CHAPTER V:
The European merchant as the 'other' of Indian merchant
The European Merchant as ‘the other’ of the ‘Indian’ Merchant

One of the factors that shaped the Mughal policy responses towards the European merchants was a sense of separation between the European and the indigenous merchants. Scholars have not paid adequate attention to the sense of ‘difference’ that informed Mughal policies towards the European merchants.

By the time the Mughals established their rule, the Portuguese had already established a monopoly on the inter-Asian trade. The main method of enforcement of this so-called monopoly was first, by issuing cartaz (or passes), by which they imposed restrictions on the personnel and armaments allowed on the ship, and, second, through piracy. The control of Portuguese of the Red Sea trade was particularly irksome to both Ottomans and Mughals since the Portuguese posed a potential danger to not only the native traders, but also to the hajj pilgrims. Akbar, in a letter in 1586 to Abdullah Khan Uzbeg, expressed displeasure regarding the unrest that the Portuguese created by harassing traders and pilgrims to holy places. Badauni also testifies to the fact that Akbar detested their control of the High Seas.

Ostensibly however, Akbar maintained cordial relations with the Portuguese by accepting to take cartaz from them to send off his pilgrim ships, a practice which continued under Jahangir. Akbar signed a farman on 18 March 1573, perhaps at Broach, instructing the Captains, Governors, administrators and other officials working especially in Surat, Broach, Naussari, and

---

1 Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, vol.iii, p.275; see also Maktubat-i-Allami (Insha’-i-Abul Fazl) DAFTAR I, tr. Mansura Haider, Delhi, 1998, P.44).
4 ibid., p.81.
Velodra (Vadodra) in the province of Gujarat not to disturb the Portuguese in their possession like Diu. It further enjoined to them not to favour Malabar pirates but extend help to Portuguese.\(^5\) As for the general Portuguese merchants, like all other traders, they had to pay custom-duties and the final decisions regarding the fiscal administration rested with the Mughal Emperor. As Akbar went on occupying the port cities of Surat, Broach and Cambay, some Portuguese merchants at Cambay sought from him the special favour of exempting them from the obligation of paying custom-duties for the commodities imported into Cambay by them. Akbar granted the request and reportedly agreed to take the lumpsum payment of 300,000 *cruzados* every year instead as duties to the captain of Cambay.\(^6\)

As their trade contracted towards the mid-sixteenth century, they began to rely more and more on the profits from directing and taxing Asian trade.\(^7\) They now allowed and even fostered Asian trade, even to Red Sea, for thus their custom-duties increased.\(^8\) Their presence was to some extent a decisive factor as far as the routes and commodity composition of the overseas trade is concerned. While in the sixteenth century the South East Asian trade declined largely because of Portuguese interference, the increasing dominance of Gujarati merchants in Red Sea trade was also evident, which remained significant in the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century. Due to the Dutch, English and the French participation, India’s foreign trade, specially the Red Sea trade, continued to increase.

\(^5\) ibid.


\(^8\) ibid., p.85.
Sea trade, both in terms of volume and value, witnessed a
tremendous growth in the seventeenth century and first half of the
eighteenth century, and indeed a major role was played by the
Indian maritime merchants also. Still, it cannot be denied that the
most important change during the eighteenth century was the
growing importance of the European factor in the Indian Ocean.
This ascendancy of European factor in Indian Ocean was certainly
not a sudden process. It was preceded by two centuries of
dependence.

The overwhelming and intimidating presence of the
Portuguese and their dominance of the maritime trade was one of
the factors that shaped the Mughal perception and policies towards
the English. The presence of the Portuguese also prevented the
Mughal officials from developing better trade relations with the
English. In 1618, Sir Thomas Roe wrote to the Company, ‘the
Portugall houlds all the coast to slaverie, and there is no way to
remedie it, unless either the Kyng would build or give us a port or
hyre our shipping; but he will not bee drawn to alter his conditions,
because hee is not sencible of the dishonour, giving reason he
conquered Guzuratt and keepes it in the same condition he found it
and upon the same articles and contracts made by Bahud(ur Shah),
King of Guzuratt, who made them with the Portingalls before this
monarchy was united.’

Some time before the foundation of the English East India
Company in 1600 A.D., a number of English travelers like Thomas
Stephens, Ralph Fitch, Newberry and Leeds visited Mughal India.
Then in 1599, John Mildenhall came during the reign of Akbar,
who tried to negotiate with the Emperor ‘some kind of commercial

---

9 ibid., p.39.

treaty or understanding which should be a basis for the English trade in India. He failed to secure any treaty with the King and returned unsuccessful. Probably, the experience of Mughal ruling elite of the European merchants with the Portuguese, who had introduced an element of 'force' in the maritime commerce of the high seas, was responsible for their wary attitude towards the English merchants. And this fear was not unfounded. They English also resorted to piratical activities against the Mughal shipping on the Western coast. They began to issue passes to unprotected Indian vessels as early as 1613. As a consequence, Muqarrab Khan, the Governor of Surat, did not allow the English to establish Factory at Surat, and also rebuked them for the robbing of ships coming from Red Sea by one of their factors, Henry Middleton. However, further attempts to open up trade with India were made during the time of Jahangir, when Hawkins, the self-styled 'envoy of the King of England' visited Jahangir's court in 1609. Hawkins met the Emperor at Agra and was given every assurance regarding trade facilities to the English but nothing substantial could be achieved which they believed was due to the intervention of Portuguese. For the same reason, in 1608, when William Hawkins arrived at Surat, Muqarrab Khan (who was the mutasaddi of both Surat and Cambay) allowed them to unload their cargo but the local Mughal officials did not permit them to engage in any commercial transaction in Surat. He did not let them establish a

12 Letter Received, vol.i, p.307.
11 Letter Received, vol.i, p.279.
15 Orme, Robert *Historical Fragments of Mughal Empire 1659-1689*, p.323-4.
factory at Surat,\textsuperscript{16} on pretext of which Middleton used force to exchange goods of Indian vessels in Red Sea, specially that of the Gujarati fleets.\textsuperscript{17}

Till the time the Portuguese retained their previous position in the perception of the Mughal elite as a formidable sea-power, the English merchants were not much encouraged. But this was not the sole factor. The indigenous merchants were unequivocally against the admission of another European company in the trade of Indian Ocean. In 1612, Middleton was also refused trade at Dabul (Dabhol)\textsuperscript{18} not because of Portuguese instigation but ostensibly because as Hawkins himself states that Surat merchants had made declaration at the court that the encouragement to English would mean ruin of trade of Gujarat.\textsuperscript{19} Having had the experience of Portuguese piratical activities, the Surat merchants were wary of letting any other European trading Company into maritime trade of the high seas. And in the initial phase, the English traders tried to make an impression upon the Gujarati merchants that they were powerful enough to succeed against the Portuguese.\textsuperscript{20} In 1612, Capt. Best and in 1614, Nicholas Downton even inflicted crushing defeat on the Portuguese, but it only served to make the ruling elite more watchful of their activities.\textsuperscript{21} The king allowed the English to trade in Mughal dominions, but he also took care to not let them settle and build a factory or even buy a house.\textsuperscript{22} Though the

\textsuperscript{16} Letter Received, vol.i pp.175-76.
\textsuperscript{17} ibid., p.279.
\textsuperscript{18} ibid., p.258.
\textsuperscript{19} Foster, W. (ed.) Early Travels in India 1583-1619, p.66.
\textsuperscript{20} Letters Received, vol. ii, p.186.
\textsuperscript{21} Tuzuk, p.274-5,1614, 9\textsuperscript{th} R.Y.
\textsuperscript{22} The permission to settle at Surat (i.e. having a factory was not yet given (for details see EFI, 1624-29,P.20-21,310).
Provincial Governors broadly acted as agents of the central administration, they also acted according to their discretion.

One example is of Muqarrab Khan, the Governor of Surat (the prime hinterland of the western coast). He tried to take advantage of friction between the two companies hoping perhaps that their conflict could only be in the interest of the Empire. In 1611, he visited Middleton and in return for some concessions (which were not given eventually), and permission for the setting up of a factory, he asked for a treaty and assurance of English aid in any fighting with the Portuguese. On 27 January 1612 he reiterated his offer to help the English to establish a factory, but within two or three days he asked them to leave the port as the Portuguese, not surprisingly, resented these negotiations and warned Muqarrab Khan to desist, at which he rapidly changed his mind. Again, it was only after a war had ensued between the Portuguese and the English that Muqarrab Khan began to seek the friendship of the English. He was pleased to hear that the English had sunk a Portuguese ship and damaged another. When he heard of the growing hostility between the English and the Portuguese (in 1614-15), he seems to have become friendlier towards the English. In any case, he prudently supported the English because

25 Purchas His Pilgrims, vol. iv, p. 219: 'that if I [Nicholas Downton] would assist them [the Mughals] against the Portugals, the Nabob would do us all the favour that in his power lyeth.' See also Purchas His Pilgrims, vol. iv, pp. 220, 222 and 258.
26 Letters Received, vol. i, p. 138; vol. iii, p. 64.
27 Purchas His Pilgrims, vol. iv, pp. 224-5.
of the fear of Portuguese naval raids. But again, a peace treaty was signed by Muqarrab Khan and the Portuguese Gocalo Pinto da Fonseca on 7 June 1615, which declared that the Mughals and the Portuguese 'will not engage in any trade' with English and Dutch merchants, nor would they be sheltered in ports, or supplied with provisions.

The Mughal perception and policies towards the English in the seventeenth century were not uniform and can be demarcated in two distinct phases. In the first phase, that lasted till about 1630s, roughly speaking, the Mughal administration perceived the English as petty merchants, foreign and inferior.

During this phase, the Mughals outright rejected the English claim to a superior status based on their political connections with the ruler of England. Hawkins' 'embassy' and later Edward's 'embassy' (who having supposedly brought a letter from King James expected a 'better treatment') had failed miserably in getting privileges for English merchants at Surat. Jahangir was fully aware that Surat had become a place of contention between the English and the Portuguese merchants and the English claim that Portuguese attacks on Mughal ships had led Muqarrab Khan to let the English fortify at Surat was totally unfounded. It is clear from a letter written in Dec. 1615 by William Edwards to the East India

---

28 Downton wrote that 'the cause of their request [to the English to stay on at Surat], was their feare lest the Viceroy [of the Portuguese] after my departure should come against Surat with all his forces.' Thomas Elkington also writes of Muqarrab Khan's anxiety to befriend the English. Purchas His Pilgrims, vol. iv, p. 243.


31 Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, p.274-5.

32 Letter Received, vol.ii, p.186.
Company in 1615, that Muqarrab Khan allowed them only ‘trade’ at Surat. They received a *farman* written to Governor of Surat and Cambay permitting them ‘trade and acceptance’ in the country.

In 1615, Sir Thomas Roe, the ambassador of King James I came to the court of Jahangir and made a deliberate effort to present himself at the Court as an ambassador of the English monarch, besides working upon getting trading privileges. For the Mughals, on the other hand, he was a representative of the English merchant body, and they were foreign merchants not to be placed on parity with Indian merchants. Obviously, this embassy was also unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Roe devised the plan of escorting Mughal vessels to Red Sea in order to gain acceptance in the Indian trade alongside the Portuguese, even if by force the mercantilist consideration behind which was to stop the bullion inflow into India from Europe and finance Indian trade from the Red Sea trade profits. Earlier an unsuccessful attempt had been made by Henry Middleton through force to gain participation in Red Sea trade. Linked with their desire to gain acceptance in the Red Sea trade was the desire to get permission for settlement in Surat which was a principal port on western coast, from where the Red Sea and Persian Gulf trade was carried on.

One of the major components of Mughal response towards the English and other European merchants was the safeguard of the trading interests of the Indian merchants.

---

33 *ibid.*, vol.ii,p.149.
34 *ibid.*, vol.iii,p.65.
36 *EFI*, vol.i, p.22.
38 *Letter Received*, vol.i, p.155-61.
In 1618, Roe drafted proposals for a *nishan* which was submitted to prince Khurram. It included a demand to allow him to land with 'arms' to defend against Portuguese, which was rejected by him.\(^{39}\) Further, his demand for complete freedom of trade throughout the Empire was completely ignored by Khurram. These proposals submitted by Roe on 15\(^{th}\) August, 1618 for a *nishan*, and reformed by Khurram were not accepted by Roe and with the mediation and assistance of Afzal Khan (Asaf Khan?), Khurram’s secretary, a revised *nishan* was issued.\(^{40}\) In the revised *nishan*, Roe had to agree not to build any house in or about Surat without obtaining permission from Jahangir. They could only rent a house for merchants’ residence and storing merchandise. (In fact, in 1617 when the news regarding a ship reportedly containing building material (reportedly for a Factory at Swally reached the Prince Khurram, an embargo was placed on their trade and they were not allowed to unload that ship).\(^{41}\) Also, their goods were not to be passed unchecked.\(^{42}\) Roe took an undertaking that the English were to live at Surat according to laws and regulations of the Empire.\(^{43}\) The English claimed that by 1613, they had the permission (by a *farman* supposedly given to Thomas Best) to trade with Surat\(^{44}\) but this *farman* had little value.\(^{45}\) The permission to settle at Surat (i.e. building a ‘factory’) was not yet given\(^{46}\) and the idea of making a fortress at the coast of Gujarat had been outright rejected by Prince

\(^{40}\) *ibid.*, p.485.
\(^{41}\) *ibid.*, p.415.
\(^{42}\) *ibid.*, p.481n.
\(^{43}\) *ibid.*
\(^{44}\) *Letters Received*, vol.i, p.280.
\(^{46}\) *EFI*, 1624-29, p.20-21,310.
Khurram (no contemporary copy of this nishan is extant. At the India Office, there is a transcript of it is made in 1789, endorsed by Khurram and signed by Roe). 47

The English could not get the Mughal Emperor sign the treaty or having an exclusive alliance with them against either Portuguese or the Dutch, because he considered it below his dignity to sign a treaty with the representatives of a foreign merchant body. Roe’s proposal to Prince Khurram to let them ‘settle’ (at Surat) against which they would assume the responsibility of naval defense of Surat against the Portuguese was scornfully rejected by Khurram. 48 Apparently any such ‘help’ which would put the Emperor under obligation of a foreign trading Company was unacceptable to him. In 1616, Roe tried to convince Jahangir that the Dutch in South and East were building forts as in case of Masulipatam, and would become masters of the port, could only ‘somewhat trouble’ Jahangir. 49 The repeated English assumptions that the Mughal Emperor shirked making alliances with them or letting them settle and give them concessions because they were apprehensive of Portuguese reactions is not true. 50 However, by the end of the first phase, the Portuguese were gradually virtually wiped out by the English and they had established complete supremacy in the high seas. The English were able to impose successive defeats on the Portuguese, one after the other. In 1622, they captured Ormuz in the Persian Gulf from the Portuguese. In 1633 they defeated the Portuguese at the port of Hugli, thoroughly routing them, their successive victories enabled

47 EFl, 1622-3, p.321.
49 ibid., p.303.
50 Letters Received, vol.iv, p.314.
them to establish a maritime supremacy in the Indian Ocean, which, with the Portuguese no longer in contention, came to be gradually recognized by the Mughals.

An important instance of Mughal perception of the English merchants comes from the Red Sea trade dispute in which Thomas Roe played an important role. In 1618, the English East India Company, under the initiative of Roe decided to participate in the trade to Red Sea, in order to enhance its profits from the Indian Ocean.¹¹ In 1618, the English dispatched Anne to Mocha. Encouraged by the profits, in 1619, another ship Lion was dispatched to the Red Sea.¹² (This trade ‘the ambassador (Roe) told the Company, in reaching home, ‘in tyme may be enlarged by the English, and will be the life of Surat and Persia trade.’¹³ The English decision to participate in the Red Sea trade created quite an uproar among the Surat merchants, who in alliance the local authorities, seized the English factories and prevented them from buying merchandise from the merchants of Gujarat. When the Factors started their investments for the fleet expected in the autumn, a general boycott was organized, and they were plainly told that unless they would undertake to abandon the Red Sea traffic, they ‘should not buy a yard of calico for that purpose.’¹⁴ When the English took the matter to Ishaq Beg, Governor of Surat, he flatly refused to help them.¹⁵ They were specially prevented from buying linen or making big investments in buying for the lading of Lion, and when they suspected that they were buying

¹² EFI, p.xiv.
¹⁴ ibid.
¹⁵ ibid.
linen from several adjacent places, they called a meeting of all brokers in Surat and surrounding places and decided not to ‘buy and sell’ any commodity to English.\(^\text{56}\) Not only Surat and Nausari, but the Governors of Broach and Baroda were also informed that the English were to be boycotted as per the orders of the Prince finally prohibiting their linen investments in Ahmedabad and confined them to Broach only. The English had to agree to not making any investments in the Red Sea until further orders came from the Prince.\(^\text{57}\) The Surat merchants, in fact in alliance with the local authorities, seized the English Factories and prevented them from buying merchandise from the merchants of Gujarat. Consequently, Thomas Roe was forced to take the matter to the Mughal court. In response to his petition concerning the blockade of the Red Sea, Prince Khurram issued a \textit{nishan}, which forbade them from trading between Gujarat and the Red Sea on the ground that their participation in the Red Sea trade was ruining the Gujarat merchants. The \textit{nishan} prohibited the English from trading between Gujarat and the Red Sea since this was the only avenue of overseas trade left to the Indian merchants in the wake of the advent of European Companies.\(^\text{58}\) Another issue of controversy was the coral trade. It was a major item of import from the Red Sea\(^\text{59}\) (although most part of coral that they sold at Surat was brought by land to Bijapur.\(^\text{60}\) The merchants of Surat did not want the English merchants to bring in large quantities of coral in Surat.\(^\text{61}\)

\(^{56}\) \textit{EFI}, vol.i, p.134-35.
\(^{57}\) \textit{ibid}.
\(^{59}\) \textit{ibid}.
\(^{60}\) \textit{EFI}, 1624-29, p.258.
\(^{61}\) \textit{EFI}, vol.i, p.54.
Khurram’s *nishan* also forbade the English from importing coral, again on same ground.\(^{62}\) When the Governor and merchants of Surat wrote a joint petition to the Prince for a *nishan* to forbid sale of coral to the English merchants and their further trade in that commodity on the pretext that it was against their interests,\(^{63}\) it was accepted. The *nishan* is significant in highlighting the Mughal perception of the English. It would seem from the *nishan* that the Mughal court did make a distinction between the India and the foreign merchants and believed that the Indian merchants, being their subjects, deserved a more favourable treatment than the foreign English merchants.\(^{64}\) A sense of identification with the Indian merchants, reinforced by a sense of difference with the English is clearly suggested from the *nishan* of Prince Khurram.

Monopoly system was an important part of the imperial economic policies which directly affected the European merchants and their trade. Monopolies in certain articles were imposed for various reasons, such as according to the military exigencies of state as in the case of saltpeter (in 1636), or for revving up revenue for the state, as in the case of indigo (which was monopolized in 1633), gold and silver monopolies. And mostly, these temporary monopolies had to be terminated before their stipulated time, one of these reasons of which was the opposition put up against them, as in the case of indigo where Anglo-Dutch combined opposition made the monopoly difficult to sustain by boycotting its purchase. The Governor of Surat, apprehensive of the falling revenues of his

\(^{63}\) *The English Factories in India*, ed. W. Foster, 1618-21, p.131
\(^{64}\) William Biddulph, one of the factors of the English Company at the Mughal court found ‘the prince and all generallie tenderinge their own peoples goods and complaints before our shutes and benefitts.’ *The English Factories in India, 1618-21*, ed. W. Foster, vol. i, p.174.
port, petitioned to the Emperor to restore the freedom of trade in indigo. Through his mediation some relaxation was given to both English and Dutch through three farmans—one to the Governor of Surat, one to English and one to Dutch, to make arrangements to buy indigo at Agra—the proposal was rejected by both English and Dutch. This shows that a foreign merchant body could expect a revision of the Emperor’s firman, if its interests were adversely affected. It also reflects the collusion between the Mughal officials and the European merchants, who through the mediation of important nobles at the imperial court, could get the imperial orders revised. These nobles, either for financial reasons (e.g. Muiz-ul-Mulk, Governor of Surat,) or for political reasons (e.g. Asaf Khan, the vakil and Afzal Khan, the Diwan-i-kul) supported them. President Methwold and others in Swally Road (Dec.29) wrote to the Company that although Manohar Das, a bania, was the prime monopolist, yet Mir Jumla, High Steward of the King, was principally engaged in the project (1634, O.C.1543 A) and they decided to take advantage of the enmity between Mir Jumla and Asaf Khan who belonged to the different factions at the court, and hooked on Asaf Khan’s help. Consequently, on 14th April, 1635, the English received the imperial farman, dissolving the indigo monopoly and its sale once again became open to all.

In 1636 when the Emperor received complaints from Dutch about attempts of Saif Khan, to monopolize the stock of indigo in his district, a farman was issued by the Emperor on Feb.22, 1636, reiterating that indigo monopoly had been taken off and that no

---

65 EFI, 1634-36, pp.70-71.
66 ibid., p.72-73; 1634-36, p.11.
67 EFI, 1634-36, 157n.
one could monopolize indigo in an unauthorized manner. Thus while making it clear that the European merchants, like all other merchants of his domain, were protected from any arbitrary act of Mughal officials, another farman, which was simultaneously issued, shows that he would neither let the foreign merchants disrupt the trade of Surat, or let the Mughal ports be harmed by them. He wanted the heads (principals) of both English and Dutch factories to be accountable for the activities of their merchants. The farman said that the Dutch and English must always keep a deposit of Rs.12 lakhs at Surat and that the Principals of both nations must always remain in Surat and must not go aboard their ships at any time. The farman further sought to regulate their movement and activities by ordering that the ‘English & Dutch must not resort to any other ports in the Mughal Empire. They were also not allowed to bring ships to any other place except Swally Hole (Swally Marine), where it ‘shall not be lawful for them to build any frigates.’ Likewise, in a document dated 10 September 1645, a hasb ul hukum issued by Saadullah Khan that the English were not expected to a) fortify their factories, b) employ armed guards in their factories, c) refuse to pay regular taxes, and d) construct a fortress for their residence.

Here we again notice the collusion of local Mughal officials with the European merchants, as seeing the opposition that it invited, the Governor did not implement the farman to its full

---

68 President Methwold’s Diary, Jan. 22-Apr. 6, 1636, (Surat Factory Records, IOR, London, vol.i, p.491; EFI,1634-36, p.157). I am grateful to Dr. Farthat Hasan for this reference.
69 EFI,1634-36, pp.157, xvi.
70 ibid.
71 Bibliotheque Nationale, Suppl. Pers. 482, ff.133(b)-134(a). I am grateful to Dr. Farthat Hasan for this reference also. Also see, Tavernier, Jean Baptiste Travels in India, 1640-67, vol.i, pp.6-7.
effect. A similar example can be taken in case of saltpetre monopoly when the cooperation of a Governor helped in making monopoly ineffective. George Tash took assistance of Governor Mir Musa (through gifts) and succeeded in clearing all obstructions to saltpetre business, which was very important for them as in Bengal, they had less trade except in saltpetre. They had large Factories in Patna, kasimbazar and Hughli. When President Methwold said that the English would not submit to conditions of such ‘slavery’, the Governor pretended that the farman was merely a ‘formality’ and when Dutch also complained through the Shahbandar, Mirza Mahmud and the King’s commissary they got the reply that ‘it was not meant for them, but to restrain the English, who had taken to frequenting the Portuguese settlements with their small vessels and were planning to use them in fetching goods by water from Broach and Cambay, which would injure the customs-revenue of Surat.\(^{74}\)

After 1630s, however, a new phase in Mughal perception and policies towards the English began to take shape. By this time, the Portuguese had been virtually wiped out by the English and the English maritime supremacy in the Indian Ocean came to be gradually recognized by the Mughals. During this phase, two developments seem to have shaped the Mughal policy towards the English. The first was the English maritime supremacy which allowed the English to engage with the Mughals in the politics of a

\(^{72}\)George Tash, Hugh Fenn and Anthony Smith at Ahmedabad in a letter on Feb.28, 1647 to Surat, President and Council, \(EFI\), 1646-50, p.108.

\(^{73}\)\(EFI\), 1661-64, p.69.

\(^{74}\)\(EFI\), 1634-36, p.57n.
balance of terror. Mughal aggressions in the land were responded by the English in equal measure on the high seas. Thus, there existed between the English and the Mughals a reciprocal 'balance of terror.' The second important development was the growth in overseas trade by the Mughal officials. Mughal ruling elite had been carrying on trade since the beginning. Muqarrab Khan, a noble of Jahangir carried on private trade. His commercial links with both Portuguese and English merchants are time and again alluded to in the Factory Records. Middleton also tells us of the commercial transactions which he conducted along with Muqarrab Khan and Khwaja Nizam. This Khwaja Nizam who appears to have been a business partner of Muqarrab Khan was reportedly such an influential merchant that no other merchant dared to trade with the English 'without his prevention and leave'; and he was thus able to dictate terms to the English merchants. Further, it appears that he owned some ships and carried on private trade. We are told that among his contemporaries, Muqarrab Khan 'hath more adventures at sea than any of this country.' And in his commercial transactions, Muqarrab Khan made full use of his

76 Purchas His Pilgrims vol.iii, pp. 180-1; vol.iv, pp. 219-20.
77 Purchas His Pilgrims vol.iii, p. 176; vol.iv, pp. 224-5; EFI, 1618-21, p. 19.
78 Letters Received, vol.i, p. 307; Purchas His Pilgrims III, p. 2.)
position; we find him forcing the English to sell their goods at lower prices.\textsuperscript{79} Nurjahan and her brother Asaf Khan in particular, depended on Roe. She, in turn, became Roe’s solicitor and Asaf Khan his ‘broker.’\textsuperscript{80}

During the second half of the seventeenth century, a large number of Mughal officials were participating in overseas trade. Mughal officials such as Shaista Khan and Mir Jumla had important trading interests in West Asia and South-East Asia. Referring to Mir Jumla, Walter Littleton and Venkata Brahman reported to the Company in 1651 that 'Concerning forran negotiation, hee [Mir Jumla) hath trade to Pegue, Tennassaree, Acheen, Rackan (Arakan, Persia, Bengalla, Moka, Peruck, Maldeevaes and Macassar. Hee hath ten vessels of his owne, and intends to augment them, makeing much preparatyon for building of more.'\textsuperscript{81} Imperial ships were regularly dispatched to the ports of Aden and Mokha by members of the imperial court. Nur Jahan, Jahan Ara and other imperial princesses had ships of their own to participate in overseas trade.\textsuperscript{82} The result of this was that the interest of the Mughal officials came to be tied up with the interests of the Company. This led to a nebulous and undefined alliance between the two. Though conflicts between the Mughals and English officials were common and frequent, these conflicts did not undermine the larger cooperation among them. This increase in the

\textsuperscript{79} See, for example, Purchas His Pilgrims, vol.iv , pp. 21, 23, 24; Letters Received, vol.ii, p. 138.
\textsuperscript{80} Letters Received, vol.i, p.150.
\textsuperscript{81} EFI, 1651-54, p.12. For details see J.N.Sarkar, The Life of Mir Jumla, New Delhi, 1979, p.83-86.
\textsuperscript{82} Shireen Moosvi, Mughal shipping at Surat in the first half of Seventeenth Century, p.312, Indian History Congress, Calcutta Session, 1990.
participation in overseas trade by the Mughal officials, and the absolute maritime supremacy enjoyed by the English in relation to the Mughals, led to the development of greater cooperation between the English and Mughal officials. This cooperation ultimately led to the development of an alliance between them based on a framework of mutually accepted code of conduct and practices. It was this alliance that considerably facilitated the trading activities of the English in India and contributed in a large measure to their ultimate success and gradual undermining of the interests of the Indian merchants.