say though
provides interesting facts about the private trading of the Bombay governors such as
Robert Cowan etc.

the relations of Marathas and Bombay during the period 1668-1774. The book deals
with the Presidency of Bombay, Keigwin mutiny, Bombay relations with Angria and
Marathas. The author also deals with Bombay relations with Peshwas. The author also
deals with Bombay and troubles at Poona and Bombay’s support to Raghoba and fall
of Salsette in 1772-74. The book is exhaustive study on the political relations with
Marathas and Bombay.
M.D. David, *History of Bombay 1661-1708*, Bombay, 1973. The book by David is important for the early history of the town up to 1708. The book touches upon many aspect of Bombay life in this period but it fails on many accounts in providing analysis of various aspects of the town life such as how Bombay tackles the problem of health, supply in the town, trading problems though discussed but it seems mere narration of facts.

Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian merchants and Decline of Surat 1700-1750*, reprint, Delhi, 1994. The study offers the great insight into the decline of the Surat city and role of merchants especially Abdul Gafoor in the Indian Ocean trading network. The study tells us how the collapse of three empires i.e. Mughal’s, Ottoman, and Safavids in India, Turkey and Persia lead to the decline of Surat. The book also touches though little on Bombay. The study leaves much to be desired about the city Bombay how it grew in its earlier phases and different problems the city faces to sustain itself.

Rodrigues, C.D., *Bombay Fort in the Eighteenth Century*, Delhi, 1994. The book comprises of nine chapters dealing with various facets of the town such as town planning, armed diplomacy, population trade etc. the book offers the good description of Bombay in eighteenth century. But the author seems to miss few important points relating to health, supply of provision to the fort.

Laxmi Subramaniam, *Indigenous Capital and Imperial Expansion*, OUP, 1996. The book is an important addition to the theme. The theme of the book justifies its content. The book offers the good insight on emerging political and merchant alliances which she called as ‘Anglo- Bania’ order. The book though important deals Bombay in 18th century and focuses largely on the commercial aspects rather than the internal dimensions of the Bombay town such as planning, fort etc. But it can easily be understood since the book is on role of indigenous capital and its use in imperial expansion.

focusing on Malwa opium and urban development in early Victorian Bombay respectively. Though the book is interesting but it’s limited in scope since it’s a mere collection of three articles it does not add much to our knowledge about the town planning of the earlier period.

Thus various studies have focused on the role of the merchants and their use of capital in the port cities, the internal dynamics and their survival mechanism has been relegated to the background. The understanding of development and growth of the port town in the 17th and 18th centuries were based on the gradual development and growth of trade and commerce along the region. The need for the secure trading outpost and a stable economic base for the European Companies was prerequisite in understanding of Bombay’s development.22

These studies viewed the development of Bombay as a fortified settlement and a commercial centre in the 18th century in the light of the changes in the Indian Ocean and the transformation within the trading system of Surat. The studies have focused on how the English East India Company utilized its commercial links with the major sections of Surat’s business community to consolidate Bombay as a commercial centre. But the place occupied by this port town needs to be examined in the context of its survival against all odds. Bombay’s geographical and economic significance in the later 18th and 19th centuries cannot be denied. But in retrospect the establishment and the consolidation of the town needs to be studied in the context of 17th and 18th centuries.

The study is thus an attempt to look into the internal dimensions of the city especially as a fortified town and how this settlement maintained its force and fortification despite the Director’s policy of reduction and alteration both in Army and Marine. The study will look into the various facets needed for making of the town mainly the role of the ruling authorities, trading problems, prospects and strategies used by the company at Bombay, the town’s need of supply of provisions, administration (civil, military and judiciary) and health. Though many studies have been taken on Bombay, the aspects of health, provisions for the town and its related effects on the inhabitants

22 This is pointed out by Mariam Dossal, Pamela Nightingale, S.T. Sheppard, S. M. Edwards and Holden Furber.
have been overlooked. The study is an attempt to further existing body of work taking into consideration the above noted factors and would try to locate the city and its participation in the coastal politics of the period concerned. The study thus would try to show that political maneuvering (though not political expansion) was clearly a major factor in the making of Bombay. Such a process was also mirrored at a roughly contemporaneous period in the rise of Calcutta as a fortified settlement of the eastern coast.

The ensuing pages will focus on the period from 1661 to 1755. The year 1661 is significant for transfer of the island from the Portuguese to the British as part of the marriage treaty of Charles II and Infanta Cathrine. The study ends at 1755, as during this year, English put an end to the ascendancy of Angria with the help of Marathas. Since Angrias were one of the main enemies of the English on the coast, the victory over them was of great importance to Bombay. As from now onwards English began to treat the Marathas, the most important power of the period on equal terms and conditions.

The other reason to restrict the period of study was that the years following 1755 were leading to a shift in political alliances on the subcontinent in particular and on the coast in general. The battle of Plassey though had limited effects on the west coast polity in general but for the English Company it changed their fortunes. In 1759 they also took Surat castle which made them all the more a contender for the political power on the subcontinent. The significant change that occurred from our period of study was in the relationship of English with the regional powers of the subcontinent. Earlier English were allies of regional powers but from now onwards regional powers were allies of the Company either by choice or compulsion. These major changes in power equations among the English and regional powers on the subcontinent have led to the limiting of the period up to 1755.

Chapter one, tries to analyze the formative phase of the island city Bombay from 1661 to 1677. The chapter will deal with many pertinent queries such as search of

23 Ibid, 104-105.
25 For detail of fall of Surat Castle refer Laxmi Subramanium, Indigenous Capital and Imperial Expansion, OUP, 1996
English for a safe trading station on the western coast and the evolution of English policy on Bombay’s possession and their initial efforts to consolidate their position on the island. The chapter will also deal with the struggle of English and Portuguese in the transfer of island and the mistake made by Humphrey Cooke while taking possession of the island without its dependencies which had a long term impact on Bombay as a trading port. Bombay although it was taken from the Portuguese in 1665 by Crown representatives could not solve the issue of passes between the Company representatives in Surat and Crown representatives in Bombay. The chapter will try to look into the major disputes between them which led to the transfer of the island to the Company in 1668. The other things of importance were the issue of established Portuguese norms on the island such as land administration, justice (though it has been given treatment as a separate chapter) etc, and how English tried to get over these norms to establish British institutions on the island such as defense, judiciary, hospital etc. (these themes have been given a separate treatment in different chapters).

The role of Governors will also be analyzed in the formative phase of the city especially of Gerald Aungier. The period is important to locate how the island of fishermen and toddy trappers was transforming itself in to a town of craftsmen and merchants.

Chapter two will analyze the growth and development of this port town from 1678 to 1755. The chapter will deal with many pertinent questions of the time i.e. Bombay’s quest to be a coastal power under the Directorship of Josiah Child with change in their strategy on the lines of Dutch and its repercussions on the subcontinent in general and on Bombay in particular. These repercussions can be seen in the form of mutiny in Bombay under Captain Keigwin and clash with the Mughals on the subcontinent. The chapter will also analyse the various problems English company was facing at home and its ill effects on the island in the form of clash between the two Governors Nicholas Waite and Gayer representing New and Old English Companies. The chapter will also analyse changes in Bombay’s fortune in the early eighteenth century from the period of crisis to steady progression under the governors like Charles Boone, William Phillip, William Wake and Richard Bourchier etc. The chapter will also look at the various efforts made by the various governors of Bombay in the development of this port. The period also deals with political and
diplomatic role by the Bombay governors on the coast which was necessary for the survival of Bombay.

Chapter three deals with Bombay and the politics on the West Coast. Bombay was surrounded by many regional powers on the coast such as Marathas, Sidi’s, Angria’s, Savantwadi’s etc and by European Companies French, Dutch and Portuguese. The chapter will look into Bombay’s relation with these powers. The chapter will also analyse how the Bombay government from time to time changed strategy and used political diplomacy against its neighbours sometimes for her survival and other times as a bargaining strategy. The chapter will thus analyse company’s shift from mere commercial interests to a wider role.

Chapter four and five deal with Bombay’s trade-its problems, prospects and strategies. The fourth chapter will look at the early phase of Bombay from its transfer from Portuguese till 1677 i.e. Aungier’s time. The chapter will focus on various problems Bombay had in establishing trade on the island relating to the merchants, trading communities, mint etc. The fifth chapter will look in to the period from 1678 to 1755, when Bombay had to deal with many problems internally and externally. The internal problems related to the clash between Old and New companies, interlopers, depleting treasury etc. while the external problems were war with hostile neighbours such as Sidi’s, Mughal’s etc. This Chapter will thus try to locate Bombay trade under these circumstances in late seventeenth and first half of eighteenth century. Since Monetary system is the integral part of any trading system the chapter will thus also deal with the mint system in Bombay its needs and problems.

The subsequent chapters will focus on the various problems of the town such as health, justice, provisions, security of the town which comprised of fort, garrison and marine to deal with her neighbours on land and seas.

Chapter six on health focuses on various causes of mortality, diseases on the island which gave rise to the famous dictum by Ovington for the island that ‘two monsoons are the ages on man’. The chapter will also analyse both manmade and natural problems which took heavy toll on the life of Europeans such as early European life style, war, manuring practices, breaches on the island and storms. The chapter will
also analyse the steps taken by the Bombay government to overcome these problems by establishing a hospital on the island. The various problems hospital faced such as scarcity of medicine, surgeons, building etc. will also be analysed.

**Chapter seven** deals with problems of supplies and provisions of the town. Since Bombay was surrounded by many mountain ranges such as Sahyadri etc her communication with her hinterland was minimal. Apart from this Bombay did not produce any agriculture crop. Its production was mainly limited to coconuts, alts etc. These problems led her to be dependent on sea routes to meet her daily supplies. The chapter thus will deal with various problems of supplies, price regulation and local market of Bombay. It will also look into various problems that accrue because of these issues and the steps taken by the Bombay government.

**Chapter eight** deals with Bombay and its judicial administration. The chapter will highlight the various steps taken by Bombay government to improve the judicial system on the island. The chapter will also analyse various trials in Bombay, office of Coroner, working of courts, admiralty court and later the working of Mayor Court.

The following chapters (**Chapters Nine, Ten and Eleven**) deal with Bombay's defenses and have been divided into three separate chapters namely fort, garrison and marine. The chapter on forts and town analyses fortification and town planning under Crown and Company by various governors and various steps taken to meet these expenses. The Chapter on garrison looks into the need and development of garrison in late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century. The chapter also looks into various problems of garrison such as mutiny, mortality etc. It tries to seek the answer as to why civil authorities were dominating military authorities in the period concerned. How Bombay presidency maintained her army despite the policies of the Directors of alternating recruitment and reduction in the name of paucity of funds.

The last chapter (**Chapter Eleven**) on Piracy, Marine and Angria will highlight the role of Bombay Marine, and its role in wiping out Angria, how the Marine became an instrument in shaping the Company’s future strategy on the coast and altering the existing political coastal order. The chapter will also investigate into process of growth of the Marine. The other important segment of the chapter would look into the
nature of piracy and its repercussions on the Company’s trade and steps taken by the Bombay government to counter it.

The sources used in the study would mainly comprise of the English documents pertaining to the period under review like English factory records both old and new series written by Foster and Fawcett respectively, travellers accounts of Thevenot, Fryer, Ovington, Alexander Hamilton, Carreri, Abbe Carre, Burnell, Edwards Ives etc. the study has analysed letters and dispatches of Bombay Council and Surat contained in Home series, Maratha series, by W. Foster. The study has also made use of contemporary Gazetteers like Campbell’s Gazetteer (Material towards statistical accounts of Bombay, 1893), Gazetteer of Bombay city and island (I, II, III, 1909, 1910), and Imperial Gazetteers. The other sources used are translated Persian documents i.e. Court Chronicles, farmans etc. of which, though only a few bear direct relevance to the study and mainly deal with the political and diplomatic activities. The study will also make use of unpublished public department diaries from the period 1720 onwards. The other sources used would comprise of secondary literature (articles), etc. But the heavy reliance on European sources, at times restricts our views in overcoming the Euro-Centric biases, lack of indigenous sources thus handicaps our thinking in analyzing the growth of the city.