CHAPTER 5
THE TOWNS

The medieval Sind besides having agricultural zones, and rural population had big towns, and a large number of sedentary population; which contributed to its polity, economy and culture. All the major towns of Sind, were located along the river Indus, which controlled maritime commercial activities, and made communication and travel very convenient and speedy.\(^1\) Therefore to control and secure river routes, from north to south, was the first and major priority of the Mughals.\(^2\) The prosperity and decline of these towns, also depended upon the river course. The destruction of old town of Alor, and the birth of new towns like Bhakkar;\(^3\) shifting of the centre from Nasarpur to

\(^1\) Mazhar-i-Shahjahānī, vol II, p.148, here is a reference of ferry check post and querying of boats; the problem which was solved by Shēr Ḵhwāja, ḵāǰārīdār of Sehwan, which gives a picture of busy maritime activities. Also see, Alexander Hamilton, vol I, pp. 123-24.

\(^2\) Probably that was the reason that immediately after Mughal occupation of Sind, Akbar secured port of Lahari Bandar, and taken it under khālisā-i-sharīfā. Mazhar-i-Shahjahānī, vol II, p. 91.

\(^3\) Henry Cousens The Antiquities of Sind, p.76; J. A. Abbott, Sind- A reinterpretation of the unhappy valley, first pub. London 1924, reprint Delhi, 1992, pp. 60, 66.
Hyderabad¹ are examples of effect of change in river course on towns’ socio, economic and political life.

Among the famous towns of Sind, were Thatta, Lahari Bandar, Bhakkar, Sukkur, Sehwan, and Nasarpur. The first among these was Thatta, which was the capital city and a great emporium of trade. It was generally referred as Debal⁵ in chronicles. The town was three miles long, and one and half mile broad.⁶ The city was situated north of the river, to its south, at a distance of three kos was the Khanwah canal which was built by Dariya Khān.⁷ This canal before entering the sea joined Nar more than ten tanāb wide, and one could navigate it till Thatta.⁸ It is quite surprising that Thatta being the chief city did not

---

⁵ *Tārīkh-i-Sind*, pp. 6, 8. Jam Nanda bin Babiniya laid the foundation of Thatta city. *Tārīkh-i-Tahiri*, pp.52, 53. Arab chroniclers had frequently mentioned Debal as ancient port of Sind. *Chachnāma* mentions it as a port town where mainly merchants resided, and had a big idol temple of 40 cubit high and its dome also 40 cubit in height. *Chachnāma* (tr.), pp. 57-8, 81.
⁷ *Tārīkh-i-Sind*, p. 113; *Tārīkh-i-Tahiri*, p. 58. Mīr Tāhīr had referred to this canal as *Nara-i-Barikh*.
seem to have a very strong fort,\(^9\) as firstly during the Arghuns’ attack, and secondly during Portuguese attack, the fort could not defend the city very well.\(^10\) The fort was so much disliked by Darā Shikōh, that he had almost burnt it.\(^11\) However, this fort had a palace for the Nababs (governor) and could lodge 5000 men and horse.\(^12\) In seventeenth century Thatta was a famous centre of learning in Theology, Philology

---

\(^9\) Though the author of *Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī*, refer it as small but strong, fort situated towards Multan. Another fort was situated on a hill, at a distance of two *kos* from the city called Tagharabad and Kalankot. *Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī*, vol II, p. 33. This fort of Taqhrabad was built by Jam Tughrur of Samma dynasty. *Tarikh-i-Ṭahārī*, p. 52.

\(^10\) *Tarikh-i-Sind*, pp.114, 184; *Tarikh-i-Ṭahārī*, pp. 111,114.

\(^11\) When Darā had come to Thatta during his flight, he did not like the average appearance of the fort and ordered it to be burnt down. *Ṭūḥfat ‘ul Kirām*, vol III, part I, pp. 331-34.

\(^12\) Alexander Hamilton, vol I, p. 115; *Mazhar-i Shāhjahānī*, vol II, p. 33. The fort which had residence of governor was other than Tagharabd. Da Laet has also recorded that, “the governor of the province of Sind lived in a well fortified citadel.” Da Laet, *The Empire of the Great Mogol*, tr. J.S.Hoyland and annotated by S.N.Bannerjee, Bombay, 1928, p. 68. He also states that, “the journey from hence to the capital Lahore takes two months, but the reverse journey only one. . . . Insects are here far less of a pest than in the other Indian ports, especially Surat.” This fort is even mentioned in *Chachnāma*, which was under the command of malik (governor) of Sahiras (son of King Sahasi Rai). *Chachnāma* (tr.), p. 12.
and Politics, and there were four hundred colleges for training up youth in these parts of the learning.\textsuperscript{13}

The inhabitants of the city included nobles, men of learning, poets, merchants (foreign as well as Indian), bankers, calligraphers, artisans, soldiers, weavers and dyers.\textsuperscript{14} Its’ population was probably more than 80,000.\textsuperscript{15} When Nādir Šāh had entered Thatta in 1742 A.D., there were 40,000 weavers, 20,000 other artisans, and 60,000 dealers in various departments of the city.\textsuperscript{16} Probably most of its population was Muslim,\textsuperscript{17} but Hindus, were also present, and enjoyed religious freedom.\textsuperscript{18} Foreign merchants were welcomed in the city and the administration took care of them, and they were provided comfort and religious freedom.\textsuperscript{19} As the city economy was mainly trade oriented, besides it being a fertile agricultural zone, and producing minerals like

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{13} Alexander Hamilton, vol I, p. 127.
\textsuperscript{14} Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 33; For the presence of bankers see E.F.I. 1634-1636, p. 131.
\textsuperscript{15} Alexander Hamilton, had recorded, “due to severe plague ..... above 80,000 died.... And above one half of the city was deserted and left empty.”Vol I, p. 122.
\textsuperscript{16} Henry Pottinger, p. 352.
\textsuperscript{17} Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{18} Alexander had described the celebration of Holi though he had called it Wooly. Alexander Hamilton, vol I, pp. 128,129.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
saltpetre, borax, opoponax, asafetida, lapis lazuli, goat bazaar etc.\textsuperscript{20} After its annexation to Mughal Empire, a Mughal mint was also established, which minted silver, as well as copper coins.\textsuperscript{21} The English had opened a factory here, where their chief factor used to reside,\textsuperscript{22} though the Portuguese had already established themselves at Thatta, ever since the days of Tarkhāns.\textsuperscript{23} The foreign merchants’ interest in this city was mainly because of its excellent cotton textiles, which were in fact, better than the Gujarati textiles.\textsuperscript{24}

Thatta being the chief city, had a famous port, Lahari Bandar, which was situated on the bank of western branch of river Indus, Baggaur, some 28 miles south-east of Karachi, and 40 miles from Thatta.\textsuperscript{25} Ibn Battūta in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century had found it to be a fine town on the sea coast, possessing a large harbor, visited by merchants from Yemen, Persia and other countries and yielded in tax (probably custom

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, p. 125.

\textsuperscript{21} Nelson Wright, \textit{Mughal Emperors of India}, Oxford, 1908, vol I, pp. IXXXIX, IXXX.

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{E.F.I.1634-1636}, p. 132.

\textsuperscript{23} For the coming of Portuguese see. \textit{Tārikh-i-Tāhīrī}, pp. 111-12.

\textsuperscript{24} Francisco Plesaert, \textit{The Remonstrantie}, tr. By \textit{W.H.Moreland} and P. Geyl as \textit{Jahangir’s India}, Delhi, n.d, p. 32; \textit{E.F.I. 1637-1641}, p. 312.

\textsuperscript{25} Edward Thornton, vol II, p. 16.
duty) a large amount (6 million dinārs or silver tankās).\(^{26}\) Abu’l Fazl includes it in the sarkār of Thatta with a total revenue of 55, 21, 419 dāms.\(^{27}\) The 18\(^{th}\) century Mirāt-ul-Hind shows Lahari Bandar as a separate sarkār, comprising two mahals only.\(^{28}\) Its possession was so important that Akbar took it under direct administration (khālisā). During Shāhjahān’s reign it was said in hyperbole to be so a big port that it could accommodate 1000 ships at a time.\(^{29}\) Ships of up to 200 and 300 ton burden called here.\(^{30}\) Royal ships used to sail from here to Red Sea.\(^{31}\) This port city was so for inland that it took three days to reach Lahari Bandar from Thatta.\(^{32}\) Large vessels and ships used to anchor at Lahari Bandar, and after unloading the cargo, the


\(^{27}\) *A’in*, vol II, p. 166.


\(^{29}\) Ināyat Khān, *Shāhjahānmāma*, tr. p. 212. Instead of Lahari Bandar, Ināyat Khān has mentioned Thatta as the port.

\(^{30}\) Alexander Hamilton, vol I, p. 114

\(^{31}\) Shireen Moosvi, *People, Taxation and trade in Mughal India*, pp.251-52. These ships were built at Lahore as Thatta could not provide sufficient timber for its manufacturing.

\(^{32}\) *Ibid.*
merchandize were brought to Thatta in small boats up to river,\textsuperscript{33} and by the land on packed animals. Lahari Bandar had a strong fort, which had four to five guns mounted on it.\textsuperscript{34} Whenever any ship entered the port, a gun was fired to inform the local merchants and inhabitants of the towns of its arrival. They used to approach the ship, in small boats (\textit{ghūrahs}) to negotiate terms. \textit{If the ship did not belong to the port, it was not allowed to anchor inside the channel, but had to anchor in the roadstead off coast. From there, its cargo was transferred to small boats, and sent to the city Thatta.}\textsuperscript{35}

Besides these maritime activities, a brisk traffic went on between Thatta and Lahari Bandar, Hamilton records that a place four miles from the port towards Thatta, contained a fort called dung-bam It was used as \textit{sarāī} and twenty cottages around the building served as the breeding centre of fowl, goat and sheep, supplying the needs of those

\textsuperscript{33} Francisco Pelsaert, pp. 31, 32.
\textsuperscript{34} Alexander Hamilton, vol I, p. 114.
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Tārīkh-i-Tahīrī} p. 114. For the navigation the localites used vessels called \textit{kishtīes} of several sizes. “The largest could carry a burden of 200 tons, which were flat bottomed, and each side had cabin built from stern to stem, that overhang about 2 foot, and in each cabin, is a kitchen, and a place for exoneration.” Alexander Hamilton, vol I p. 123; \textit{Tim} mentions that at least 40,000 boats were present in Thatta. Vol II, p.165.
passing through.\textsuperscript{36} Thevenot, who wrote his account of Sind in the 1660s mentions Lahari Bandar, as a great centre of trade providing better harbor for ships, than any other place.\textsuperscript{37}

A silver mint was established here by the Mughals.\textsuperscript{38} This confirms the presence of official staff of mint, bankers, foreign\textsuperscript{39} as well as Indian merchants, governor, administrative officials, artisans, and soldiers, amongst the local population. But during the later half of the seventeenth century, the position of Lahari Bandar and Thatta as great centres of trade, started declining, partially because of the blockening of the port due to salt siltation, and partially due to the loss of Hormuz to the Safawids. Though in 1652, Aūrangzēb tried to replace this port, with that of Kakralah,\textsuperscript{40} but to no avail, and the end of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, the port shifted to Karachi. Thatta also remained the capital city of Sind.

\begin{enumerate}
\item Jean de Thevenot, \textit{Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri}, ed. by Surendra Nath Sen, New Delhi, 1949, p. 75.
\item Nelson Wright, vol I, pp. IXXXIX, IXXX.
\item The Portuguese had built a church here and Christian missionary also lived here. See Nicoloi Manucci, \textit{Storia do Mogor}, tr. by William Irwine, as \textit{Mughal India}, Calcutta, 1965, vol I, p. 60.
\item \textit{E.F.I. 1651-1654}, p. 118.
\end{enumerate}
till the Amīrs built the fortress of Hyderabad, and removed their court thither.\(^1\)

Another very important urban centre of Sind, was the transitional principality of Northern Sind 1555-74, an offshoot of the Arghun State, which for nearly two decades maintained an autonomous existence by balancing itself between Safawid Empire and the Mughals, and between the Tarkhāns of Thatta, and the Mughal court. Its capital was Bhakkar, a rocky island, with the archipelago of rock of Gibralter, lat. 31° 37' long 71° 4' on the Indus between Sukkur and Rohri. It had an ideal situation for a secure fort; not only it commanded the route between Sind and the Punjab, but could also serve as a secure post for meeting any invasion from the north-west down the Bolan pas. For these reasons, it was frequently mentioned in Sultanate, and Mughal chronicles. It was sometimes mentioned as Beghrur\(^2\) and Bakar.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Henry Pottinger, p. 351.
\(^2\) Al Baladhūri, Fīūth-i-Buldān, tr. by Elliot and Dowson as, The history of India as told by its own historians, Allahabad, n.d. vol I, p. 122.
\(^3\) Alāuddin At’a Malik Jīwāīnī, Tārīkh-i-Jahān Gūshā, tr. J.A. Boyle, A history of the world conqueror, Manchester, 1958, vol II, p. 414. It states, “Qubāchā fled to Akar and Bakar, two forts on an island.”
The birth of this island was caused by an incidental change in the eastern branch Hakrah of Indus, which caused the desertion of an old town Alor, and the birth of Bhakkar, Sukkur and Rohri. It seems that Bhakkar existed before Sukkur, as it was known as Sukkur qadīm, and also as Mansurah. Sukkur was situated to its north, while Rohri was situated towards south. Rohri or Alor was the capital city of Sind in the period when Arab army invaded Sind (712-714 A.D.). According to Chachnāma, "the town of Alor was the capital city of Hind and Sind. It was adorned with various kinds of royal buildings, villas, gardens, fountains, streams, meadows, and trees, and was situated on the bank of river called Mihran (ancient name of river Indus)."

Bhakkar had a very strong fort, which was reconstructed by Shāh Beg Arghun, using the bricks from the Alor fort, and from the houses

---


45 *Tārīkh-i-Sind*, p.b.

46 *Ā’in*, vol II, p.160.

47 *Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī*, vol II, p. 74. While Manucci places their location as in east and west. See *Storia do Mogor*, vol I, p. 310.

48 *Chachnāma* (tr.), p. 11.
of Turks and Sammah people in the suburb of Bhakkar. The fort was oval in shape measuring 800x300 yards and was made of burnt bricks. During the flight of Humayun, he wished to stay in the fort but considering the importance of the fort, Sultan Mahmud Kokaltash (who was made in charge of the fort by Shah Beg Arghun) declined the offer. He had added an outer enveloping wall to the fort and constructed two gardens inside the fort; namely Nazrgah and Guzrgah. After Bhakkar came under Mughal sway, a number of buildings were added to the town.

---

49 *Tārīḵ-i-Sind*, p. 124; *Mażhar-i-Shāhjahānī*, vol II, p. 5. Earlier Jam Nizāmuddin of Sammah dynasty had left this fort under the custody of his slave Dilshād after filling the fort with all kind of provisions. *Tārīḵ-i-Sind*, p. 73.

50 A. Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara and a voyage on the Indus*, vol II, pp. 270-271. While according to Manucci “the fortress was nine hundred and seventy five pace long, and five hundred and fifty three broad.” Niccoloi Manucci, vol I, p. 310.

51 In its place he offered Chachgan in southern Sind to Humayun. *Tārīḵ-i-Sind*, p. 170.

52 Henry Cousens, p. 144.

53 Mir Qasim Khan Namkīn had constructed a quadrangular platform with minarets and called it *Suffah-i-Safa*, while Mir Ma’sūm, the author of *Tārīḵ-i-Sind*, had constructed a green dome *sitāsar*, and a ship like mosque on top of the hill. See *Mażhar-i-Shāhjahānī*, pp. 3, 4. Mir Ma’sūm had also constructed a minaret at Sukkur. Henry Cousens, p.151; *Ma’asir-ul-Umara*,vol III, p. 77; *Zakahīr-ul-Khwānīn*, vol I, pp.198, 199.

184
To the west of the fort situated another hillock known as Sadh Bela which was an abode of baniyās of Hindu caste. Since Bhakkar was located on important strategic point, its economic importance was also significant. Even prior to Thatta and Lahari Bandar, a Mughal silver mint was established in Bhakkar in the year 1574 A.D. Bankers were present here as Bills of exchange (hūndis) were very popular in Thatta and Bhakkar, most probably due to security reasons. These bills were generally drawn on Ahmadabad. The presence of Multani merchants are also recorded. Very good quality of swords were also manufactured here, which were in great demand, besides its textiles. It commanded inland trade route to Qandahar, and also towards Jaisalmer.

---


57 Manucci, vol I, p. 427. These merchants of Khatri community are mentioned even in East India Company records. H.T. Sorley, Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit, pp. 103-104.

58 Henry Cousens, p.p. 143,144.
and Uchch; besides supplying camels on lease to those going towards Jaisalmer, Qandahar and Multan.\(^5^9\)

Thus it seems that Bhakkar’s population was generally composed of Mughal officials, merchants, bankers, scholars, artisans and soldiers, men of learning, and renowned scholars were living in large numbers ever since the days of Arghuns.\(^6^0\) There used to be a great annual fair on this island, because of the shrine of Khwaja Khizr, attended by both Hindus and Muslims, but after the two having quarreled, the Hindus got themselves established at Sukkur.\(^6^1\) Here also men of learning came and settled down.\(^6^2\) Rohri, which is also adjacent to Bhakkar, stands on a hill, opposite of the river from Sukkur; and came into being during Mughal period.\(^6^3\) Here are some mosque buildings which date back to sixteen, seventeen and early eighteen century. Its population mostly

\(^5^9\) Mazhar-i-Shahjahani, vol II, p. 5.
\(^6^0\) Ansar Zahid khan, History and Culture of Sind, p. 262.
\(^6^1\) Henry Cousens, p. 148.
\(^6^2\) Mīr Ma’sūm Bhakkarī got settled in Sukkur, and so also Shāh Khairūddin, who had spent his youth in religious studies at Baghadd, visited Mecca and Madina, then he got settled at Sukkur as a religious teacher. Henry Cousens, p.p, 153,154.
\(^6^3\) When seventeen hundred families of Sayyids deserted the fort of Bhakkar during the siege, and migrated towards Lohri hills and established a new town called Rohri. Henry cousens, pp, 155,156.
included merchants who dealt in merchandize viz cotton cloth, indigo etc.\(^{64}\)

Another very important city of Mughal Sind was Sehwan, which is situated on the bank of river in lower valley, especially in the western valley section of Sind, to the east of Manchur lake.\(^{65}\) Although Indus had changed its course many times, but from Sehwan its movements became very limited. The hills in Sehwan were mainly the abode of nomads. Lakki mountains, which originates from seacoast and ends at Sehwan, was inhabited by the Kalimati Baloch tribe. Another range is Kirthar, which runs from Sehwan to Siwi, and was an abode of Nuhmardi tribe.\(^{66}\) It is also famous for its excessive heat which records 126\(^0\)F (52.2\(^0\)C).\(^{67}\)

It was called by different names in Mughal Chronicles as Siwistan (Sehwan), while Cunningham mentions its old name as Sadustan.\(^{68}\) With the establishment of Mughal rule in Sind, sarkār

\(^{64}\) *Ibid.* p. 158.

\(^{65}\) O. H. K. Spate and A. T. A. Learnmonth, p. 504.

\(^{66}\) *Ā Ṭūn*, vol II, p. 165.

\(^{67}\) O. H. K. Spate and A. T. A. Learnmonth, p. 588.

Sehwan was taken direct administration. This was probably due to its important strategic location as a gate to Lower Sind, which is why Abdūr Raḥim Khān-i-Khānān tried to secure it first before going towards Thatta. But towards the second half of the seventeenth century (sometimes before 1656AD) Sehwan was transferred from Thatta to Multan ṣūba, when it appears on a revenue list under Multan and not under Thatta.

The fort of Sehwan was located on the north side, while population lived on the southern side. It was called qīla-i-kāfīr by the locals, mud built, measuring approximately 400 X 200 yards, and about 60 feet high. Since it was nomad infested area, therefore to ensure its security, Mirza Yūsūf, brother of Ahmad Beg Khān the jāgārdār of Sehwan, ordered a wall to be constructed around the city.

---

69 Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 91.
70 Tarikh-i-Sind, p. 252.
72 Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 57.
73 Henry Cousens, pp. 138, 139. Even Yūsūf Mirāk had mentioned this fort as old and dilapidated. Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p.57.
74 Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 158.
It was also a great centre of trade. Its excellent cotton textiles were in great demand,\textsuperscript{75} nearly once thousand families of weavers used to live here.\textsuperscript{76} The maximum production of indigo in Sind, used to be in Sehwan, amounting to 2000 maunds per year.\textsuperscript{77} Other cash crops that this town produces were tobacco and cotton.\textsuperscript{78}

The trade was carried through river rine traffic, in boats\textsuperscript{79} and barter trade was generally in vogue in this town. The nomads of Nuhmardi tribe, visited regularly the town of Sehwan, comprising 4,000 to 5,000 camels, and traded mountain products for grain, arms etc.\textsuperscript{80}

Its population comprised Mughal officials, merchants, scholars, sufis, singers, weavers, boatmen, washermen and soldiers. People of all the religion had freedom to celebrate their festivals. Urs and Shivratri

\textsuperscript{75} Irfan Habib, 'Indian textile industry in the seventeenth century,' Essays in the honour of prof S.C. Sarkar, section III, New Delhi, 1976, p. 187.
\textsuperscript{76} E.F.I. 1634-1636, pp. 128,129.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid p. 129.
\textsuperscript{78} Mazhar-i-Shâhjahânî, vol II, pp. 183, 184, 185.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, pp. 156-57. Between Bhakkar and Sehwan, to the eastern side is Khyrpur river, which is navigated by the light boats during rainy season. See Henry Pottinger, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{80} Mazhar-i-Shâhjahânî, vol II, pp. 111, 239.
were celebrated with same zeal and grandeur. This town was also famous for the shrine of famous Lal Shāh Baz Qalandar, which existed to the extreme south of the city, who was worshipped both by the Hindus and the Muslims equally.

Another important trading centre and town was Nasarpur. It was one of the four sarkārs of ṣūba Thatta, and was situated on the river Sankara. The size of the town was as big as Thatta, during the Arghun period also, it was one of the important six sarkārs. The city was founded by Amīr Naṣr, an officer of Sultan Firūz Shāh Tughlaq, but the buildings were mainly added by the Tarkhāns.

---

81 Ibid. p. 59.
82 Ibid, p. 57. Saints’ real name was Shāikh Usmān Manwandi, who came to Sehwan and spent the rest of his life here. He died in the year 1274A.D. Henry Cousens, p. 139.
84 It was change in this branch of river westward towards Hyderabad (old Nairun), which led to the prosperity of the new town, and the decay of old. See Henry Cousens, p. 167; M.R. Haig, the Indus Delta country, p.4. The name Sankara was applied to the western branch of eastern Nara. See An Atlas, p. 15. Sheet 5 B.
87 Henry Cousens, p. 147. It was here that the coronation of Shāh Husain Arghun took place. Tarikh-i-Sind, pp. 126, 127.
The town became one of the important centres of textile industry whose weavers along with Thatta numbered three thousand.\textsuperscript{89} The textiles were exported largely to Cango, Basra, Persia and Turkey market.\textsuperscript{90} An English factory was also established here, along with a subordinate to the chief factor;\textsuperscript{91} which shows the economic importance of this town which it retained till river Sankara deserted it.

Besides these, there were other important towns, which were either trade centres or military centres, like Darbela, Kandiaro, Halahkandi, Sann and Bubeca noted for their excellent textile and indigo production;\textsuperscript{92} while Mathila (to the NE of Bhakkar) was noted for its important military fortification.

\textsuperscript{89} \textit{E.F.I. 1634-1636}, pp. 128, 129.
\textsuperscript{90} \textit{Ibid}, p. 130.
\textsuperscript{92} \textit{E.F.I. 1637-1641}, p. 136; \textit{E.F.I. 1642-1645}, pp. 136, 137, 163.
CHAPTER 6
URBAN ECONOMY

6.1: Trade and Commerce: Major Export and Import Items

Situated on the lower side of river Indus, Thatta had been an important trading centre, with its port Lahari Bandar on the bank of western branch of river Indus, Baggaur. Ibn Battuta in the 14th Century, had found it to be a fine town on the sea coast, possessing a large harbor, visited by merchants from Yemen, Persia, and other countries.1 Its possession was so important that Akbar took it under direct administration (khālisa).2 During Shāhjahān’s reign, it was said that it could accommodate 1000 ships at a time.3 Ships of up to 200 and 300 tons burden called here.4 It took almost three day to reach Thatta from here.5 Larger vessels and ships used to anchor at Lahari Bandar and after unloading the cargo, the merchandize were brought

---

1 Ibn Battuta, Al-Rahela (tr), vol III, pp. 599 n, 602.
2 Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 91.
3 Inayat Khān, Shāhjahānāma (tr.) p. 212. Instead of Lahari Bandar, Inayat Khān has mentioned Thatta as a port.
5 Ibid
to Thatta in Small boats up the river, and by the land on packed animals. Whenever any ship entered the port, a gun was fired to inform the local merchants and inhabitants of the town, of its arrivals. They used to approach the ship in small boats (ghūrabs) to negotiate terms. If the ship did not belong to the port, it was not allowed to anchor inside the channel, but had to anchor in the roadstead off the coast. From there, its cargo was transferred to small boats and sent on to the city (Thatta).  

The major items exported from here were textile, indigo, leather, saltpeter, butter and ivory products to Congo, Basra, Persia, Masqat, Hormuz, Portugal. The textiles of Sind were in great demand, which were mainly used for trading purpose rather than home consumption. Thatta, Nasarpur, Sehwan, Kandiaro and Darbela were the main centres of cotton textiles, especially Thatta and Nasarpur, where three thousand families of weavers used to live, whereas

---

6 Francisco Pelsaert, *The Remonstrantie* (tr), pp. 31, 32.

7 *Tārīkh-i-Ẓāhirī*, p. 144.


193
Sehwan accommodated one thousand families of weavers.\(^9\) Most of the weavers used to weave checkered alegias (silk cloth), which was exported mainly to the Persian and Turkey market.\(^10\) A large quantity of these clothes was sent to the port of Congo and Basra by the merchants of Thatta.\(^11\)

Another type of Sindhi textiles were joorie (striped), jamawars, cudburges, cambooles (mixture of silk and wool), dustars, armeniaes, duster gullames, cannikins, alaboolaes or red joories, semavars (wrought silk cloth) and a coarse sort of gingham called seriaes (made of double thread) was also manufactured here.\(^12\) The joories and chhints manufactured here were very soft, and used mainly for bed covers;\(^13\) of these comboolies (wool+silk), and alachas (cotton+silk), cuttanee (cotton+silk), were mainly exported to


\(^10\) *E.F.I. 1634-1636*, p. 130.


\(^12\) *Ibid*, pp. 130, 133.

Portugal, where its demand was much higher. Not only this, but embroidered calico and silk were also demanded by the English for export to Europe.

While comparing cotton textile of Sind with that of Gujarat calicoes, Palsaert gives weightage to Sindhi calicoes; despite the fact that Gujarat textile was higher in price. Its demand was so much that the English had invested rupees seventeen thousand alone in Thatta calicoes with a total quantity from 5000 pieces to 20,000 at a time. Thatta alone had two thousand looms, whose woven cloth was very fine and exported largely, while silken taffeta and taffseales were praised highly. It seems that joories were liked most by the English, due to which English factors were ordered to send 2000 pieces of joories per year to England; but due to weavers' engagement in other types, European merchants had to buy it from other centres as

---

16 E.F.I.1637-1641, p. 312
17 Pelsaert op. cit. p. 32
19 E.F.I. 1637-1642, p. 312. Joorie was 432 inches in length and 27 inches in width; E.F.I. 1634-1634, p. 130.
well to fulfill their demand. But still, five thousand to twenty thousand joorie pieces were bought every year by the English merchants. Cloth was also dyed and printed [block printed]. Shah Abdul Latif in his poetry refers to the hand printing of bed sheets.

The textile industry of Sind had passed many ups and down, which can be seen in its price fluctuation. English factory records reports about the increase prices of piece goods, owing to large investment for Basra; and it was hoped that price will again fall, so that supply to England can be enhance to meet demand at home. Again in 1656, prices rose at Nasarpur (sūba Thatta) as large quantities were sent to Basra by Thatta merchants. One main reason behind the increasing demand of Sind textile was a terrible famine of Gujarat in 1630 A.D, which mainly affected the weavers, washers and dyers of Broach, hence attention of the buyers turned towards Sind as a substitute. Thus, rising demand also led to speedy and expanded production, leading ultimately to the fall in quality. Because of this in

---

20 E.F.I. 1634-1636, p.130
21 E.F.I. 1637-1641, p. 312; E.F.I. 1651-1654, pp. 129, 130.
22 S.M. Jhangiani, Shah Abdul Latif and his times 1690-1751, p.155. For printing cloth punhu (wooden stamp) was used.
23 E.F.I. 1642-1645, p. 163. This rise in price was reported in March, 1644 A.D.
the second half of the seventeenth century, the English factors reported about the deteriorating quality of cloth, perhaps the weavers could not cope up with the quantity and quality simultaneously. To solve this problem, English buyers had asked Nasarpur weavers to alter their looms in the year 1647, and instead of weaving cloth of 600 yarns in a warp, they were asked to use 700 yarn. But the increasing fall in quality led to decreasing demand of Sindhi textile.

Another industry which flourished in Sind and attracted European merchants was indigo. Indigo was mainly used for dying clothes, and, this was one of the main agricultural produce of sūba Thatta, grown especially in Sehwan, but it was not that good as of Bayana and Sarkhej, yet it was exported to Basra and England. Producers of Sehwan were mainly depended on Thatta dyers, because they were their chief customers and main exporters also. These dyers used to pay 41½ rupees per maund, and rupees 3 were taken as extra extra

---

27 The English were granted permission for indigo trade with Sind through a nishān of Dāra Shikōh in 1644 A.D., who was the then Governor of Thatta, and John Spiller was the Chief factor of Thatta factory. D. pant, The commercial policy of Mughals, reprint, Delhi, 1978, p. 196.
28 E.F.I. 1637-1641, p. 277.
charges. In total, they were paying 44½ rupees for per *maund* indigo, while indigo seller at Thatta used to buy indigo from Bubeca and Sann for rupees 21 or 22 per *maund*, with the condition that they could not buy less than 100 *maunds* at a time. There are reports that show that cost of indigo was cheaper at Sehwan than at Thatta, yet the Thatta dyers were not at loss because weight differs at both the places. In Sehwan *man-i-Jahāngīrī* was prevalent [which was lb 33.19] while Thatta had a use of *man-i-Shāhjahānī* [lb36.88]. Finally the English factor at Thatta had fixed its price to rupees 40 a *maund*. Indigo which was found in Sind was obtained from two wild species of *Indigofera* i.e. *Lordifolia*, Heyne, and *Paucifolia*, Delisle, but the cultivated plant was *Tinctoria*. It was mainly consumed by dyers. The process of dyeing a cloth, required to first dip into mordant of glum, gum and fullers earth, and then it was dyed into colour of choice. Portuguese and other merchants of the city bought cloth, and used to dye it in deep blue

---

29 *E.F.I. 1642-1645*, p. 203.

30 *E.F.I. 1642-1645*, pp.136, 137.


32 Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian system of Mughal India*, 1556-1707 A.D., pp. 374, 376. lists of weights is given in Appendix 'B'

33 *E.F.I. 1642-1645*, p. 203.

for export to Basra. Indigo dyed cloths were very wide; it was either bafftas or chhint.

Thus indigo cultivation in Sind had two main markets, firstly at home, and secondary at foreign land, mainly in England, Hormuz, Italy and Turkey. From time to time, the English merchants had reported indigo as dear commodity, whose cultivation was limited due to scarcity of means, and cultivators were also resistant to grow this crop. Thus adulteration was great, and at the time of sell, sand was mix within it. Yet its production in Sind had the fourth highest rate of revenue payment ie. 35 tankā murādī per annum. Its maximum production was in the sarkār of Sehwan, amounting to 2000 maunds per year. But lately the English records show the scarcity, that by the second half of the seventeenth century, the total production of indigo in Sind, was not more than 800 maunds. In quality, albeit it remained inferior to Sarkhej, but the produce of Muda Nar in pargana

---

36 E.F.I. 1642-1645, p. 203. The cultivations were hesitant as it affected the productivity of soil.
37 D. Pant, op. cit. p. 196.
40 E.F.I. 1642-1645, p.203
Haweli Sehwan, was superior to Bayana indigo. But with the opening of indigo trading with West Indies by the English, West Indies became the main supplier, and Indian indigo trade suffered out of it. Except indigo, another thing which was used for dyeing was fawn or Masseidt, which gives red colour. This was imported from Iran through the Isfahani merchants.

The third major export from Sind was leather. This region abounded in cattle especially buffaloes, which resulted in a great export of their hides through ships. Sindhi manufacture a very fine quality of leather, which Portuguese styled as Sindhi leather, mainly exported to Arab and Persia. It was not a plain preparation, rather decorated with black stitch work, and fringes of silk at the corners; horse trappings, stitched quilts and excellent mattresses called Sindhi mattresses were the main items. Linschoten says “They were

---

41 Ansar Zahid Khan, History and Culture of Sind, p. 160.
42 The total input of indigo in the year 1782, into England was lb 64,309 from West Indies, while entire Asian export was only lb 25,535. George Watt, op cit, p. 461.
43 Pelsaert, The Remonstrantie, p. 32.
44 Fray Sebastein Manrique, op. cit. vol II, p. 239n.
excellent leather, cunningly wrought with silk of all colours, both flowers and personages.”

Other items which were included in the list of export items were wheat and Ghee for Masqat, wine for England, locally manufactured desks, draught boards, writing cases, inlaid with ivory and ebony, exported in large quantity to Goa and other coastal towns. Saltpetre, which was of a fine quality, and exported mainly to England, priced rupees 6 per maund, and in one time 50 tones of saltpetre was sent. One more commodity chiefly exported to China, was the wood ligna dulics, grown at Sind. Its root was called Pitchock or Radix dulics, served as a main ingredient in making perfumes. It was exported to Surat and from there sent to China, where it fetched a very good price. Besides it, asafoetida to England, and a sweet flavored fish

---

46 Ibid, p. 239n
49 Pelsaert, op. cit. p.32.
50 E.F.I. 1634-1636, p. 130, E.F.I. 1661-1664 , p. 108; Alexander Hamilton, vol I, p. 12; according to ʿĀṭān, “in Thatta Saltpetre was found in abundance.” ʿĀṭān, vol II , p.165. List of prices of different commodities is provided in the Appendix.A.
called *pala*, was also exported to England after making it dry, and its oil was used mainly in ship building.

As far as import is concerned, Sind mainly imported precious metals like silver and gold from outside world, and commodities for daily consumption were chiefly imported from other cities of India. This inter-regional, and intra-regional trade was generally of barter nature. As Sind imported sugar, sugar candy, *naushader*, ginger from Lahore, in exchange for pepper, tin, lead, spices, broad clothes, dates, coker milts. It also imported tobacco from Gujarat. From outside India specially from Arab and Persia, dates, horses, seed pearls, pearls, incense, gem mastic, senna leaves, and Jew’s stones, were imported, in exchange for white and black sugar, butter, silver oil and cocos.

---

55 *Ibid*
57 *E.F.I. 1646-1650*, p. 60.
58 Manucci, *op. cit.* vol I, p. 58
As far as import items from Europe are concerned; in exchange for bafta and cotton textiles Sind mainly imported precious metals and spices, and especially silver. Between 1586-1590, Portuguese exported 50-45 metric tons of silver to Sind and Gujarat. Sind also imported silver from Middle East by overseas route. Silver and gold coins especially Lari, Reales of eight, Abbas, gold ducats were also imported from Asia and Europe.

During the latter half of the seventeenth century Sind witnessed a decline in trade and its reflection can be seen in stagnation of money circulation, due to decline in mint production. Clearly the long term trend could have had little to do with such local problems, as the blockening of Lahari Bandar by sand banks, or the final seizure of Qandahar by the Safawids in 1648-49, leading to fell of Hormuz; though these were undoubted irritants. The English factors were continuously complaining of the scarcity of rupees and also of

---


61 E.F.I. 1637-1641, pp. 42, 133; E.F.I. 1651-1654, p. 118.

62 William floor, The Dutch East India company (VOC) and Diewel Sind (Pakistan) in 17th and 18th Centuries, pp. 23-4.
difficulty in obtaining even previously issued rupees. So, the English found it very difficult to continue trade with Sind. This scarcity became so adverse that a person who wished to make a long distance remittances from Bhakkar, found it very difficult to have it done directly from Bhakkar to Akbarabad (Agra), or Kannauj. This is strongly brought out in letters written by ‘Abdu’l Bilgrāmī, an official posted at Bhakkar. In 1708, he explained his son the difficulties in remitting money to Bilgram (near Kannauj), it says “in Bhakkar, there is no banker (mahājan) who can draw a hundawī on Akbarabad (Agra) or Kannauj. The hundawī from here is drawn on Multan; from Multan on Lahore; from Lahore on Akbarabad, and from thence on order for payment in chalāntī (current rupees) is issued on Kannauj. In such circumstances, one has to get a hundawī, written out at four places carefully; ensuring specification of rupee, mintage and year of issue (in which payment is to be made).” He, therefore, advised his son to try to have a reverse hundawī (hundawī-i-jawābi) discounted by a mahājan, drawn upon him at Bhakkar, so that presumably all the successive stages would be managed by mahājans discounting it at

---

63 E.F.I. 1646-1650, pp. 73, 101, 102.
64 Ibid
each stage. Clearly none of the great bankers at Agra or Delhi, cared to have agents or correspondents at Bhakkar or even Multan, and this would only be when the trade between upper Sind and the core of Mughal Empire, was not a scale sufficient enough to provide for the profitable establishment of a direct credit and exchange mechanism.

The conquest of Sind by the Mughal Emperor Akbar in the year 1591-1592 A.D. led to the establishment of Imperial mints in that region, and thereby unifying the monetary system of Sind with the rest of the Mughal Empire. Bhakkar in northern Sind had been annexed to Akbar's dominions earlier in 1574; and in the Ā‘īn-i Akbarī, Abu’l Fazl has mentioned the name of Bhakkar amongst the list of twenty-eight towns, where only copper coins were struck. After the annexation of whole of Sind eighteen years later, imperial mints were also established, at Thatta, and at Lahari Bandar, which were exclusively silver mints.

65 'Abdūl Jāhil Bilgārī’s letters, Persian text on even and translation on odd pages, Oriental Miscellany, Calcutta, I 1978, p. 156. See also pp. 274, 276, 278, 282.
Under the previous rulers of the Arghun and Tarkhan dynasties, the rulers did not seem for a long time to have minted their own coins. Foreign coinage like Persian lāri\(^67\) and Portuguese ‘Xeraphin’ or Ashraft\(^68\) [Begī] were apparently used\(^68\) for transactions. The use of lāris was obviously the result of Sind’s regular trade with Hormuz. It was only the Tarkhan rulers who issued copper coins of very small denomination. First there was the ‘Isai, which was issued by ‘Isa Khān Tarkhan I (1565-66).\(^69\) The mūris, a copper coin, also called postāni, was also issued during the reign of Jānī Beg Tarkhan 1584-1599. There was another larger coin called the kabar.\(^70\) Ṭāhir Muḥammad Nisyānī, in Jahāngīr’s time has recorded the exchange value of these coins as 1 kabar = 12 mūris, 72 mūris (or 6 kābars) = 1 tankā, 24 tankā-murādī = 1 rupee.\(^71\) Thus one silver Mughal rupee

---

\(^{67}\) The frequent use of Lāri in Sind can be judged by the fact that when in 1558-59, Sultān Maḥmūd of Bhakkar laid siege to Sitpur [on Punj-nad], south-west of Multan, to punish the rebel Nāhar Khān. Nāhar Khān offered 4 lakh lāris to Sultān Maḥmūd in order to ward off the danger. Tārikh-i-Sind, pp. 221-232. The important of lari continued even during the Mughal Period, but at that time, they were restruck.

\(^{68}\) Tārikh-i-Ṭāhirī, p.183

\(^{69}\) Ibid., p. 170.

\(^{70}\) Ibid, p .183.

\(^{71}\) Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 185.
was equal to 1,728 mīrīs and 144 kābars. It is not clear whether by tankā murādī, Tahir means the double-dām of Akbar or the earlier bullion tankā of the Lodis. With the full imposition of Mughal authority over Sind, the right of minting the coins was taken from the Tarkhān, Imperial mints were established at Thatta and Lahari Bandar, besides Bhakkar. The silver rupee and copper dām were now sought to be established standard currency. None of the contemporary sources on Sind contains any account of the administration of these mints, yet it may be presumed that these functioned according to the imperial rules and regulations; a regular staff of Darōgha, Sarrāf, Amīn, Mushrif, Gārgīr [Treasurer] Tarāzūkāsh [weighman], Garazgīr-i-Khām [Melter of the ore], and warāq-kāsh [the plate maker], as prescribed in the Ā′īn-i Akbarī. As the Mughal system was one of open or ‘free’ coinage, any individual

72 Tārikh-i-Tahirī, p. 183.

73 The Bhakkar Mint was probably established after the year 1574-1575, when Gīśū Khān occupied Bhakkar or behalf of Akbar. Tārikh-i-Sind, pp. 235, 236. See also catalogue of the coins in Indian Museum, Calcutta; Nelson Wright, Mughal Emperors of India, Oxford, 1908, vol I, p.xxxv. Mints at Thatta and Lahari Bandar were established directly after its conquest in 1591-92 A.D., because the first specimen of square rupee of the Ilahi type belongs to the year 1592-93 A.D. /1001 A.H. Nelson Wright, vol I, pp. lxxix, lxxx.

74 Ā′īn, vol I, pp.10-12.
could bring the precious metals gold, silver and copper to the mint, and could get the coin struck in the Imperial mint after paying the seigniorage of 5½ percent on the value of the metal.\textsuperscript{75} At the Thatta mint, according to a report of mid-1640's, coins were struck only once in a week, and most of the minting was done for the state treasury by diwān,\textsuperscript{76} which sometimes made the transaction difficult for merchants due to their inability of obtaining the coins at the needed time.\textsuperscript{77} However, the mints of Sind issued sufficient amount of currency to claim a noticeable share in the total issue of silver coins of Mughal Empire.\textsuperscript{78} As a result, during the seventeenth century, the earlier regional currency of Sind was totally replaced by the silver rupee and copper tankās and dāms. The land revenue rates, customs, revenue realization (hāsil), everything was being recorded either in silver rupee, or in copper tankā or dām.\textsuperscript{79} Our Tables ‘A’, ‘B’ and


\textsuperscript{76} \textit{E.F.I. 1646-1650}, p. 101.

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Ibid}, pp.73, 101, 102.

\textsuperscript{78} Aziza Hasan, p.324.

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī}, vol II, pp. 36, 37, 171, 172, 183, 184. The jama' of pargana Samwati and pargana Halah Kandi of sarkār Thatta is stated as 4 million dāms, and 2 million dāms respectively; while the custom duty on indigo is recorded as 3 rupees per man, tobacco 7 dams per man, and sold for 8 tankās.
bring out some long term shifts in Sind’s mint production. It was because of the steady mint production that the rupīyah and dām or tankā totally replaced the regional currency, while at the same time obtaining a rising share in the total north Indian mint output of Mughal Empire.

---

TABLE A

RUPEES FROM THATTA MINT 1591-1708

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number of coins (Museum collection)</th>
<th>Number of Coins (U.P. Hoards)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1591-1592 to 1603-1604</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1606-1607 to 1627-1628</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1628-1629 to 1657-1658</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1659-1660 to 1707-1708</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>538</strong></td>
<td><strong>456</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## TABLE B

### RUPEES FROM BHAKKAR MINT, 1575-1684

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of coins (Museum collections)</th>
<th>Number of Coins (U.P. Hoards)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1575-1576 to 1576-1577</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1630-1631 to 1651-1658</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1660-1661 to 1683-1684</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td><strong>83</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE C

RUPEES FROM LAHARI BANDAR MINT, 1595-96

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number of coins</th>
<th>Number of Coins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Museum collections)</td>
<td>(U.P.Hoards)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1595-1596 to 1598-1599</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the seventeenth century Thatta had *hundis* (bills of exchange) drawn upon it from Ahmedabad, and vice-versa with a common discount of 1 1/4 and 1 percent.\(^1\) Lack of safety on the route

---

\(^1\) *E.F.I. 1634-1636*, p. 131. In this letter of December 18\(^{th}\), 1635, the English factor has mentioned that the bills of exchange issued from Thatta for Ahmadabab are generally for sixty days, and these days encashment of bills at Ahmadabad entitled to a loss of one percent. See also *E.F.I. 1646-1650*, pp. 60-61. Here the factor records the promise of Shah Bandar to the English, regarding payment on bills of exchange.
through Cutch could be one reason for resort to such bills. Merchants did not want to take the risk of carrying coins. In the years between 1586-1590, Portuguese exported 50.45 metric tons of silver to Sind and Gujarat. Sind, therefore, drew to itself especially lārī, Reales of eight, Abbāsīs and gold Ducats. These were melted and re-minted as rupees in the imperial mint. It was because of this influx of silver during the 17th century, that the output of Thatta mint was highest in the decade 1598-1636, when it contributed 21.8% of the total number of coins issued in entire North India. Even, the output of Bhakkar mint was also much higher during these decades, though not single specimen of Jahāngīr’s reign is found from Bhakkar mint. But in the same period i.e. between 1607-1616, the output of Qandahar mint was the highest counting by decades, being 13.9 percent of total North

82 N. Withington, pp. 190, 213, 214.
83 *E.F.I. 1634-1636*, p. 131.
85 *E.F.I. 1637-1641*, pp. 42, 133; *E.F.I. 1651-1654*, p. 118. The exchange value of these foreign currencies is as follows; 1 *abbāsī* = 100 rupees, 1 *venetion sequin or ducat* = 12 3/8 rupees, 100 reales of eight = 205 1/2 rupees, and 112 totals of silver in bullion = 100 rupees. *E.F.I. 1634-1636*, p. 134.
86 *E.F.I. 1651-1654*, p. 118.
Indian output. One may infer that when Qandahar was under Mughal control, as it was during the larger part of Jahāngīr’s reign the silver coin and bullion received overland from Iran coined there; when it went out of Mughal hands, it was the Bhakkar mint which performed the same function. Thus during ShāhJahān’s reign Bhakkar mint again became very active, and total number of silver coins reported from it between 1630-1631, 1651-1658 numbered 85. But with the decline of trade of Sind in the later half of the seventeenth century the credit and exchange mechanism also suffered out of it.

\[88\text{ Ibid, pp. 334, 335.}\]
\[89\text{ See table B.}\]
\[90\text{ William Floor, The Dutch East India Company (VOC) and Diewal Sind (Pakistan) in 17th and 18th Centuries, pp. 23, 24}\]
# APPENDIX-A

## Prices of Different Commodities as Recorded by the English Factories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEC 4, 1635</td>
<td>Hen Sheep</td>
<td>4 Pice 1 Rupee</td>
<td>Per Hen</td>
<td>Lahari</td>
<td>E.F.I., 1634-1636, p.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC 18, 1635</td>
<td>Salt petre</td>
<td>6 Rupee</td>
<td>Per maund</td>
<td>Thatta</td>
<td>E.F.I., 1634-1636, p.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 1st, 1636</td>
<td>Indigo</td>
<td>61 Rupees</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>E.F.I. 1634-1636, p. 244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARCH, 1639</td>
<td>Narrow baftas or joories</td>
<td>17 to 18 Rupees</td>
<td>Per cor[ge]</td>
<td>Darbelah</td>
<td>E.F.I., 1637-1641, p.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oil and butter</td>
<td>1 Rup[ee]</td>
<td>7½ s[ee]</td>
<td>Bhakkar</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sehwan joories</td>
<td>¼ to 1¼ Rup[ees]</td>
<td>Per piece, 2 covet</td>
<td>Sehwan</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shorter than Nasarpur [Which is 16-17 great covets]</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bayana indigo</td>
<td>85 Rup[ees]</td>
<td>Per maund</td>
<td>Multan</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sugar candy</td>
<td>15 Rup[ees]</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>10 Rup[ees]</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC 29, 1640</td>
<td>Indigo</td>
<td>70 Rupees</td>
<td>Per double maund of Sind</td>
<td>E.F.I. 1637-1641, p.274</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[high rate probably due to failure of crop] 73½ lb</td>
<td>Surat</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARCH 26, 1644</td>
<td>Narrow bafta or</td>
<td>55 Rupees</td>
<td>Per double maund</td>
<td>Kandiaro+</td>
<td>E.F.I. 1642-1645, p.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>joories</td>
<td></td>
<td>maund</td>
<td>Darbelah</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Commodity</td>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV 28, 1644</td>
<td>Narrow jories</td>
<td>Per corge</td>
<td>Price rose 5 to 6 Rupees (inspite of bad quality) but due to large investment for Basra</td>
<td>Nasarpur</td>
<td>E.F.I. 1642-1645, p.203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOV 28, 1644</td>
<td>Indigo</td>
<td>Per maund</td>
<td>41½ Rupees besides 3 Rupees custom charge</td>
<td>Sind (in area around Sehwan)</td>
<td>E.F.I. 1642-1645, p.203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPT 8, 1647</td>
<td>Indigo</td>
<td>Per maund</td>
<td>Price rose (?) due to absconding of dyers</td>
<td>San</td>
<td>E.F.I. 1646-1650, p.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEB 1659</td>
<td>Cotton goods</td>
<td>Per maund</td>
<td>Price rose(?) due to many buyers from Thatta</td>
<td>Nasarpur</td>
<td>E.F.I. 1656-1660, p.222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Recorded in Persian Sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mazhar-i-Shahjahānī, vol II, pp. 171-172</td>
<td>1. Indigo</td>
<td>Per maund</td>
<td>20 rupees</td>
<td>Sehwan</td>
<td>Mid17th c. 1615-16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX-B

Weights Prevalent in Sind as Recorded in the Persian Sources, and the English Factory Records of Seventeenth Century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weights</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Kharwār = 60 kasahs</td>
<td>Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(assload)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corwar[kharwār] = 8 Man-i-Jahāngirī</td>
<td>E.F.I. 1634-1636, p. 133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Kasah = 30 Jahāngirī sīr</td>
<td>Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kasah = 6 Jahāngirī sīr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kasah = 4 tōyah</td>
<td>Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Toyah = 1½ Jahāngirī sīr</td>
<td>Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man-i-Jahāngirī</td>
<td>E.F.I. 1634-1636, p. 133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Prevalent at Sehwan]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man-i-Shāhjahānī</td>
<td>E.F.I. 1634-1636, p. 133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Prevalent at Thatta]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

91 Irfan Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India, p. 429. According to him “The approximate weight of Man-i-Jahāngirī should have been 33.19 lb avdp. (15.07 kg), while that of Man-i-Shāhjahānī should have been 36.88 lb. (16.74 kg).
6.2: Trading Class and Instruments of Trade in Sind

The overseas trade, indeed appreciate the importance of the individual and the power of the specialized local network within the interlocking mechanism, which kept the trade going; one of such mechanism was the networking of indigenous and foreign merchants in Sind.

Sind’s geographical position enabled it to serve as a junction of routes, connecting Western and Central Asia with India on one hand, and European and African countries on the other, which helped to attract attention of merchants within India and outside also. Its sea ports played an important role in breaking its isolation and linking it to far off countries. These promoted the commercial activities and developed its culture, and provided opportunities to assimilate the bits of foreign culture within its fold.

Thatta being the chief port city of Sind was a central place for the foreign merchants to settle in, and to carry on their commercial activities. Ibn Battūta had mentioned its port Lahari Bandar visited by merchants from Yemen, Persia, and other countries, so a brisk traffic went on between Thatta and Lahari Bandar, so much so that Hamilton

---

1 Al-Rahela (tr.), vol III, pp. 599n, 602.
records that a place four miles from the port towards Thatta, containing a fort called Dungbam. It was used as a serāī, and twenty cottages around the building served as a breeding centre of fowls, goats and sheep, supplying the needs of those passing through.²

Before the establishment of an English factory here, the Portuguese alone represented the European element.³ They asserted their monopoly of the trade here, and did not allow any other foreign merchants to come. Sir Robert Sherley, who arrived at Lahari Bandar, somewhere before 1614, was harshly treated by them and even his house was set afire.⁴ Consequently the attention was shifted to the neighboring entrepots of Cambay, Surat and Hormuz. In 1623, 54 ships are recorded having called at Hormuz from Gujarat, and Sind ports, of which eight were from the mouth of Indus.⁵ Ships from Basra, Gombroon, Hormuz and Masqat used to visit very often, and

³ Francisco Pelsaert, The Remonstrantie, p. 32. For the coming of Portuguese and sack of Thatta see Tarikh-i-Tahirī, pp. 111,112. While fighting with the imperial forces, war boats were carrying Portuguese, and one of them was chief of the Portuguese settlement of Hormuz, whose name was Charkas Daflir, who used to come yearly from Hormuz to Thatta. (Tarikh i-Tahirī, p.185)
⁴ N. Withington, Early Travels in India, p. 212.
cartas [passes] were issued to them, and to the local merchants by the Portuguese;\(^6\) and the dues from outgoing and incoming vessels was collected by their agents. The main comptroller of the port, shāhbandar, often secured the revenue of the port on farming basis (ijārah) and, therefore, he was always afraid of the loss of trade and revenues, and, therefore tried to keep the Portuguese in good humor. What they brought to him was estimated at rupees one lakh.\(^7\) In other words in the early years of seventeenth century, the interest of the Portuguese became identical with that of the Mughals. The continuation of this highly advantageous position and their complete monopolization of trade allowed them to have control over the ports of the Mughal Empire, including those of Sind. This control was so deep that the English and the Dutch attempts were deliberately made futile to enter into port.\(^8\) But despite Portuguese attempts, the English succeeded to send a broker from Surat via land route, along the Rann of Cutch to procure some goods from the region of Sind.\(^9\) This land


\(^7\) Ansar Zahid Khan, History and Culture of Sind, p. 190; W.H. Moreland, From Akbar to Aurangzeb, London, 1923, pp. 41, 42.

\(^8\) N. Withington, pp. 188, 233.

\(^9\) E.F.I. 1630-1633, p. 35; N. Withington, pp. 188, 233.
route was followed from Gujarat to Cutch, to Badin, and thence to Thatta. But finally with the loss of Hormuz, Portuguese negotiated with the English in 1635 A.D. which was initiated by the English factor Methworld, and this led to the lifting of their monopoly by the Portuguese. Originally three English factories were suggested, one at Thatta, second at Nasarpur and third at Sehwan. To run the administration of these factories, arrangements were made, according to which a chief factor was to be appointed at Thatta, and one subordinate at the other two factories, with one penman, one cashier, one packer, and one keeper of petty customs to be appointed accordingly. English dealt mainly in cotton clothes, indigo and saltpetre, and in return they were bringing largely silver, and

---

10 At the time when Hormuz was under Portuguese, ruler of Houmuz, maintained his factor at Thatta, namely Georges Brown. *Tarikh-i-Sind*, p. 256. This factor named Charkas Daflir helped Mirza Jānī Beg Tarkhān’s forces against Mughal forces during siege of Sind in 1591. *Tarikh-i-Tahirī*, p. 185; *Tarikh-i-Sind*, p. 253.


12 *E.F.I. 1634-1636*, p. 132; Ansar Zahid Khan, p. 191.

13 Niccoloi Manucci, vol I, p. 60; Fray Sebastien Manrique, vol II, p. 233 One chief factor who had succeeded Scrievener, was accused of keeping accounts in his hands against the rules. *E.F.I. 1661-1664*, p. 116.

14 The English were granted permission for indigo trade with Sind through a *nishān* of Dāra Shikōh in 1644 A.D, who was then governor in charge of Thatta, and John
sometimes carried gold also with themselves. It seems that during the
initial phase, the administration had adopted a strict policy
towards the English, may be because their relation with the native
merchants had not been smooth, because once a cargo carrying Sindhi
merchants with the cartas [issued by the Portuguese to them to trade
at the port of Masqat] was looted by the English merchants. To
punish them, Governor Āsaf Khān threatened the English to return
goods to the Sindhi merchants, or else the matter will be reported to
the Emperor Jahāngīr. This cargo was estimated worth rupees 8
million. As a result the English trade with Agra was also checked;

Spiller was the chief factor of Thatta factory. *E.F.I. 1642-1645*, p. 215; *E.F.I. 1642-1644*, pp. 227, 232. From time to time instructions were issued to the chief
factor to maintain a steady supply of these items. See also *E.F.I. 1661-1664*, p. 78.

Aziza Hasan, *Mints of the Mughal Empire: A study in comparative currency
output*, p. 329

Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India* tr. by V. Ball, ed. by William Crooke,
reprint New Delhi, 1977. p. 10

Āsaf Khān, the then Governor of Thatta had charged English behind this loss.
*E.F.I. 1618-1621*, pp. 181,267. While the English had claimed that the Dutch were
behind this loss. Om Prakash, *The Dutch factories in India, 1617-1623 A.D*, N.
Delhi, 1984, p. 192.


Om Prakash,*The Dutch Factories in India 1617-1623*, p. 192. See also *E.F.I. 1622-
1623*, pp. 78, 90, 91.
perhaps the matter was solved because the later records do not show repetition of the incident.

In some ways trade at Lahari Bandar was considered to be freer than at Thatta. The English factors reported in 1636, that at the latter place “the will of the Governors is a law; so that he sets what prices he pleaseth on commodities,” while at Lahari Bandar “it is not so, for there the prizes [prices] are known and set down in a rate book not to be innovated or altered at every covetous or unjust Governor’s will.”20 The English were so much assured of their profits that the chief factor John Spiller and Scrivener carried their private business as well, in cooperation with local traders, Bumbamal and Navaldas, who had a share in the profits.21 Earlier the factors’ salaries were low i.e. £ 50 per annum, but even after an increase in their salaries, their private trade continued.22 Āsaf Khan remitted half of the custom duties for the English merchants in Lahari Bandar.23

20 *E.F.I. 1634-1636*, p. 244.
22 *E.F.I. 1642-1645*, pp. 13n, 132. John Spiller’s salary was increased to £133.6s 8d.
23 Sorley, pp. 103, 104.
The English did not always trade in exchange of bullion, but practiced barter trade also. While following the land route from Lahore to Multan and then to Thatta; they carried sugar candy (*nabat*), in exchange for pepper, tin, lead, spices, broad clothes, dates and other commodities.\(^24\) Merchants coming from Persia and Arab exchanging dates, horses seed pearls (*Algofrees*) pearls, incense, gymnastics, seena leaves, and jews stones (*Lapis Judicus*) for white and black sugar, butter, cocos (called *Nos Indica* or Indian nut), white linen and printed cloth.\(^25\) Isfahani merchants were also visiting Thatta for the sale of their silk, especially after Portuguese lost Hormuz.\(^26\)

After the Portuguese, the English had tried to monopolize the trade with Sind by adopting unfriendly attitude towards other competitors from Europe; for example, the Dutch traders against whom the English joined hands with the Portuguese: and the English even pleaded the local merchants, to not to welcome the new ones. The extent of their unwillingness went so far that they contacted a local sea pirate Rasy Rānā (perhaps a Med) to attack Dutch Cargos.\(^27\)

\(^{24}\) *E.F.I. 1646-1650*, p. 102.


\(^{26}\) Manucci, vol I. p. 58

\(^{27}\) Pelsaert, pp. 37,32.
Since the Dutch had already established their factory in Iran,\textsuperscript{28} in 1623 A.D; their trading with Sind was probably through Iran via Makran, they now wanted to open a factory in Sind also. An attempt was made in 1652 A.D. by Director Pelgromscent Pieter De Bie.\textsuperscript{29} They, however, continued to trade for few years, but due to the constant danger of pirates and nomads, who threatened the safety of trade routes, the Dutch withdrew their efforts. From the side of Baluchistan the Baluchi chiefs, while Rajasthan border was inhabited by the Samejahs, who from time to time made the route uncomfortable for the merchants. Although the Mughal administration in Sind, subsequently tried hard to clear the route for which at one instance, the zamīndār Rānā Rūkun in the year 1655 A.D, was even attacked by the Mughal forces under Zafar Khān for having looted the property of the merchants.\textsuperscript{30} The administration had even tried to keep check on these pirates, by promoting other recalcitrant or by pleasing them; as a pirate was being paid to clear the sea from Sangani (Cutchi) pirates,

\textsuperscript{28} William Floor, op. cit. p. 10. Besides English, the Portuguese had also threatened the Governor of Thatta, that if the Dutch were allowed to trade, the Portuguese fleet would attack the town. \textit{E.F.I. 1630-1633}, p. 207n.

\textsuperscript{29} William Floor, op. cit. pp. 9, 10.

\textsuperscript{30} ibid.
and an annual payment was forwarded to Rasy Rānā, and a Baluch chief to check them from doing wrong with the merchants.\(^{31}\)

Previously, in the year 1613 A.D., an English traveller, who was coming by way of Radhanpur and Nagar parkar, from Ahmadabad to Thatta, with his fellows, was attacked and looted by a local chief (probably a nomad from the hills), some merchants were even killed also.\(^2\) Apart from expansion of trade around this time, it seems that owing to constant apprehension of nomadic attacks, and lack of safety in transit routes that bills of exchange (Hūndis) became very popular in Thatta and Bhakkar. These bills were generally drawn on Ahmadabad.\(^3\) There is a reference when a bill was issued from Bhakkar to be drawn on Multan, from Multan on Lahore, from Lahore on Akbarabad (Agra), and from there, on Kannauj.\(^4\) With this the risk

\(^{31}\) Ināyat Khān, Shāhjahāmā, tr. p. 509.

\(^{32}\) William Floor, op. cit, p. 11 Raja Rānā, who was settled in the Indus delta was being paid Rs 12,000 to 14,000 annually, and Baluch chief was paid Rs10,000 to 14,000 annually.

\(^{33}\) N. Withington, p. 191. See also pp. 212, 214, 220 for other incidents of plundering and murdering of merchants.

\(^{34}\) When the bill was issued from Thatta to Ahmedabad it was at one percent loss, with a limitation of payment within 60 days, and at a interest rate of 1½ and 1 percent. While if the bill was issued from Ahmadabad and drawn at Thatta it would gain 2 percent. E.F.I. 1634-1636, p. 131; E.F.I. 1646-1650, p. 101.
of carrying coins, and unsafe trade became lesser to some extent. Ensuring a safe passage for the merchants through this region, was a constant goal of the Mughal administration.

Although the European merchants remained dominant in the region, yet the bania (caste of Hindu), and the khatri communities of this region carried brisk trade with Iran,\textsuperscript{35} generally known as Multani merchants. These traders were so powerful that even the East India company agents relied upon them, and their names are casually mentioned in the East India company records, for e.g. Navaladas, who financed commerce between Sind, Multan and Lahore; and Bumbamal, who made large payments to the Mughal officers out of his own wealth.\textsuperscript{36} With the help of these merchants, a coastal trade was carried out, outside India, with the ports of Basra, Gombroon, Masqat, Congo, Bahrein, and also with the Indian ports of Cambay and Surat. Several hundred maunds of silk were brought to Sind every year by the

\textsuperscript{35} It was because there was no mahājan (banker) at Bhakkar. See ‘Abdul Jalīl Bilgrāmī’s letters, Persian translation on even and translation on odd pages in \textit{Oriental Mescillany} Calcutta, I (1978), p. 156. See also pp. 274, 276, 278, 282. There could be much loss in discount (hundyāvār).

\textsuperscript{36} Jean de Thevenot, \textit{Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri}, pp. 77, 78.
Lohanis, chiefly from Bokhara and Turkistan. The indigenous merchants shared the trade with their foreign counterparts at these places. The land route followed the export from Thatta to Khorasan via Bhakkar, Multan, Qandahar, and Persia through caravans. An annual caravan left Bhakkar for there kingdoms carrying textiles and other things. These caravans where generally dominated by the Multani merchants. Banīas of this place also gave impetus to trade with Afghan via Bolan Pass. Lohanis used to visit Multan every year, chiefly from Bokhara, and Turkistan, carrying silk with them. Not only the urban traders were involved in commercial activities, but at a local level, nomads also participated to internal trade, nomads of Sehwan especially Nuhmardis, used to sell livestock including camels, horses, goats, cows and asses; along with carpets and rugs, in exchange for

38 H.T. Soriey, pp. 103, 104.
grains, clothes and arms. But this type of trade did not amount to much revenues for the Mughal Empire, and was much local in character.

The geographical position of Sind benefited merchants to carry overseas trade through Indus to Persian Gulf and Red Sea, and for inland trade, they generally followed route from Bhakkar to Multan to Lahore to Qandahar and thence to Persia: another one through Rann of Cutch to Jaisalmer, and from there to Agra. The administration also provided religious and civic liberties to foreign merchants.

As far as the mode of transport is concerned, the merchandise were either carried on camels, horses and pack oxen on land routes or through small boats. Ships up to 200 and 300 tons of burden used to anchor at the port and after unloading the cargo, the merchandize were

---

42 Mazhar-i-Shahjahānī, vol II, pp. 111, 124, 239. During the tenure of Qāsim Khān Namkīn as a jāgīrdār of Sehwan, these Nuhmardis has promised a safe conduct in lieu of which they were granted permission for trade. A caravan of their, comprising 4,000 to 5,000 camels regularly came to the city of Sehwan for trading purpose.

43 Manucci, vol I, p. 60.

44 Mazhar-i-Shahjahānī, vol II, pp. 5, 5, 26, 111.

45 Alexander Hamilton, vol I, p. 115. Apparently the carts were not employed. Nomads of Alor as Pahawar possessed a large number of camels and supplied them on lease to Jaisalmer, Multan, and Qandahar. Mazhar-i-Shahjahānī vol II, p. 5
brought to Thatta in small boats up the river.\(^{46}\) A cargo capacity of one hundred maund procured Rs.250.\(^{47}\) Generally the boats were of four types *dündì*, *dünij*, *dahrā* and *ghūrab*.\(^{48}\) Alexander Hamilton has described these boats in detail which was used by the merchants frequently within Sind region.\(^{49}\) Among these, the officials at Sind generally kept *ghūrabs* (war boats), for commanding riparian traffic, as most of traffic was centred on different channels in Sind.

The petition of John Spiller, shows how the Mughal administration functioned, and how difficulties arose between the local officials and

\(^{46}\) *Tārīkh-i-Tāhīrī*. p.114. There were some 40,000 boats small or big lying in the sarkar of Thatta. Irfan Habib *The agrarian system of Mughal India* 1556-1707, p. 70n. Pelsaert, pp. 31, 32. In Sehwan also small boats of ferries used to bring merchandize. *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani*, vol II, p. 157.

\(^{47}\) *E.F.I.1637-1647*, p. 41.

\(^{48}\) *Tārīkh-i-Tāhīrī*, p. 114. While for the crossing of river *pūlā jār* and *mussuks* (inflated hide) were used; Edward Thornton, vol I, p. 208. The boatmen of *pargana* Nairun used reed woven boats, the smaller one called *tārō*, and bigger ones *madd* in Sindhi language. (Mazhar-i-Shāhjahānī, vol II, p. 69.)

\(^{49}\) For the navigation the localites used vessels called *kishtīes* of several sizes. “The largest could carry a burden of 200 tons, which were flat bottomed, and each side had cabin built from stem to stem, that overhang about 2 foot, and in each cabin, is a kitchen, and a place for exoneration.” See Alexander Hamilton, vol I p. 123. *Ā‘m* mentions that at least 40,000 boats were present in Thatta. Vol II, p.165.
the English,\textsuperscript{50} which is addressed to the \textit{Bakshiu 'l Mamalik}; is, in fact a bitter complaint against the \textit{Shāhbandar} (who was also the \textit{bakhshī} of \textit{sūba} Thatta). This document also throws light on the corrupt practices that were practiced there, which caused difficulty for the English merchants. The English factory records do not directly reveal any such incident, but in a letter of 11 February 1647 to Surat, a reference is made to “dealing with that \textit{Shāhbandar} about their broadcloth,”\textsuperscript{51} which may be the same transaction as the sale to the Shah Bandar of the broadcloth worth Rs 700, mentioned in our document. Also in November 1647, Spiller did in fact reported a great French ship engaged in piracy which may be related to reference of French pirate ships in our document.\textsuperscript{52}

Apparently the matter was solved, otherwise the English records would have contained constant complaints over the nonpayment of the price of their broadcloth by the vexing Shah Bandar.

\textsuperscript{50} Sloane collection, 80 b(2). A translation of this document is provided in the Appendix B of chapter one, part three.

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{E.F.I. 1646-1650}, p. 102.

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ibid.}
Despite, one or two of such incidents, Mughal administration tried to keep these foreign merchants in good humor, as they were given certain concessions from time to time by the Imperial authorities; either by minimizing the custom duties, or abolition of illegal cesses by the Emperor. The Governors even attended some of them personally. Despite this apparent condescending attitude of the Imperial authorities, it seems that certain geographical changes in the latter half of the seventeenth century possibly led to the decline in the trade, and trading activities in Sind.