The Indian Ocean was one of the kindest oceans in the world at a time when Man's technical skill was at a low ebb and he needed all the co-operation of a bountiful Nature for sheer survival. The extensive Asiatic-African land mass with its innumerable peninsulas, archipelagos, islands, promontories, protected seas, gulfs and narrow seas, gave to the people of the Indian Ocean lands, a long coastline from the Mediterranean to the Far East, clinging to which they could go from port to port in search of commercial gains. Added to this was the fact that the changing Monsoon winds of the Ocean provided the ancient sailing ships with the energy necessary to go far out into the open sea and return to home base with comparatively less risk than in the Atlantic or the Pacific Oceans. The Afro-Asian land mass also had within its limits several fertile river valleys which supported an ancient agricultural civilisation capable of producing enough surpluses to generate industry and commerce. Nature itself had thus provided the facilities for developing close commercial links between the many states of the Indian Ocean since pre-historic times. The mariners, seeking profits in trade from the surpluses at home, could literally float with the
winds and currents in the Indian Ocean or sail leisurely along the coasts and exchange the goods of one country for those of another.

India at the head of the Indian Ocean was particularly well placed, midway between West Asia and East Africa on the one side and the Burma-Indo-China Peninsulas, the Malaysian-Indonesian Archipelagos and China on the other, to function as "middleman" in an east-west trade. In all these areas ancient river valley civilisations existed to promote commerce. India herself had within its confines fertile river valleys which encouraged settled agriculture, trade and industry as far back as 4000 B.C. India's ancient river valley civilisations were contemporaneous with the Nile Valley, the Mesopotamian and the Huang-Ho-Yangtze civilisations and in no way any meaner than these. She was also rich in many of the resources demanded by the ancient communities. Broach stood at the head of a river in whose valley flourished an ancient agricultural civilisation. The navigability of the river and its access to the protected Gulf of Cambay and the Arabian Sea with its favourable Monsoons and currents, enabled it to establish contacts with West Asia, East Africa and even the Far East, from very early times. Its land contacts were also equally favourable. The Narbada Valley, with the port of Broach at its mouth, was the nearest convenient outlet for the land locked regions of the Gangetic Valley and the Malwa Plateau.
This fact made the Valley a coveted possession for the dynasties which established themselves, in these areas. The contact of the Indo-Gangetic Plain with the Afghanistan-Persian Plateau by land across the gaps in the north western mountain complex, drew the Narbada Valley and Broach to West Asia, by land, whenever a northern dynasty projected itself to the fertile plains of Gujarat. The Narbada Valley was also linked with the fertile coasts of Saurashtra by sea across the Gulf of Cambay and by land through the Viramgam - Wadhwan plains. Further, the broad plains of northern Gujarat connected Broach to Sind and Rajasthan. To the south, the Narbada Basin had access to the Deccan Plateau through the gaps in the Vindhyan-Satpura and the Sahyadri mountain ranges. By land and by sea, Broach was well placed to draw the resources of a large hinterland and foreland and distribute them far and wide. The Introduction (Chapter I) gives the physical configuration of the Indian Ocean coasts, its winds and currents, the facilities for the sailing ships of the Ancients in the Gulf of Cambay and the river Narbada and the land connections of the Narbada Basin and Broach with the rest of India and with the early centres of civilisation in Mesopotamia, Egypt and across Central Asia to China, which gave a nodality to Broach to promote its trade.

Chapter II is an account of the trade of Broach during the period of the Indus Valley Civilisation, the Vedic and
Epic Periods and in the period of the Persian Ascendency in West Asia, Egypt and the Punjab. Archaeological excavations in the Narbada Valley have yielded evidences of ancient city sites which lived on trade. Artefacts of the Indus Valley type bear proof to an industry of a high order. There is no doubt that Broach traded with Sumer (Mesopotamia) and the Nile Valley during the period of the Indus Civilisation. The Mahabharata and the Ramayanas (Epic Period) mention Barukachcha as a thriving centre. Trade was usually by barter and was carried on by enterprising traders, desirous of profits, from site to site. In such a trade "Central Places" with natural facilities evolved as trade centres. There is reason to believe that Broach functioned as a "Central Place" in the mechanism of ancient trade.

The two drawbacks for the ancient traders were the lack of a currency and the absence of communication lines on land. These were somewhat overcome during the period of the Persian Empire. The Persians were great road builders. Their trans-country roads encouraged long distance travels by caravans. The Persians were also well known for issuing currency of a very high order. It encouraged trade by currency but barter trade continued as it was thought to be more reliable, particularly during periods of inflation and in areas where Persian currency was not valid. Cotton fabric was the main export from India. Broach was famous for its cotton cloth even in
this very ancient period. Ivory, gold, precious stones, glass etc. are also mentioned as exports from India and Broach. Much of what India exported at this time seem to have come from Ceylon, Burma and the Far East. According to La Couperie the Far Eastern trade of India was as old as that with Sumer and the Nile Valley. It was well established in Pre-Aryan and Aryan India. The winds and currents in the bay of Bengal and the eastern seas were as favourable as those of the Arabian Sea, to encourage the traders to go in search of sandal wood, agallochum, musk, rubies, gold and other metals, all of which fetched a high price at the time.

The Mauryan Period (Chapter III) saw almost the whole of India welded into one single Empire. In the north west Asoka Maurya's Empire extended beyond the mountain wall to Archosia, Gedrosia and Paropanisadae. He had thus easy access to the Afghanistan Plateau and the Persian Gulf by land and sea. The Asokan Empire was the largest the world had seen after the break up of the Persian Empire.

The early Ptolemies who succeeded the Persians in Egypt were contemporaries of the Mauryans in India. They were anxious to establish direct trade contacts with the mighty Mauryan Empire and to reduce their dependence on the Arabians of the Frankincense Country and the Seleucids in the Persian Gulf. Ptolemy Philadelphus established the ports of Myos Hormos, Berenice and Ptolemais and set up trade colonies at Adulis in
the Red Sea, for trade with India. He connected them by
desert roads to Meroe, the interior market town, and through
the Nile to Arsinoe on the Mediterranean. He repaired the
Canal of the Ancients, for an all water link between Meroe
and Arsinoe. Mauryan India had close trade links with Egypt.
The efficient administration of Chandragupta and Asoka enabled
Broach to take advantage of the trade routes built by the
Mauryans. The great Hindustan road from Pataliputra to
Takshashila was linked with Broach through Ujjain and Mathura.
Ujjain and Broach were also linked by road with the Deccan
through the Mahishmati-Khandesh-Burhanpur natural gateway.
Goods flowed from all parts of India to Broach for export
and it distributed what it received from overseas to the rest
of the Empire and across the seas.

Trade with the Persian Gulf received a set back because
of the weakness of the Seleucids. But when the Mauryans
gained control of Takshashila and the provinces beyond the
mountain barrier, the land routes to Persia and Afghanistan
came within the Empire. A large part of the trade of Mauryan
India with Persia was by land. But sea trade along the
Sind-Makran coast to the Persian Gulf also thrived. Asoka
also had an extensive trade with the Far East. Mauryan India
dominated the Indian Ocean trade. Broach, Somnath Patan and
Sopara are cited as the major ports of international trade
in western India during the Mauryan Period.
After the break up of the Mauryan Empire, Broach lost the facilities that a strong Government could provide (Chapter IV). It also lost the links with its wide hinterland. The Bactrians, the Saka-Scythians, the Parthians and the Yuechehis poured into India from West Asia, through the well known channels of communication between India and Central and West Asia. The Bactrians established themselves in Western India. Broach seems to have been a Bactrian port at least during the period of Appolodotus and Menander. But the Bactrian territory was surrounded by powers antagonistic to it. Pushyamitra Sunga of Pataliputra, Kharavela of Kalinga and the Andhras of the Deccan Plateau, challenged the Bactrians in Western India. In their own country a rival house of the Bactrians and later the Saka-Scythians under Mithradates I and II deprived them of Takshashila and the vital life lines of north western India to Afghanistan and Persia. In India itself the Bactrian sway did not reach beyond Mathura. The Sungas and the Kalingas blocked their further progress. In the south and central India the Andhras proved a power to be contended with. It is doubtful whether the Bactrians were able to hold on to Broach right through the period of Appolodotes and Menander. The proof of Bactrian supremacy in India is based mainly on the recovery of Bactrian coins. But coins can travel like any other commodity of trade. Whatever the validity of these findings, the Bactrians even at the height of their power, did not possess the great market towns of Takshashila in the north west and
Ujjain on the Malwa Plateau. Access to the Deccan through the Mahishmati route was also blocked by the Andhras. Mathura was the only link between Broach and the Great Hindustan Road. But the Saka-Scythians who had by now reached the Gangetic Plain were not inclined to look upon the Bactrians with favour. The Bactrians had therefore to look to the sea routes to maintain trade contacts. But with a shrinking hinterland, Broach was deprived of much of the commodities which she could exchange for overseas products. Most of the trade of Broach at this time was through the coastal sea route along Sind and Makran to Socotra and the Red Sea ports. The Ptolemies of Egypt were also of Greek origin. They were anxious to establish direct contacts with India and bypass the Arabians and the Saka-Scythians. They even extended their authority to Eudaemon and Socotra in a bid to control the frankincense trade of the Arabians with India and the East. Socotra and Eudaemon controlled the entrance to the Red Sea. The Ptolemies still had the use of the Red Sea ports of Myos Hormos and Berenice. Meroe and Aswan, the interior market towns were connected to these ports on the one side and to the Mediterranean, through the Nile at its northern end. Broach under the Bactrians therefore had close sea links with Ptolemaic Egypt.

The Bactrian rule in Western India was short lived. The Kshatrapas who next figure in the history of Broach and of
Western India were originally vassals of the Saka-Scythian-Parthians. They later had established a dynasty in the Gangetic Plain by the time Kanishka became the ruler of the Indian branch. Kanishka's territories, reached upto Sarnath in the east and as far as Khotan and Afghanistan in the north west. But his territory did not reach Broach. The vassals of the Saka-Scythians, however, seem to have moved from Mathura and established an independent line of the Kshatrapas in Western India. Bhumaka and Nahapana maintained close links with the Saka-Scythian-Parthian clans in northern India and western Asia. Nahapana the greatest of the early Kshatrapas had the use of the Takshashila route to the Persian Plateau. In the south he held Nasik and the ports of Kalleina and Sopara. It is known that Nahapana's Kingdom thrived on a sea trade. The orientation of Broach at this time was mainly to the north and north west because of Nahapana's friendly relation with the Gangetic Saka-Scythian-Parthians. However the conquest of Nasik, Kalleina and Sopara placed him in an advantageous position regarding the trade of the Deccan. Kalleina and Sopara were the main ports of the Andhras on the west coast. The loss of these and the land routes to Malwa made the Andhras dependent on the Kshatrapas for their trade with the Arabian Sea ports. The links of Broach with Paithan, the major market town of upper Deccan, was a natural one and goods generally flowed through the Burhanpur-Khandesh route and the
Nanaghat - Junnar route to Broach. But the natural gateways being of strategic value were bones of contention between the Andhras and the Kshatrapas.

The Andhras, under Gautamiputra Sri Satakarni, were able to challenge the Kshatrapas, who after Nahapana's death, lost their vigour. Broach was included in the Andhra Kingdom, a Deccan power, which pulled it to the south. But Broach was on the frontiers of the Andhra Kingdom, where trade proved risky. The Andhras had also the use of Kalleina and Sopara, which were the traditional and more favoured outlets of the Deccan Plateau in the west. The Andhra Kingdom also had the use of the eastern coast ports. Broach, as an Andhra port, therefore had to compete with many other ports of the Deccan.

The Andhras lost their grip over the Nerbada Basin, Malwa and Central India after Sri Pulamayi. A marriage alliance between Pulamayi and the daughter of Kshatrapa Rudradaman did not succeed in quelling the rivalry between the two houses. In the Andhra Kingdom, the usurpation of the throne by Yagna Sri, generated internal instability. Rudradaman gained control of Broach. The later Kshatrapas had to contend with not only the Andhras but also with the Roman entry into the eastern trade.

Blocked by the Parthians beyond the Levant in Western Asia, and deprived of the silks of China, because of the
Parthian hold on the silk routes, Rome had been for long looking to Egypt as a link between the Mediterranean and the East. The Ptolemies succumbed to Rome in 31 B.C. and Rome was freed of the Parthian domination in the eastern trade. The Red Sea route to India was now at the disposal of Roman Egypt. But till a Greek merchant of Egypt discovered that the Arabs and the Indians were using the Monsoon winds for journeying across the sea, Roman shipping was along the coast of Arabia and Makran to Barbaricum on the mouth of the Indus. But with the discovery of the Monsoon, the traders of Roman Egypt could strike across the sea and reach the coasts of the Konkan and Malabar. The discovery of the Monsoon had the effect of swinging the trade of Roman Egypt to the southern ports of the west coast of India. Roman records mention the Kshatrapas only in passing while the Andhras find frequent mention. With the Andhra-Roman alliance in the trade of Roman Egypt with India, the Kshatrapas had to establish closer relations with the Saka-Scythians and the Arabians of West Asia and the Persian Gulf to maintain the trade of Broach and Gujarat. In this trade Rudradaman had the advantage of possessing Malwa for some time. The Malwa corridor was the link between the Gangetic Plain and its nearest sea outlet in Gujarat. The Saka-Scythians had to have the alliance of the Kshatrapas for the trade of the Gangetic Plain. Rudradaman also held the Saurashtra-Cutch-Sind coasts although his hold was loose.
He could maintain the balance in his favour against the Andhras and the Romans, till the Andhras again asserted their authority over the Narbada Valley.

It was during this period of political uncertainty in western India and Broach that Roman trade contacts with India reached its zenith. The conquest of Egypt by Rome put the Ptolemaic ports of Berenice and Myos Hormos in the hands of Rome. But the Arabs held Muza and stopped Indian shipping at Ocelis. Rome's connection with the Arabian Sea was through Ethiopia and Adulis. Indians frequented the ports of the Horn of Africa and eastern Africa. Chapter IV deals with the trade of Broach during the post Mauryan Period, when it was alternatively held either by the Bactrians, the early and later Kshatrapas or the Andhras. By the time of the early Kshatrapas in Western India, Egypt had become Roman. The details of the commodities that entered its trade, the areas from which they came, the overseas ports with which Broach traded at this time, have mainly been based on Roman records. Its trade has been interpreted in terms of its location, its accessibility to the major trade routes of the period and its political links.

The Parthian Empire and the Roman Empire were laid waste by the Barbarians. The Roman Empire split into two, the West with its capital at Rome and the East with its capital at Byzantium. The Eastern Roman Empire took up the trade with
the east and became the link between Rome and the East. But Byzantium had no control of Egypt and the Red Sea route. She had access only up to Alexandria. But the demand for eastern luxuries in Rome was so great even during its declining days, that Byzantium found it profitable to continue the trade either through Alexandria or through the Caspian Sea - Black Sea route. The Indians traded at the ports of the Horn of Africa and East Africa. But Indian traders also frequented Alexandria.

While the Roman Empire disintegrated, great changes were taking place in West Asia and India. The Barbarians did not spare the Parthian Empire. The Parthians bore the brunt of their invasions long before they reached the walls of Rome and a backwash reached the frontiers of India through the north western passes. In the eastern Gangetic Plain (Pataliputra), a power rose which for the next few centuries gave India a stable government. The Guptas moved from the east Gangetic Plain and conquered the entire northern plain, central India and Gujarat (Chapter V). At a time when West Asia and the Mediterranean were crushed by Barbarian invasions, the Guptas Empire in India, like that of the Mauryans of the 3rd century B.C., stood out as a beacon of light in the trade of the Indian Ocean. The efficient rule of the Guptas, their concern for the traders, their maintenance of the trade routes and the guilds of traders, the facilities they offered
to improve industry agriculture and overseas trade, the capability of their currency, all made the Indian Ocean traders flock to India. Broach is cited as the main port of the Guptas while Tamralipti in Bengal was the second in importance. The acquisition of Malwa, both West and East, by the Guptas, restored the link between the Gangetic Plain and Broach. Broach could even compete with Tamralipti in the Eastern trade because the general flow of goods was to the West through Malwa to the Gujarat Coast. In the Deccan Plateau, Broach had no great rivals. The Yakatakas who succeeded the Andhras were in alliance with the Guptas. The Gupta Empire at its height reached upto Kalleina and Sopara making the Yakatakas dependent on the Guptas for an outlet.

But the Western trade of the Guptas was somewhat disrupted because of the power vacuum in West Asia, Egypt and East Africa. Indians traded at any of the well known ports where facilities were available. Many of the ports of East Africa and of Arabia asserted their independence by the sheer vigour of their trade and tried to draw as much of the lucrative trade to their own ports. The Indians found that they were welcome at most of the ports. In the Persian Gulf area, the Byzantines maintained treaty relations with Persia to keep open the Silk Route to China and the Takhashila route to India, open for their trade. But the alliance between Persia and Byzantium was often marred by trade rivalry. The Arabians also had their own strongholds in the
Persian Gulf region and resented Byzantine's entry into the eastern trade by the back door. The Guptas had no control over the land route to Persia, as the Mauryans, before them.

With the western trade becoming risky, the Gupta period is known for the expansion of trade with the Far East. The Golden Age of the Guptas and the emergence of "Greater India" in the Malaysian-Indonesian Archipelago, were really brought about by the enterprise of the merchant community of India. The traders of Broach, with their long standing experience in overseas trade played a significant role in establishing trade settlements in Java, Sumatra and the Far East. Chapter V is an account of the trade of Broach under the Guptas.

The collapse of the Gupta Empire (Chapter VI) once again introduced a period of chaos when petty dynasties and clans fought against each other for a share in the commercial wealth of the country. The post Gupta period saw the struggle between the powers that ruled the Gangetic Plain, Malwa, Gujarat and the Deccan, for access to the sea. Broach entered a period of uncertain loyalties. Powerful clans in Gujarat sought to make Broach independent while others of Malwa, the Gangetic Plain and the Deccan attacked it to include it within their kingdoms. The Traikutakas of the upper Konkan, the Vakatakas of the Deccan, the Kalachchuris of Central India, the Gurjaras of Nandipuri, the Valabhis of Vale and the Chalukyas of Badami, claimed Broach in turn, but could not retain it because of
the continuous rivalry between them. During the same period a power rose in the Gangetic Plain and sought access to the sea through Malwa. The threat of Harsha of Thaneshwar brought about short lived alliances between the Deccan, Gujarat, Malwa and Saurashtra but the trade of Broach was too lucrative for the alliances to last long. Broach changed hands rapidly. Its hinterland also changed with its political affinities. But throughout this period the nodality of Broach and its standing as an international port proved to be its advantage and its curse.

Chapter VII is an account of the revival of a Deccan power in Gujarat. The Rashtrakutas were either an offshoot of the Chalukyas or their vassals. The Rashtrakutas however were well disposed towards the Arabs who were now in control of the Arabian Sea trade. By the 8th century, with the vigour of a new and young religion (Islam) to spur them, the Arabs had conquered the entire West Asia, Egypt, North Africa and parts of Spain. By 712 they had established the Kingdom of Mansurah in Sind and gained access to the coasts of Gujarat. The early Arab travellers knew the Rashtrakutas as Balharas and they mention Broach as a Balhara port. The Gurjaras, the Valabhis and the Kalachchuris being antagonistic to the Arabs, they might have looked to the Rashtrakutas for their trade. But it is doubtful whether the Rashtrakutas were still in control of Broach when Al Biruni and the Arab travellers of
the 11th century visited Gujarat because by this time the Solankis were in full control of Gujarat. The Rashtrakutas were overthrown by the Chalukyas. The Chalukyas set up a viceroyalty in Gujarat. The Solankis who established one of the most brilliant dynasties in Gujarat were perhaps the descendants of the Chalukya viceroy of Gujarat and the Balharas of the later Arab travellers were probably the Solankis.

Chapter VIII traces the development of Broach and its trade during the Solanki Period. For the first time "The Kingdom of Gujarat" began to assume, at least roughly, its present day shape and limits. But under the Solankis, Broach had to give up its premier place in the international trade of western India. The Solanki capital was Anhilwad Patan, in northern Gujarat. With the early onslaughts of the Arabs on the coasts of south Saurashtra, they lost the Anhilwad Patan - Somnath Patan trade route which ran through Viramgam, Wadhwan, Gondal, Jetpur and Junagadh. The Cutch-Dwarka coasts were infested with pirates and the Medhs. It became imperative for the Solankis to establish a new port to continue their overseas trade. Cambay, at the head of the Gulf of Cambay, was the nearest port to Anhilwad Patan in mainland Gujarat. Cambay was developed as the main port of the Solankis. The navigation channels in the Gulf to the port of Cambay was improving by this time. The trade route from Anhilawad-Patan to Cambay was stabilised when Karandeva Solanki wrested Asawal from the
Kolis and founded the city of Karnavati on the Sabarmati (later re-established as Ahmedabad by Sultan Ahmed Shah in 1411). The major trade route of the prosperous Kingdom of Gujarat ceased to be the Gangetic-Malwa to Broach and it shifted to the Anhilawad Patan-Cambay route. Political conditions and the construction of roads gave Cambay a nodality which so far was possessed by Broach. Broach was relegated to the position of a market town and manufacturing centre in the hinterland of Cambay.

The Solankis, unlike the Gurjaras and the Kalachchuris, provided all facilities to the Arabs to trade in their ports. Siddharaj Solanki knew that the trade of his Kingdom depended on the friendship of the Arabs who, under the Abbasid Dynasty controlled the Arabian Sea and the Mediterranean Sea trade. The Arabs had also shifted their capital from Damascus to Baghdad and the eastern trade was centred on the Persian Gulf ports. But the Red Sea ports were also under the Arabs or their vassals and the Gujarat Kingdom had access to them. The richness of the textiles of Broach and the fact that it was on the Hindustan-Malwa route and the Paithan-Burhanpur-Malwa route to the major Solanki port of Cambay, made it a thriving town in the Solanki Kingdom. Siddharaj, like Nahapana, seems to have extended his sway upto Kalleina and Sopara blocking access to the sea for the Deccan powers.
During the declining days of the Solanki Dynasty (13th century) and in the 14th century, nothing much is heard about Cambay or Broach (Chapter IX). But Indian goods from the "Kingdom of Cambaya" was a highly priced commodity in the Indian Ocean trade. The fact that the Abbasids controlled all the trade routes (except the Black Sea-Caspian Sea route) to the east prompted Marco Polo, Nicolo Conti and the early travellers from Italy to travel to the East to appraise Europe of the trade routes and the merchandise available in the East. It is the same motive that induced the early cartographers of Majorca, Catalonia and Venice to glean from the Arabs and the Indians, the details of the coasts of Asia and Africa. The Cartographic Revolution of Europe from the 11th to the 14th century was a fore-runner of the "Age of Discovery" of the 15th and 16th centuries.

But the Abbasids were ousted by the Seljuks and the Ottoman Turks by the end of the 13th century. Waves of Mongol Muslims came from the east. The Abbasid Empire was taken over by the Mongol Muslims. West Asia Egypt and North Africa came under the Ottoman Turks, but their sway did not extend to Spain as during the period of the Abbasids. However, in the east, the Ottoman Turks succeeded in overwhelming the Byzantine Empire (1453) and expanding upto the walls of Vienna in Europe. The Ottomans shifted their capital to Byzantium (Istambul) on the Dardanelles-Bosporus. The only route open to the Europeans for their trade with the East was now closed to them making it more imperative to discover a new route.
In India, also changes were taking place with the sweep of the Mongolians in West Asia. Long before the Abbasids' final collapse in 1258, the frontier governors of the Abbasid rulers were chalking out independent programmes of conquest. Muhammad Ghazini and Muhammad Ghori attacked the Anhilawad Patan Kingdom in the 11th and 12th centuries. The strategic situation of Ghazini and Ghor gave them access to the Bolan-Multan route to the Indus Basin and from thence to Patan in northern Gujarat. Waves of Mongol and Turkish-Afghan Muslims reached as far as Delhi. Kutb-din Aibek established the Slave Dynasty in Delhi. It was followed by the Khalji Dynasty of Ala-uddin and the Tughlak Dynasty of Muhammad bin and Feroz Shah. Ala-uddin Khalji and Muhammad bin Tughlak attacked the Solanki capital and their major ports. Broach was one of the targets of attack of the Tughlaks. Muhammad bin Tughlak established an Empire in India larger than that of Asoka Maurya but it was a weak Empire. Broach could not take advantage of the extensiveness of the Empire as administration under the Tughlaks was not aimed at economic stability. But Tughlaks introduced Muslim rule to all parts of India except the deep south.

After the death of Feroz Shah Tughlak, many provinces of the Tughlak Empire, including Gujarat, asserted their independence. The Sultanate of Gujarat (Chapter X) was established by Ahmed Shah in 1411 and reached its zenith during the reign of
Muhammad Begada. When the Indo-Gangetic Valley was torn by strifes and wars the Gujarat Sultans brought peace and prosperity to Western India. They were in alliance with the Mamluks of Egypt (vassals of the Turkish Caliphs) and the Ottoman Turkish Empire. The trade of Gujarat with the Red Sea ports, the Horn of Africa, Eastern Africa and the Arabian Sea coast was conducted without much difficulty. The Ottoman Turks were not interested in trade and left it to the Arabs. But the Arabs did not have the same facilities they enjoyed under the Abbasids. However, they strengthened their trade contacts from Egypt to the Far East. In 1411 Malacca in the East was taken by the Arabs and they reached as far as the Philippines. The spice trade of the Moluccas fell into Arab hands. Muhammad Begada's friendship with the Arabs stood him in good stead for the trade of Gujarat both with the West and with the East. Gujaratis traded side by side with the Arabs in all their ports.

But the political chaos in northern India and the fact that Persia and Afghanistan were outside the limits of the Ottoman Empire had an impact on the links of Gujarat with the Indo-Gangetic Plain and west Asia by land. The City States of Europe looked to Russia and Persia to keep open the Volga-Caspian route to China. The alliance of Persia with Europe had a damaging effect on the land trade of Gujarat. The capture of Malwa by Begada gave him some advantage in the
land trade of the northern plains. The Sultanate's trade was mainly a sea trade and the hinterland of their main port, Cambay, was virtually confined to the Gujarat Kingdom. Broach continued as a market town in the hinterland of Cambay. Its industries and particularly its textiles, were appreciated by Duarte Barbosa, Linschoten, Pires and other travellers of the period.

But the trade of Gujarat during the Sultanate Period was diffused. Muhammad Begda had at one time 84 ports in his kingdom. He even succeeded in extending his territories to the upper Konkan bringing under his control Kalleina and Sopara. He also found it difficult to keep the navigation channels to Cambay clear of silt. By the end of his reign a large part of Cambay's trade was shifted to Diu. Broach had the advantage of being the nearest port on the mainland to the Diu-Gogha coast of Saurashtra. But Broach never attained the place of a premier port under the Sultanate.

Gujarat also had to face a more serious threat in trade even before Muhammad Begada's death in 1517. The Portuguese had discovered the Cape route in 1498. They established themselves in Hormuz and Goa in 1508, Jedda and Socotra, in 1512-13 and in Malacca, in 1511. Their aim was to control the Indian trade by subjugating the strategic ports on the sea routes. Bahadur, the successor of Begada, had to surrender
Diu to the Portuguese in 1531, in a bid to save his kingdom from the onslaughts of the Mughals, who had by now, established themselves in the Gangetic Plain. Akbar, the successor of Babar and Humayun, conquered Gujarat in 1573 (Chapter XI).

Akbar's might and his peaceful administration brought some semblance of prosperity to Gujarat. The Portuguese, knowing the strength of the Mughal army decided to abandon the cause of the Gujarat Sultans and to side with the Mughals but they refused to part with Diu. Akbar's pact with the Portuguese enabled him to trade in peace with West Asia and Africa. The Rajputs in Rajasthan were also subdued by Akbar and the Malwa route to Gujarat was somewhat safe for trade. But the Sind route to Multan which was at the disposal of Akbar, was through desert and risky for trade. Akbar's conquest of Ahmednagar in the Deccan also did not give him complete control of the Malwa - Deccan routes. The Mughal trade was centred on Surat which was the major port of the Mughals in the West Coast. The Malwa route to Gujarat was through Godhra and Dohad to Surat. Broach was connected to it only by a branch line. All roads converged now on Surat and Broach became a market town in the hinterland of Surat. Much of its trade was diverted to Surat. But Broach also was a town of great trade and had an independent overseas trade as well.

By the time Jehangir ascended the Mughal throne, in 1605, the Portuguese sea power had declined and they had
embarked on a policy of issuing licences to the Indians and others permitting them to trade at their ports on payment of dues. The Indian Ocean trade of the Indians and Arabs gradually sunk to a position of a "sufferance" from a European power. Jehangir gave permission to the English East India Company to trade at Surat in 1608 in a bid to curb the power of the Portuguese and the Dutch. Since the days of Jehangir Indian trade gradually fell into foreign hands. The rivalry of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English, to wrest the Eastern trade, and their dependence on naval power, ousted the Indians and the Arabs from the Indian Ocean trade. The conquests of Aurangzeb and the expansion of the Mughal Empire to the Deccan did not check the deterioration in Indian trade. On the contrary the expanding empire brought the rivalry of the Deccan kingdoms and the Marathas against the Mughals. It was easy for the foreign trading companies to take advantage of the situation. By the 18th century (Chapter XII) the English Company had actually become the masters in India. Its trade with China in the 18th century was in the hands of the English. Its revenues were passed from one Maratha house to another, or to other chiefs at the instance of the English trading agents. Broach set up an independent Nawab who was soon pensioned off by the English. By the beginning of the 19th century Broach ceased to be of any consequence in international trade. The English trade was concentrated at Bombay. But the greatest blow to
Indians trading in the Indian Ocean came when the British Parliament passed the Navigation Act in 1814 prohibiting Indians from trading in the Indian Ocean in their own ships. They could only function as paid servants of the British. The railways introduced in the mid-19th century opened up a vast hinterland for Bombay. The steamships also required concentration of port facilities at particular ports and the English decided that Bombay should be their only port in Western India. The rest of the ports could handle only a coastal trade.