Chapter -2

Major Merchant Communities
in Mughal Gujarat
The merchants of Gujarat have earned the reputation of being the best in the world. This view is shared for their honesty and integrity in Sufi literature. Tom Pires, the Portuguese ambassador to China (1512-15 A.D.) acknowledges the Gujarati merchants for their knowledge of merchandise comparable with the Italian merchants, and their keen honesty for non-offence with merchandise. They were also credited for being quick in trade and proficient in accounts. For which reason he rated the Gujarati merchants higher than the Cairo merchants settled in Cambay. The interesting reflections are stated thus:

"I now come to the trade of Cambay. These people are like Italians in their knowledge of and dealing in merchandise. All the trade in Cambay is in the hands of the heathen. Their general designation is Gujaratee, and then they are divided into various races – Banians, Brahmanas and Pattars. There is no doubt that these people have the cream of the trade. They are men who understand merchandise; they are so properly steeped in the sound and harmony of it, that the Gujaratees say that any offence connected with merchandise is pardonable. There are Gujaratees settled everywhere. They work some for some others for others. They are diligent, quick men in trade. They do their accounts with figures like ours and with our very writing. They are men, who do not give away anything that belongs to them, nor do they want anything that belongs to anyone else; wherefore they have been esteemed in Cambay up to the present, practicing their idolatry, because they enrich the kingdom greatly with the said trade. There are also some Cairo merchants settled in Cambay, and many Khorasans and Guilans from Aden and Ormuz, all of them do a great trade in the seaport towns of Cambay, but none of these count in comparison with the heathen, especially in knowledge."

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1 Polo, Marco, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the east*, Tr. & Eds. Henry Yule and Henri Cordier, 2 Vol., II, London, 1921, p. 313.
This chapter intends to identify the major merchant communities of Gujarat as well as broadly outline their chief commercial activities, area of operation and distinct repute in Gujarat.

Favourable commercial setup can be traced from the sixteenth century when Akbar pursued economic policies which facilitated merchants to intensify their business activities. First and foremost he demanded land revenue in cash. The peasants in the countryside were compelled to sell a part of their produce in the market. Commercialization of agriculture and monetization of economy gained momentum. There was an overall vigour in trading activities which triggered merchant immigration. The merchant had larger penetration into the rural areas.

Trade and commerce is a major element of Indian economy, and the class which dominates business activities is generally termed merchant community. Merchant community is basically a group of merchants. The problem appears how to determine the identification of a community? Should it be their caste or their common business or the area in which they were involved in their business activities?

Dwijendra Tripathi and M. J. Mehta underline certain criterions which categorize different businessmen, such as their ethnicity, mother tongue, religion and regional affiliation.

Regarding the merchant communities of sixteenth century Gujarat, we base our study on the contemporary literature, such as *Ain-i-Akbari*, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* and other regional literature. The above mentioned Persian sources used sectarian or religious identification for the merchants, like Jain merchant, Bohra merchant, Jain sahu and Jain jawahari etc., so it is quite convenient to follow the same pattern to categorize the groups of merchants.

The merchants of medieval Gujarat were Hindus, Jain, Muslims and Parsi. However Tirmizi has adopted variant criterion to divide merchants into three broad categories. He has classified them into itinerant, foreign and local converts:

1. The itinerant merchants: who visited Gujarat for purpose of trade and returned to their native countries after transacting their business.

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2. The foreign merchants: who hailed from distant places and settled down in Gujarat.
3. The local converts from Hinduism to Islam.

The itinerant merchants who subsequently settled down in the coastal towns of Gujarat came from far off places like Egypt, Persia, Turkey and Arabia. The epigraphical records allude that the Arab and Persian merchants had settled down not only in the coastal parts of Gujarat but had penetrated into the towns of Pattan and Junagarh, where they were in a large number and build mosques in these towns. An Arabic inscription found at Junagarh give details of a mosque constructed in 1286-87 A.D. by Afif-ut-Dumiyawad din Abdul Qasim bin Ali Al Iraqi, who has been described as "the prince of the ship-masters of the pilgrims to the holy cities of Mecca and Madina."

Among the local converts of Islam, the Bohras, the Khojas and the Memons were commercially most important communities. In the ports of Cambay and Surat, there were both Hindu and Muslim merchants. In Rander all the great merchants were Muslim, while the population of Diu was notable for the large number of Turkish merchant resident there.

Thus the major merchant communities of Gujarat include Banias, Bohras, Parsis, Khojas, Memons, Ghanchis, Chalebis, Armenians and European traders. Among most of these, there were different septs and other categories.

These merchants were responsible for operations and organizations of the mercantile economy at large. They were involved in commodity trade, brokerage, money lending and banking.

Gujarat has maintained its identity as a commercial centre and fame for industries, such as shipbuilding, cotton, silk, indigo, agate and paper etc. Different communities of merchants were involved in these industries. They had a significant role in the business, the paper industry of Ahmadabad was dominated by the Bohras, shipbuilding in various places was monopolized by Bohras and later on by Parsis, money-lending was the

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6 'Muslim Merchants of Medieval Gujarat', pp. 61-62.
7 Ibid., p. 62.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., p. 63.
specialty of Banias, and they also had monopoly over brokery. Some Jain Banias were
involved in the jewellery business. Sometimes these merchants mediated between their
community and administration, between their fellow merchants and European
merchants. Some merchants also played the role of translators for European merchants
and companies.

The merchants of Gujarat have attracted attention of historians for their business
style, their commercial network, contacts with Europeans and their monopoly over
some particular merchandise. They attracted Pearson’s attention for their dealings
with Portuguese in Gujarat especially Cambay and Diu. Cambay has been selected by
him as it was a place where a Portuguese trader resided and this number was highest in
comparison to any other non-Portuguese Asian city.\(^{11}\) Even private merchants of
Portugal utilized Gujarati capital and Gujarati brokers for their business. In due course
Gujarati merchants earned recognition, honours, position and considerable respect by
the Portuguese.\(^ {12}\) In the context of Gujarati-Portuguese trade relations, Pearson was
impressed by well-defined international routes linked with Gujarat, especially the most
important route which was connected via ports of Gujarat to Malacca and Aden. Trade
between these places was entirely dominated and handled by Gujarati ships.

Makarand Mehta has other reasons for interest in Gujarati merchants. He finds
Gujarat was the most urbanized region which had a capacity to pay a big amount for
revenue. This region had well-linked ports and industrial cities which was connected by
roads. Different communities were involved in business, such as Parsis, Hindus, Jains
and Muslims. Merchants had organized guilds and various industries, such as agate
industry of Cambay, paper industry of Ahmadabad, shipbuilding at Surat etc.

Ashin Das Gupta has focused upon Surat and its decline. In this context he has
discussed Bohras of Surat, especially Mulla Abdul Ghafur. S.C. Misra and Karim
Mehmud Master have broadly discussed about Muslim communities of Gujarat, their
origin and socio-religious set-up in the region. While Deepak Bardolikar has dealt only
with the Bohras of Sunni sect of Muslims, and Piloo Nanavutty has traced Parsis’
history in his account.

\(^{11}\) Coastal Western India, op.cit., pp. 102-111.

\(^ {12}\) Ibid.
Banias:

Fortunately we have some regional Gujarati sources like Jain Aitihasik Rasmala and Amdabandho Itihas which have a rich mine of information about the Banias of Gujarat.

Among the modern scholars interesting observation on the importance of Gujarati Banias who sold cotton textile at Mocha has been made in the context of eighteenth century by Ashin Das Gupta. He points out the prevalence of Bania calendar as distinct from the Nauruz/new year system of payment. The Bania calendar was determined by Diwali festival and sail of Hindustani fleet. Similarly, the Bania adhered to Bania dollar which was 2.5% below the Spanish dollar. Gupta thus underlines the ascendancy of Bania merchants at the Yemeni port city on the basis of Coin of account, System of selling debt, Calendar of payment.

The traditional view regarding Bania caste was highlighted by Abul Fazl: “One caste of Bais (Vaishya), which is designated Banik, is called Bania in ordinary usage and 'Baqqal' in Arabic.” Mirat-i-Ahmadi also endorses this view.

The generic appellation applied to the trading community within the Hindu fold was Vaisya or more commonly Bania, or in Gujarati - Vanias. This is the term which the foreign traders commonly used, they could distinguish only between the Bania and the Muslim traders. For them every non-Muslim merchant was a Vanias. However this general term encompassed a host of castes. Broadly at least the major classification was among the Jainas and the Vaishnava Vanias.

The Hindus and the Jainas were ancient community in India. Their identity is marked by their distinct theology, philosophy, religion and social mores and literary traditions etc. The profession of Jainas in historical period has been primarily trade, both local and long distance. Jains were largely settled in Gujarat and Rajasthan, however as traders they traversed across the country.

In the economy of Gujarat as a whole there is no doubt that the dominant group in all trade matters was the Banias. Jain Vanias were called Shrawak and Hindu Vaishya Vanias were called Meshri. The Meshri Banias were very religious and gave special importance to omens. They usually consulted astrologers for their important and

13 Ain, III, op. cit., p. 132.
religious works. They were staunch adherents of the Vallabhacharya sect to which they were said to have been converted in fifteenth-sixteenth century, and they showed extreme respect for their Mahajans or religious heads. The Banias employed Brahmins in all their religious ceremonies. As a rule the priest belonged to the corresponding sub-division. For instance a Modh Bania generally had a Modh Brahmin as his family priest and a Shrimali Bania a Shrimali Brahmin. The Dutch factor W. Gelleynssen de Jong, who was in Burhanpur-Broach area from 1623 A.D. to 1632 A.D., provides details about the rituals and practices of Bania community. This community appears from his account as very well organized. It was a well-knit community primarily engaged in money exchange, business and lending capital.

Although it was a well-organized group but they also had some sectarian divisions. Sources speak of different number of sept for instance Ovington mentions there were 24 castes sects among the Banias. De Jongh informed about the Banias being divided into 60-70 sects. Careri mentions in his account that there were 20 sects of Banias and they did not marry into the other, and they did not eat anything that has life, they love to eat only herbs and pulses.

Fortunately Ali Mohammad Khan has supplied the following exhaustive list of these 84 sub-castes of Banias in his ‘Mirat-i-Ahmadi’. Generally Jain traders and Hindu Vaishya traders were jointly called Banias. These 84 castes were as follows:

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17 Hindu Caste and Tribes of Gujarat, II, op. cit., p. 89.
19 ‘Merchant Communities of Gujarat During the seventeenth Century as Described by Geleynssen De Jongh’, op. cit., p. 291.
20 Ovington, p. 168.
21 De Jongh Cf. ‘Merchant Communities of Gujarat during the seventeenth Century as Described by Geleynssen De Jongh’, p. 291.
22 Careri, p. 256.
23 Mirat-i-Ahmadi (Suppl.), p. 138-139.
The Sanskrit word ‘Banik’ or ‘Vanik’ meant merchants. The Arabic word ‘Baqgal’, used in Indo-Persian writings as a synonym for Bania, meant “grain merchants” in India and “greengrocer” in Iran.24

In view of similarities in the several socio-cultural customs, outsiders were unable to distinguish between Hindus and Jains. Since the Jains were mostly traders, they were regarded as a part of the Hindu Vaishya community. The Hindus and the Jains lived harmoniously. In Ahmadabad, Jains were more prosperous as a community, and better educated than their Vaishnava fellow Vanias.25 It cannot be denied that Jainism helped to mould the commercial structure of the Gujarat. This is true for Vaishnavism also.26

**Jain Banias / Shravakas:** Some historians of Gujarat like Pearson and Mehta etc. have observed that Jains were the most dominant social group even in the pre seventeenth

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25 *Ahmadabad: A Study in Indian Urban History*, op. cit., p. 23.

26 Ibid.
century. The deep inclination of the Jain merchants to use their influence towards maintaining and reinforcing the cultural and religious ethos and its symbol was sustained by their teachers, the ‘sadhus’, particularly the distinguished Suris. The distinguished figureheads provided the basis on which Jain tradition is founded.27

Religious debates and discussions were carried on at the Ibadatkhan. Abul Fazl informs us that by 1578 A.D., representatives of many creeds had gathered there to join the discussions.28 The term ‘Jati’29 (Yati) and ‘Sewara’30 used by Abul Fazl, and the term ‘Samanis’ by Badaoni, refers to the monks and members of the Jain Svetambara sect.31 The Jain monks like: Hiravijai Suri, Vijaisen Suri, Bhanuchandra ‘Upadhyaya’, Shantichandra etc., played a prominent role in the discussion and debates at the Ibadatkhana. They exercised considerable impact on the mind of the emperor.32 Hiravijai Suri persuaded the emperor to prohibit the slaughter of animals at least during the Jaina festival of ‘Paryusana’.33 Akbar’s policy of religious toleration seems implicit in a ‘farman’, which he issued in 6th June 1584 A.D., ordering his officials not to allow slaughter of animals during the 12 days of the Jain ‘Paryusana’ festival, in places where the Jains were settled.34 In V.S. 1641 first Ashadh (June 1584 A.D.), the honourable title of- ‘Jagatguru’ (world preceptor) was conferred upon Acharya Hiravijai Suri.35

Two greatest merchants of the seventeenth century Virji Vora of Surat and Shantidas Zaveri of Ahmadabad, both were Jain Banias. Banias were not only involved in business but they were also involved in other commercial activities. Bania brokers were very faithful and popular among the European companies.

In spite of professing common religion and bound by vows to practice non-violence, the Jains were divided into several sects and sub-sects since ancient times. The

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27 Business Communities in India, p. 48.
29 Ibid.
30 Ain, III, p. 222.
32 ‘Jaina Priest at the Court of Akbar’, op. cit., pp. 4-9.
33 Ibid., p. 7.
35 Jaina Priest at the Court of Akbar, p. 7.
The caste system had entered among the Jains right from the time of Mahavira. The first sectarian division brought into existence – the Svetambara and Digambra sects in time of Bhadrabahu, a Jain saint during the Mauryan period. The Svetambaras were generally called ‘Shevras’ and ‘Jati’ (Yati) in Gujarat, they were the class of mendicants who observe celibacy and had knowledge of medicine and astrology. Their popular deity was Parasnath (Parswanath), a section of their community was called ‘Dhoondias’ who did not believe in images. They abstain from food and drink for 40 days in their special period called ‘Pachusan’ (Paryusana). When Mandelslo reached the village Sojitara at night, he saw that the Jain shopkeepers did not burn the candles because of the fear of insects being killed.

The Shevras were also divided into 84 classes called ‘Gachhas’, as in line of the Banias and the Brahmanas their classes derived from the name of their towns where they were settled.

### Castes of Jains / Gachhas

(16th-17th c.)

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<td>Morasia</td>
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<td>Vikdoniya</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Vakhesara</td>
<td>Morasia</td>
<td>Vikdoniya</td>
<td>Bokhul</td>
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</tbody>
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37 Mirat-i-Ahmadi (Supl.), p. 135; Akbarnama, III, p. 365.
38 Mirat-i-Ahmadi (Supl.), pp. 135-136.
39 Mandelslo, p. 46.
40 Mirat-i-Ahmadi (Supl) p. 137-138.
Oswal:41 The Jains who belonged to Osian are called Oswal Jains. Jain Aitihasik Rasmala mentions that Shantidas was a Kshatriya and closely related to Sisodia dynasty. His grandfather Vatsasheth and great-grandfather Padam Shah42 or Harpal Sheth belonged to the family of Samant Sangram Singh and Kumarpal of Sisodia dynasty.43 Sisodias gave protection to Jainism in the earlier period. Some of the rulers encouraged trade and commercial activities as well.44 So Shantidas was originally a Kshatriya. This was a tradition in Jainism since the time of first tirthankar Rishabhdeva. Most of the tirthankaras were kshatriyas.45

Jain migration from Rajasthan started as early as the reign of Akbar. Jahangir established peace with Mewar, the only state which had declined to accept the friendship offered by Mughals. This facilitated the Jains to travel all over the Mughal Empire.46 The arrival of the European companies furnished another reason of the movements of Jain merchants from one place to another.47 This migration process continued till the reign of Aurangzeb.48 But at the dawn of the sixteenth century, the Jains were mainly concentrated in Rajasthan and Gujarat.49

Shrimali: Shrimali had their roots in Shrimal (at present Bhinmal, about 50 miles west of Mount Abu) in Marwar. They were found all over Gujarat, but mainly in Ahmadabad and Kaira. They were divided into dasa and visa. They could dine together but did not intermarry. The visas were exclusively Jains.50 Fortunately for us we have in

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41 A History of Gujarat, II, pp. 140-149.
42 His great grand- father’s name was Padam Shah at some places he is called Harpal Sheth. Buddhisagarji, Jain Aitihasik Rasmala, Eds. Mohanlal Dalichand Desai, 2 Vols., I, Ahmadabad, 1912, pp. 1, 49.
44 Ibid., p. 2.
48 ‘Jain Merchants in Eastern India under the Great Mughals’, p. 73.
49 Ibid., p. 69.
50 Hindu Caste and Tribes of Gujarat, I, p. 73.
Ardhakathanak a remarkable autobiography of Banarasidas belonging to the sixteenth century written in Brijbhasha. Banarasidas belonged to the enterprising clan of Shrimalis among the Jains. He gives interesting information about the origin of this sept, he mentions that before the conversion into Jains they were Rajputs of royal blood. Later they came to be called ‘srimals’ because they took to wearing garland inscribed with the mantra- ‘sri’. This particular sept operated as an autonomous body. It was affluent enough to support its members for the cause of education and commercial interest. The demand of their business was to travel in far flung towns. They maintained close links with fellow members of the sept in order to boost trade opportunities and safe conduct of trade. They were also linked together by religious affiliations of pilgrimage and other customs. Thus there was considerable cohesion within the Shrimali community.

**Hindu Banias / Meshris:** The Mesharis also had many septs like:

**Agarwal:** Among the 84 septs of Banias, *Agarwal* is a popular caste even now days. They were found in north Gujarat. It was a wealthy trading class and it has various explanations of their name. First, this name was derived from aromatic *agar* wood (Aquilaria agallocha), they adopted this name because they were busy in dealing in *agar* wood. Second, there were a thousand families of Agnihotri Brahmins settled in Kashmir, and they supplied *agar* wood for their sacrifices by a special tribe of Vaishyas. When Alexander invaded India, he broke their sacred fire pits (*agni kund*), and these Vaishyas migrated to Agra and then they adopted this name. But the most acceptable view is that they belonged to an ancient midland town – Agar (about 40 miles north—east of Ujjain). They had a division – *dasa* (ten) and *visa* (twenty). *Visas* were called pure and *dasa* were half pure, and *visa* Agarwal did not eat, drink or intermarry with *dasa*. 

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52 *Hindu Caste and Tribes of Gujarat*, I, p. 70.
55 *Hindu Caste and Tribes of Gujarat*, I, p. 70.
56 *The Tribes and Castes of the North Western India*, I, p. 17.
57 Ibid.
Gujar: They were mostly found in Ahmadabad, Broach and south Gujarat. They were broadly divided into dasa and visa. Later on visas joined dasas. Their family priests were Shrimalai Brahmans and they were followers of Vallabhacharya sect.58

Chitroda: They were found mainly in Broach and Baroda. They took their name from Chitrod in Rajputana. It is noteworthy that they were not divided into visa and dasa.59

Paliwal: Another sub-caste Paliwal belonged to the town of Palli or Pali in Marwar.60

Disawal: They were found chiefly in north Gujarat. They took their name from an ancient town – Disa (about 89 miles north-west of Ahmadabad). They were divided into visa, dasa and panchas. Dasas were further divided into Ahmabadhi, Surati and Ghogharis. Both dasa and visa interdine but do not intermarry.61

Jhalora: Jharola or Jhalora were found chiefly in Baroda and east Gujarat and belonged to the Jhalor in Marwar. They also had divisions like dasa, visa and panchas. Dasa and visa could dine together but did not intermarry. The panchas formed a separate community. Jhaloras were Vallabhacharya Vaishnavas.62

Kapol: Their main region was Kathiawar, Amreli, Delvara, Mahuva and Bhavnagar. Originally they belonged to Junagarh or Gimar. They did not have any division. Their family priests were Kandola Brahmans and their family goddess was samudri-mata. They were also Vallabhacharya Vaishnavas.63

Porvad: they were found all over Gujarat. They took their name from Porvad, a suburb Shrimal (in Marwar). They were divided into dasa and visas. Their family priests were Shrimali Brahmans.64

Nagar: They were found all over Gujarat but mainly in Baroda and Kaira. They were divided into dasa and visa. They were followers of Vallabhacharya sect.65

59 Ibid., p. 70.
60 The Tribes and Castes of the North Western India, IV, p. 109.
61 Hindu Caste and Tribes of Gujarat, I, p. 70.
62 Ibid., p. 71.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., p. 73
65 Ibid.
Nima: They were mainly found in Panch Mahal and were divided into dasa and visa, who neither eat together nor intermarry.\textsuperscript{66}

Bohras:

Among the Muslim merchants Bohras were prominent. They operated successfully in trade with Arabia, Persia and Hindustan. In recognition of their involvement in commercial activities they were lavishly bestowed lofty titles and other honours by the Mughal Emperors. The activities of prominent Bohra like Abdul Ghafur have been investigated by Ashin Das Gupta and S.C. Misra.

The original domicile of Sunni Bohras is Gujarat (see Map-6). Fortunately enough immense mine of information is contained in regional Gujarati sources like \textit{Khambhat Shaherno Itihas}, \textit{Sunni Vahora}, \textit{Surat Sonani Murat} and \textit{Vahora Vibhutiyo} provide some rare and important information about the Bohras, such as titles given by Mughals to them, their socio-cultural life etc. the population of Sunni Bohras still inhabited in different villages of Gujarat and Saurashtra. Their main profession was trade and agriculture.\textsuperscript{67}

According to \textit{Khambhat Shaherno Itihas}, Cambay was inhabited by Brahmins, Banias, Shravakas, Kanabis, Kolis, Kaachhiyas, Rajputs, Khaarwas, Ghanchis and many communities of Muslims. Among these Muslim communities Bohras were prominent. They were fairly wealthy. Primarily they were engaged in the trade with the China, Japan etc

\begin{quote}
"अंशालतनी बंडर मुम्बई वसती ब्राह्मण, वाजीया, श्रावक, कलबी, कोली, श्रावकीया, राजपूत, भारवाड़, गांवी, अने केबिलीक जतन मुसलमाननी के जेबैं अंशालतना मुसलमान कोसर अंटला पैसाधार के वे तेजीम चील, जोगनार, अने जापान सूदी व्यापार घालाबे के."\textsuperscript{68}
\end{quote}

The highest number of Sunni Bohras was recorded in Broach district followed by Surat, Sabarkantha, Baroda and Kaira district. The Bohras were initially settled in the

\textsuperscript{66} Hindu Caste and Tribes of Gujarat, I, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{67} Sunni Vahora, op. cit., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{68} Khambhat Shaherno Itihas, op. cit., p. 4.
north, were ‘Pattani’ Bohras. The Bohras of central and south Gujarat were trading community, with agriculture as its main occupation in rural areas.⁶⁹

According to Deepak Bardolikar the cities of Ahmadabad, Pattan, Surat and Broach, Bohra merchants traded in cotton, silk, cloth, brocade, paper, indigo, ghee, molasses, ornaments, jewelry and the arms material etc.

“अम्बावाड, पाटन, सुरत, ब्रोच, वगेरा साहेबने सुन्नी ज्योति वेपारीयो सूतर, राशम, कापड, ब्लैकवेयर, कागज, गोल, लोसा, अवेसाल, शलसाबंधी, वगेरा वस्तुयोने वेपार करतात.”⁷⁰

Since Mulla Muhammad Ali was a Shia, his disciples naturally adopted the Shia creed. At Pattan, which was then a big city, they were in the majority. When Sultan Muzaffar took possession of Gujarat, his Sunni followers who emigrated with him from Delhi, converted the Shia Bohras of the town. However the Bohras of the neighbouring district and villages remained Shias.⁷¹

From the below stated divisions it appears the nomenclature is derived from their respective spiritual leader. Some of them came with Sayyid Imam-ud-Din (buried at the village of Giramntha).⁷²

The Ismaili Bohras were the most prominent among the Muslim merchants of Gujarat, especially in Surat. Being persecuted for their religious beliefs and practices by the Sunni rulers of the area and being “gradually squeezed out of its traditional avocations by a hostile political regime”, the Bohras became rapidly urbanized, and the community tended “to the diversion of more and more people towards commerce” in which they soon established their skills and leadership.⁷³

⁷⁰ Sunni Vahora, op. cit., p. 23.
⁷¹ Mirat-i-Ahmadi (Supl.), pp. 130-131.
⁷² Ibid.
⁷³ Muslim Communities in Mughal Gujarat, op. cit., pp. 25, 27; Surat in Seventeenth Century, op. cit., p. 35.
Mirat-i-Ahmadi and Mahagujaratno Musalmano furnish the name of seven divisions of Bohras, but the list varies. Surprisingly only three names in both the sources are same the rest are different.\(^7^4\)

Divisions of Shia Bohras

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mirat-i-Ahmadi</th>
<th>Mahagujaratno Musalmano</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Daudi</td>
<td>1. Daidi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sulaimani</td>
<td>2. Sulaimani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Alia</td>
<td>3. Alia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hajumia</td>
<td>5. Nagoshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ismaili</td>
<td>6. Hiptia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Nazaria</td>
<td>7. Mehdibagwala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"शिया बहेरस्योलो जमातां स्वमेत पेटारीवाले हैं। तेहें जिना लालशम संविद्धां नीवे
1. जाजी, 2. सुलामानी, 3. अली, 4. जाफर, 5. नागंसी, 6. हिथिया,
7. मेहदीबागवाला।"\(^7^5\)

Mirat-i-Ahmadi explains the division by informing that initially the Sunni and Shia Bohras permitted intermarriages, later from the time of Sayyed Jafar of Shiraz\(^7^6\), the two communities became completely separate from each-other. The Sunni were called “the big community”, and the Shia “the small community”. The Shias always had a leader who was called a Mulla. He was a learned man and was authorized to appoint collectors of Zakat\(^7^7\) and Khums\(^7^8\) which were paid by their followers.\(^7^9\) In fifteenth century A.D.

\(^7^4\) Master, Karim Mehmud, "Mahagujaratno Musalmano (part – 1 & 2)," Prachya Vidya Mandir, M.S. University, Baroda, 1969, p. 140.

\(^7^5\) Mahagujaratno Musalmano (part – 1 & 2), op. cit., p.139.

\(^7^6\) Sayyed Jafar is buried inside the fort near the ‘Astodia’ gate.

\(^7^7\) Zakat is the practice of charitable giving by Muslims based on accumulated wealth, and is obligatory for all who are able to do so. It is considered to be a personal responsibility for Muslims to ease economic hardship for others and eliminate inequality.
this community came to have gained majority (bahumat) as compared to Shia Bohras and was popular as badi jamaat (big community).

“उसूली १५ मि सदी में आ किम शिया वोहरा किम सराबहमीं बहमतींम थीमनी गैरी अहे।
‘बडी जमात’ तरी केवलाली रही।”.

**Ismaili:** During the period of Sultan Ahmad Shah of Gujarat (1411-1442 A.D.), Shia Ismaili Bohras were spread over Gujarat. They were extremely influential in the court as well. But in Anhilwara Patan, Mulla Jaafar Patani, posed a threat to Shia Ismaili Bohras. As a result many Shia Bohras joined his leadership. They rebelled against the stringent rules and religious views of Ismailis. This breakaway group presented their views intelligently and impressively in front of Shia Ismailis. They thus emerged as Sunni group in Patan, in a quite short span of time.  

**Jaafari:** Under the leadership of Jaafar Patani and his followers, a big community of Sunni Bohras came into existence. It was called moti jamaat (big community) due its magnitude of followers. This community was alternatively called Jaafari Bohras, presently these Bohras are addressed as — Surati Bohra, Patani Bohra, Kheroot Bohra and Charotari Bohra. There was a lack of organization (sangathan) and discipline (niyambaddhata) in this community. As a result this community suffered from organizational character and absence of able leader to control over it.  

According to testimony of Ali Muhammad during the reign of Aurangzeb, Shias were persecuted, so they did not openly profess their beliefs, so much so that they also kept their sacred texts hidden. However, this much is known that they count their months according to the Hindu calculations.  

**Hindu Bohras:** Many of the Brahmans and Banias of Gujarat also suffixed the surname of ‘Vohra’. Such converts retained their surname in Islam from the time of their first

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78 A religious obligation to contribute one-fifth of a certain type of income to charity.
79 *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* (Supl.), p. 130.
80 *Sunni Vohora*, p. 10.
81 Ibid., p. 13.
82 Ibid., p. 14.
83 Ibid., p. 10.
84 *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* (Supl.), pp. 130-131.
preacher Mulla Muhammad Ali. Their first religious guide being named Bohra, the followers were named after him.\(^8\)

**Daudi:** The Daudi sept had a regional and urban character. Their mores evolved in stages. They faced persecutions. Maulana Jafar, turned dissident. This lead to large scale secessions in the fifteenth century. The practice was continued by another probable secessionist, Maulana Muhammad Tahir in the sixteenth century. These waves of reconversion reduced the original community to a minority status. It seems difficult to accept that the agrarian communities had a collective rubric.

**Sunni Bohra:** The Sunni Bohra embraced a number of marrying castes. They originally belonged to the same body, which had been converted to Islam by the early proselytizers, who popularized the Ismaili creed. Nevertheless, after the sixteenth century, the Ismaili community was reduced to wholly urban. More than 80% were lost to the Sunni faith.\(^9\)

In 1686 A.D., Bohra merchants and craftsmen of Patani came to Surat. Two contemporary manuscripts viz. *Tazkira-ut-Salihin* and *Tarikh-i-Surat* gives detailed information about their migration. They settled in the locality of Saudagarpura in Surat. Mohammad Jamal Abdul and Miyan Abdul Hai came in the fold of Patani Bohras. The above manuscripts also give information about Shahsaudagar Mulla Abdul Ghafur bin Abu Baqr.

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"पाटलिणा वहीर सैंडगरे - हुजुरमंडी अने अन्य भंडापरियों या. स. 1585 ना अरसामा सूरत आवता ध्या हत. 'ताज़ीररीतुसालीहिङ्ज' अने 'तारीखि सुरत' नामे हस्तचित्रिल संहितीमा दशरथ्या प्राप्त परिचित पटवारी (पाटलिणा सूरी वहीरार्थो) या.स. 1585 अरसामा सूरत आवती, सैंडगरार्था नामे अधिवासा संतामा स्थायी ध्या हता. या पटवारी वहीरार्थों मोहम्मद जहान अबदुल अह्लाद अने मियां अबदुल हासिम अबदुललाल पटवारी मानवता ध्या हतो. ये संहितीमा सूरी वहीर शाहसुदगर बूसा अबदुल मुशर किन अबु फकर विपण विगतपूर्व माहिती आपल्यांमा आवले हे."\(^10\)
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\(^8\) *Mirat-i-Ahmadi (Supl.)*, p. 131.


\(^10\) *Sunni Vahora*, p. 42.
Lotiya Bohras: Numerically the largest community was of Daudis among the Shia Bohras. They were also called lotiyas, because their turban had the shape of ewer.

“They belonging to this community wore loti shaped turban. The turban was also called lotiyas.”

They were mostly found in Bhavnagar, Rajkot, Junagarh, Kutch, Bhuj, Mandavi, Ahmadabad, Ahmadnagar, Broach, Cambay, Dohad, Godhara, Gogha, Navsari, Surat and Vadodara/Baroda.

The highest numbers of Daudi Bohras were found in Panch Mahal district, followed by Surat and Mehsana. The Daudi Bohras, as is well known, are prosperous trading community. Only a few of them followed any other calling. Vada Mullaji (big Mullaji) or religious head of Daudis was called Da’ai of his community. He had following four people or subordinates for his help.

The terminology for subordinates was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subordinates of Da’ai of Daudi Bohras</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Maazan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mushbir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mashayakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mulla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alia: The founder of Alia sect of Shia Bohras, was the son of Ibrahim.
There were many Bohra merchants in Gujarat, however some were very prominent. Some Gujarati texts give information of such merchants.

The power and prestige of the Bohras can be gauged from the regional Gujarati sources.

Sheikh Hamid was one of them, he came to Surat in 1640 A.D. and his trade flourished during the reign of Shahjahan.

He owned seven ships. Emperor bestowed upon the title of ‘Umdat-ut-Tujjar’ (best/reliable among the merchants), elephant & palanquin, turban and a diamond crest. He was bestowed land assignment also. He was exempted from revenue of worth Rs.1,00,000/- from the ruler.

Similarly we learn of the prestige of the family of Sheikh Sarkheji, who was issued a farman by Shahjahan in order to confer the title of ‘Umdat-ut-Tujjar’ to Sheikh

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93 Mahagujaratno Musalmano (part – 1 & 2), p. 166.
94 Surat Sonani Murat, op. cit., p. 6.
96 Ibid.
Hamid and it bore the seal of Shahjahan, princess Jahanara and governor (mutasaddi) Haqeeqat Khan of Surat.

"आ जुडूकं पारे आ बंधा जरामों हूँ रखा है. जाहजाहाँने शेब हमीदेने लिए लखयो,
तेना जराम पर जाहजाहाँनी तथा सहजुनवी जहाँजाहाँनी सहीत मुसाफी हड़कर भाग
मुकरे हैः."

His son Sheikh Muhammad Fazil was also a wealthy merchant. He was also honoured by the title of 'Umdat-ut-Tujjaf. 98 In 1713 A.D., Farrukhsiyar addressed a farman for the mint of Surat to issue 4000 coins daily in order to reward him for his scholarly activities and efforts.

"नाराज़ जमीनीयारे सुरतनी साक्षातवा मुहम्मद फजिल देशिक जमारे मांगे त्यारे यार
क्षर वाज़ीना सिक्त बादी आपवांनी नती." 99

Another big name was Mulla Abdul Ghafur, the wealthiest Bohra merchant of the city. He came to Surat in late sixties from the northern town of Pattan. 100 He was called Mulla because of his distinct status in the mosque. He was haji and was generally addressed as Mulla. He enjoyed a high position among the Gujarati merchants. Manucci informs us that he was "the most powerful merchant at Surat, and owns over 20 ships of his own." 101

There are variations in the number of ships he owned. According to Manucci and Hamilton he had 20 ships. Bardolikar says he had 19 ships. Ashin Das and Pearson mention that he had 17 ships after the raids of Shivaji. B.G. Gokhale says that his family had around 34 ships. One can thus estimate that Mulla Ghafur owned from 17 to 34 ships in his life-time. We do not have details about his Ships, but his main ships were as follows:

97 Surat Sonani Murat, op. cit., p. 62; Also see Sunni Vahora, p. 27.
98 Surat Sonani Murat, p. 62; Sunni Vahora, p.27.
99 Surat Sonani Murat, p. 62; Sunni Vahora, p.27.
100 Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat, op. cit., p.77.
Details of Mulla Abdul Ghafur’s Ships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHIP</th>
<th>CAPACITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Firuz Baksh</td>
<td>500 tons, It was among the largest ships at Surat at that time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Fateh Murad</td>
<td>It was a fast sailor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hussaini</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fez Resan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Queda Merchant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ghafur controlled about ¼ of the entire mercantile shipping at Surat.\textsuperscript{107} He received the title of ‘Malek-ut-Tujjar’ from Mughal emperor.

“अंडेर तरक्की निवेशों में ‘मालेक-उत-तूज़ज़’ की बिगाड़ मान्य हैं...”\textsuperscript{108}

His son Mulla Abdul Hai was also a successful merchant and was honoured the title of ‘Umdat-ut-Tujjar’, an elephant and a dress of honour.\textsuperscript{109}

Mulla Muhammad Ali, son of Abdul Hai, continued his family business. He had a conflict with the Nawab of Surat.\textsuperscript{110} Ali Mohammad says that- ‘he had his own army of three thousand soldiers.’\textsuperscript{111} He bought a village called ‘Athwa’ (near Surat) and developed a town over here, which was known as ‘Rasoolabad’, where he made a fort and a port.

\textsuperscript{103} ‘Gujarati Merchants and the Red Sea Trade’, op. cit., p.128.
\textsuperscript{104} Commerce and Craft in Gujarat, sixteenth and seventeenth Centuries, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{105} ‘A Note on Ship-owing Merchants of Surat, c. 1700’, op. cit., pp. 112-114; Also see Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{106} Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{107} ‘A Note on Ship-owing Merchants of Surat, c. 1700’, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{108} Sunni Vahora, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Sunni Vahora, pp. 27-28.
\textsuperscript{111} Mirat-i-Ahmadi, pp. 457-461.
The family business of Ghafur continued till the time of the grandson of Abdul Hai-Majiduddin Fateh. Bohras were an important part of merchants’ society and played a very prominent role in trading activities, especially in shipping. They had good relations with the Mughals and got many titles for their commercial talent and sometimes for their literary contributions as well. Besides business, Bohras were also interested in literature, translation of manuscripts and some of them had their own library and clerical staff for translations and to collect manuscripts from far off countries.

Chalebis:

Chalebi is originally a Turkish word which means ‘Amir’ (noble) or a ‘man of god’. Chalebis were Ottoman Turks and by profession they were navigators. This term was used for upper classes in Turkey. They came in hidia during the reign of Humayun. A Turkish navigator Siddi Ali Rais landed at Surat in 1553 A.D. he was a poet, writer, astronomer, mathematician, and geographer. He wrote Mirat-ul-Mumalik (mirror of countries), Al-Muhit (the Ocean) and Mirat-ul-Kainat. He stayed at Surat for one year and then he visited Gujarat, Sind and Delhi. Probably he was the first Chalebi who temporarily established himself in Surat.

It seems that by mid-seventeenth century Chalebis had established their colonies at Surat and came into prominence by the end of the seventeenth century, and they maintained a few sarais for strangers. At the time when Shivaji sacked Surat in 1664

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112 Sunni Vahora, pp. 27-28.
113 Ibid.
115 ‘The Chalebi Merchants at Surat, sixteenth-eighteenth centuries’, op. cit., P. 408.
116 Ibid., p. 408.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid., p. 409.
A.D and 1670 A.D., a new sarai was owned by the Chalebis which they defended against Shivaji.¹²⁰

Mohammad Chalebi was the oldest eminent merchant who had keen knowledge of trade and commerce. He owned a ship called ‘welcome’, by which he regularly traded with Queda in 1672 A.D.¹²¹ He also used English ships for his business, in 1683 A.D. he imported some parcels through English ship ‘laurel’ from Gombroon. He did not pay freight for that because he had some agreements with English company.¹²²

In 1702 A.D., Sulaiman Chalebi acquired influence over the Mughal governor.¹²³ He used his influence to extort money from the Banias of Surat. A complaint was lodged against him by the Banias of Surat on 27 December 1703 A.D. They complained that Sulaiman Chalebi, being a favourite of the late governor Itibar Khan, had extorted Rs. 85,000/- from them, then he was detained at kotwali with the object of forcing him to refund the money to the complainants. Sulaiman refused to pay the amount and said that he received that amount for the benefit and use of the previous governor. The new governor had put some guards at his house till he finally satisfied the complainants.¹²⁴

Ashin Das Gupta cites the names of a few leading Chalebi merchants of first quarter of the eighteenth century, such as Haji Ahmad Chalebi, Ibrahim Chalebi, Hussain Chalebi and Omar Chalebi.¹²⁵ Haji Ahmad Chalebi was an important shipping magnate and had at least eight ships of his own.¹²⁶

Ahmad Chalebi, good friend of Mulla Muhammad Ali, was a successful businessman of that time. According to Sunni Vahora - Mughal Emperor Alamgir honoured him with the title of ‘Zubd-ut-Tujjar.’

¹²⁰ EFI, 1661-64, pp. 297, 308.
¹²¹ Ibid., 1670-77, p. 226.
¹²² Ibid., 1678-84, pp. 329-330.
However they were competitors in business pursuits since they were the common traders in the Red Sea region. Ahmad Chalebi had a military contingent of two thousand Turkish (Roomi) soldiers. The father of Ahmad Chalebi Haji Saleh Bin Durwesh ‘Musul’ was employed at the court of Ghulam Khanzadah of Iraq. He came to Surat during Aurangzeb’s reign. In 1677 A.D., he built a mosque in Saudagarwada in Surat. It was called “Chalebi’s mosque”. Nawab of Surat Tegh Begh Khan murdered Ahmad Chalebi in 1752 A.D.

Another Chalebi merchant was Noman Bin Hussain, he owned a ship named Ganjawar. One of the members of his family - Usman Chalebi was the owner of many (fulkha, safineh etc.) ships. One of his ships - safineh was captured by the Portuguese while returning laden from Jeddah. He traced it from Goa with the help of Rustam Manekji.

To secure its release Rustom (a Parsi broker of both English and Portuguese) went to Goa at the request of the governor of Surat – Amanat Khan. The Portuguese

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128 Sunni Vahora, p. 28.

On the basis of Dutch sources, Ashin Das Gupta writes in his article ‘The Merchants of Surat’ that community of Chalebis and Mulas had enmity, and these groups were led by Ahmad Chalebi and Mulla Mohammad Ali. However regional sources call both the merchants as friends.


130 Sunni Vahora, p. 28.

131 Ibid.


133 Ibid.


commander returned the ship to Rustom with all its cargo and he returned to Surat by same ship. On his arrival Usman Chalebi entertained him and gave a robe of honour to him.\(^{135}\)

Usman Chalebi also had a garden in which Mughal governors occasionally used to stay. When the acting governor Safdar Khan replaced by Tegh Beg Khan in 1748 A.D. and he had to leave the place, he spent around 20 days in his garden.\(^{136}\)

The Chalebis were successfully absorbed in the Gujarati culture and they had the identity of wealthy and successful merchants.

**Khojas:**

The term *Khoja* is the form used in India for the Persian *khwaja* – “a rich or respectable person, a gentleman, an opulent merchant.”\(^{137}\)

Kareem Mehmud Master in his *Mahagujaratno Musalmano*, observes that khoja is a Turkish word, but in Persian it is pronounced ‘*kha’ja*’ and written ‘*khwaja*’, which is used for poet, teacher and merchant:

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“कोजा छठीं सदैव अने ते लडकुछे ववस्तहे हे. तससीमें शे शब्दको उज्ज्वल आजा हे.
लबवाळां ते पवाळा तलाबाहे हे. तेनो अर्थ कदि, शिल्क, वेपारी साथ ये.”
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Khojas were settled approximately in whole of Gujarat and mainly in Saurashtra, Diu and Daman, Ahmadabad, Vadodara/Baroda and Surat.\(^{139}\) It was the community of Shia Muslims.\(^{140}\) (see Map-6)

According to testimony of *Khoja Vritant*, this community was divided into following seven divisions:\(^{141}\)

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\(^{135}\) ‘The Chalebi Merchants at Surat, Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries’, p. 409.

\(^{136}\) Ibid., p. 410.


\(^{139}\) Ibid.

\(^{140}\) Ibid., p. 127.

At their initial settlement in the towns of Gujarat, the Khojas belonged to varied profession parched grain and fuel sellers, gold embroiders (zaripuranas), and bricklayers. Later they assumed a powerful position in such industries as ivory, horn, cotton, hide, mother of pearl, grain, spice, fishery, shark-fin, cotton seed, furniture, opium and silk traders. They enjoyed a good business reputation. They were identified as neat, clean, sober, thrifty and ambitious, enterprising trade and cool and resourceful. They were great travelers by land and sea, visited and settled in distant countries for purpose of trade.\textsuperscript{142}

Khojas were Ismailias of the Nazarian sub-division, who separated in 1094 A.D. from the Mutaalian Ismailians on a question regarding the succession to the throne of the Fatimite Khilafat in Egypt.\textsuperscript{143} The Indian Khojas believed that Hassan was the first of their Imams to send a missionary to India. The name of that missionary was – ‘Nur Satagur’.\textsuperscript{144}

According to the Khoja accounts – Nuruddin, or as they all called him Nur Satagur, came from Deilam to Pattan (Gujarat), when that country was governed by a Hindu prince, apparently the Solanki Bhima II (A.D. 1179-1242). He is said to have returned to Persia shortly after converting the Hindu ruler of Pattan secretly to his faith.\textsuperscript{145} On his second visit to Gujarat he married the daughter of Raja Surchand, chief or Governor of Navsari. His success as a proselytiser and his wealth exciting the envy of his followers, he was killed by Chach, one of his two disciples while he was absorbed in Samadhi or contemplation.\textsuperscript{146}

The name Nur Satagur “teacher of pure light” which he adopted in addition to his own name Nuruddin or Nurshah and the practice of the Hindu abstraction or Samadhi, 

\textsuperscript{142} The Tribes and Castes of Bombay, II, op. cit., p. 230.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., II, p. 217; Also see Mahagujaratno Musalmano (part – 1 & 2), p. 184.
\textsuperscript{144} The Tribes and Castes of Bombay, II, p. 219.
\textsuperscript{145} The Khoja hymn called Ramat in the ‘Khoja Vritant’, p. 155, Cf. The Tribes and Castes of Bombay, p. 219.
\textsuperscript{146} The Tribes and Castes of Bombay, II, p. 219-20.
show the process by which the first Ismailia preachers succeeded in converting Hindus.147

“नूर सत्यार, अर्द्धसर सत्यार शे नाम तेनारे पोताला मृत्यु नाम नुम्बिलन अयावा नुम्बिलन उपरांत भरावा रूप्या हुता. या हिंदुस्थानी नाम अनेक समाधिनी हिंदु बिधि उपरांत समाधि हे के उस समाधिली संरक्षय उपरांत श्रृं कंपाको भिक्यावणे छल्लांमा आलावा मात्र छे उसरी उपरी बोधवाही करेक रेखावी हुता.”148

Another preacher of the community was Sadruddin, later on he adopted a Hindu name Satdev and Harchand.

“उसमाली संपुक्काणा वीर थोड उपरांत सहकोने पहुँच सत्यार अत कराउन पाँच हिंदु नाम धारक हार्दाह हुता.”149

A later segment of this community was of Kashmir origin. Ferishta, mentions in his text, the chaks were originally a race of sun-worshippers, who called themselves Pausharias – the people of light. During the reign of Fateh Shah of Kashmir (A.D. 1458-59), these chaks were converted to the Ismaili’s faith by a missionary to India. This was Shams-ud-Din, the second Ismailia missionary to India. According to Khoja Ramat he was capable to do miracles.150

Memons:

Memons was another community of Muslim merchants of Gujarat. According to Tirmizi the Memons were converted from the Lohanas151 of Thatta in Sindh. Persecuted by the local people, one group immigrated to Haalar in Saurashtra and they were known...
as Halai Memons. The second group inhabited Kutch and came to be designated as Kutchi Memons, while the third group settled down at Surat and was known as Surati Memons.\(^{152}\) (see Map-6) Karim Mehmud Master supports this view but he mentions different names for their divisions based on the area where they resided. According to them, the divisions of Memons were:

**Major Septs of Memons**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Karim Mehmud Master</th>
<th>S.A.I. Tirmizi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Kutchhi Memon:</strong> who were settled in Sindh and Kutch</td>
<td><strong>Kutchhi Memon</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Halai Memon:</strong> who resided in the Haalar region of Kathiawar.</td>
<td><strong>Halai Memon</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Dholka Memon:</strong> they were the residents of Dholka near Ahmadabad.</td>
<td><strong>Surati Memon</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Bhavanagari Memon:</strong> residents of Bhavanagar in Kathiawar.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Veraval Memon:</strong> who lived in Veraval (south of Kathiawar).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Surat the Memons were a thriving community, but as this place was gradually outrivaled by Bombay they had moved southwards. In Bombay, they were engaged in every branch of trade and commerce, from shop keeping to retail dealing and brokerage. The Memons co-operated with the British traders and emerged as enterprising businessmen in the nineteenth century. They settled down in big cities of India and transacted business in all types of goods.\(^{153}\)

Karim Mehmud supplies a list of 59 surnames (*atak / nukh*)\(^{154}\) out of 84 *Lohanas* of 1400 A.D.:

**Surnames (Atak / Nukh) of Lohana**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surnames</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Oudani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Aahiya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ambiya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Aasakirah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ad thakkar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Bhatadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Bariya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Gakhar</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Gatha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ghandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ghadatar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Ganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Gajan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Mathiya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Gulbadan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Chokha sona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Chandmadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Sunchak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Gideman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Chakiya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Cheede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Chaduputra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Chandan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Jobanputra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Khora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Lodhiya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Ladak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Majithiya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Manek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Medwar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{152}\) 'Muslim Merchants of Medieval Gujarat', p. 64.

\(^{153}\) Ibid.

\(^{154}\) *Mahagujaratno Musalmano* (part - 1 & 2), p. 252.
He also furnishes list of around 40 surnames of Memons. He found only one surname namely **Lodhiya** was similar to the surnames of Lohanas of that period\(^{155}\):-

### Surnames of Memons

|------------|--------|----------|-----------|--------------|

Memons also played an important role in the various dimensions of Gujarati trade.

### Parsis:

Parsi as their name implies, are of Persian descent. The word ‘Parsi’ means the men from Pars or Fars, ancient Parsa, Greek Persepolis, in southern Iran. The origin of this small community has been traced to the Indo-European brand of Aryans.\(^{156}\) They came to India in order to seek peace and freedom to practice their faith.\(^{157}\)

There are very few sources to know about the Parsi community in earlier period and their history. Most of the works are modern. The only contemporary source is **Kissa-i-Sanjan** in Persian language. Apart from this some regional sources of medieval

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\(^{156}\) *The Parsis*, op. cit., p. 1.

\(^{157}\) Ibid., p. 10.
Gujarat are very helpful for this purpose, like Khambhat Shaherno Itihas and Parsi Vishayo.

After the fall of Persian Empire to the Arabs in A.D. 651, they came to Gujarat. Muslim historians of the early Medieval Ages also testify to the advent of Iranian Zoroastrians in Gujarat. 158

According to Khambhat Shaherno Itihas - Parsis’ main settlement area was Cambay and they came in India in 636 A.D. They mainly resided in the area of Komari, near river Mahi during 942-997 A.D.

According to Nanvutty - Iranians were forcibly converted to Islam under the Arabs. 160 Those who retained their ancient faith were persecuted, and fled to the mountains of Kohistan in Khorasan. According to tradition, they stayed there for a hundred years. According to some historians they arrived at Diu (in Kathiawar), and stayed there for nineteen years. They again set their sail, for the new destination Sanjan (a small fishing village) on the west coast of Gujarat, where they landed around 785 A.D., where the local Hindu Raja- Jadhav Rana offered them shelter. 161

The solitary surviving document on the early history of Parsees is the ‘Kissa-i-Sanjan’, a chronicle in Persian couplets by Behman Kaikobad Sanjan ‘Dastur’. Behman Kaikaobad was the son of Merji Rana, who was selected as ‘Dastur’ (high priest) of the community in 1579 A.D. at Navsari. He was invited by Mughal Emperor, due to his interest in Zoroastrian religion. A land grant of two hundred acres at Navsari was granted at this occasion as a mark of royal favour. 162 In the year 1595 A.D., Akbar ordered another free grant of one hundred acres of land at Navsari to Kaikobad, who succeeded his father as the Dastur. 163
As per information contained in 'Kissa-i-Sanjan', when the Parsi approached Jadhdav Rana, the local ruler of Sanjan, for permission to settle there, five conditions\(^1\) were imposed on them. These were as follows:

- The explanation of the Zoroastrian religion to the raja, by the Parsi high priest, who accompanied the refugees and had safeguarded the sacred fire all the way from Iran to India;
- The adoption of Gujarati as their mother tongue;
- The adoption of saree by Parsi women;
- The surrender of all weapons; and
- The Parsi wedding processions be held in the dark of the night (this last may have been a request from the refugees themselves, a protective measure to avoid the attention of other communities to an alien community in their midst.).

Between the 8th and fifteenth centuries, the Parsis settled in the small towns of Gujarat coast. As described in 'Kissa...': "Some turned to Vankanir and some took their way to Broach, some went to Vairav (Veraval), some arrived at Anklesar (Ankleshwar), and proceeded towards the city of Cambay. Some took their kit to Navsari..."\(^2\) They adopted varied professions as farmers and agriculturists, fruit growers, toddy planters, carpenters and weavers. They were not only excellent weavers but they gave India three of their most ancient crafts\(^3\), viz

- The Surati Ghat (a soft silk with a Satin finish on one side),
- The Garo,
- Tanchoi

(The Garo and Tanchoi crafts were originally imported by the Parsis from China)\(^4\)

Parsis were well versed in small-scale banking and in shop-keeping. The famous perfumed oil\(^5\) of Navsari is associated with Parsi enterprise and finds mention in the

\(^{1}\) The Parsis, p. 39.
\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 41.
\(^{3}\) Ibid., p. 42.
\(^{4}\) Ibid.
Because of their business tactics and earnings in Cambay, Hindus were unable to get suitable conditions for their business and they left this place.

A new era begins in the history of Parsis with the advent of Europeans in India. Due to the presence of Europeans, the Parsis found themselves playing the role of entrepreneurs and mediators between different vested interests. The first British factory was built at Surat in 1608 A.D. the Dutch built their factory in 1617 A.D. These factories employed Parsis as their chief brokers. The Parsis of seventeenth century India had not begun to move into inter-regional, trade however they were heavily involved in related activities. Hamilton observes about the Parsis "they were very industrious and diligent in their vocation, are bred to traders and manuring ground. They are good carpenters or shipbuilders, exquisite in the weaver's trade and embroidery, which may be seen in the rich at lasses, battadars and jemewaars made by them as well as fine Baroach (Broach) and Nunsari (Navsari) Bastas (Baftas) that come from their manufactories. They work well in ivory and agate; and are excellent cabinet-makers. They distill strong waters, but that they do clandestinely, because that trade is prohibited by government...." Mandelslo remarks that- "they (Parsis) lived by growing tobacco, drawing palm-juice, banking, trading, shop-keeping and the practice of crafts."

An outstanding example of their commercial activities is Sheth Rustom Manek of Surat (1635-1721 A.D.) who acted as broker to the English factory at Surat, agent of

169 Ain, II, p. 123.
170 Ain, I, p. 193.
171 Khamhat Shaheno Itihas, p. 18.
172 The Parsis, p. 51.
174 Mandelslo, p. 8.
raja of Battam at Singapore, and commercial agent and interpreter to the Portuguese at Surat.\textsuperscript{175}

John Fryer who came to Surat in 1670s observes that—“Parsis were rather husbandmen than traders...they supply the marine with carts drawn by oxen, the ships with wood and water.”\textsuperscript{176} They were, however, in the forefront of the shipbuilding industry in Surat. Cursetji and Khurshed were two most renowned shipbuilders during the latter seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{177}

When Catherina of Braganza married Charles II of England, the Portuguese handed over Bombay to the British as wedding gift in 1661 A.D.. At this time weavers, foremen and carpenters were in great demand. Surat supplied many of these craftsmen at the request of the first British Governer of Bombay, Gerald Aungier.\textsuperscript{178}

Parsis were the first to earn into the reputation as constructors of dockyards and as shipbuilders. In 1700 A.D., the East India Company made the Surat docks at Tapi. Their maintenance was under the control of Parsis. Particularly Lavji Nusserwanji Wadia (1702-1774 A.D.), a shipbuilders and foreman at the Surat dockyards. He served for the company for about 35 years at Surat. Lavji was invited to Bombay to build three docks: in 1754 A.D., in 1762 A.D. and in 1765 A.D. respectively.\textsuperscript{179}

The Parsis were the earliest to enter modern industries as compared to other merchant communities. They were able to maintain their lead in this field until well after First World War.\textsuperscript{180} Parsis started trade with China and Burma. Banaji Limji (1654-1734 A.D.), a Parsi from Surat, came to Bombay in 1690 A.D., and grew prosperous. His descendant, Framji Cowasji Banaji (1767-1852 A.D.) started trade with Burma and China, and amassed enough wealth to own forty ships.\textsuperscript{181} The first Parsi who sailed to China for trade was Hirji Jivanji in 1756 A.D. The Parsis carried a flourishing trade with Canton, Macao, Hongkong and Shanghai.\textsuperscript{182}

\textsuperscript{175} The Parsis, p. 51.


\textsuperscript{177} EFI, 1670-70, p. 233.

\textsuperscript{178} The Parsis, p. 86.

\textsuperscript{179} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{180} Guha, Amalendu, ‘More about the Parsi Sheths: Their roots, Entrepreneurship, and Comprador role - 1650-1918’, Business Communities in India, pp. 111-112.

\textsuperscript{181} The Parsis, p. 87.

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid.
Sir Jamshed Jejeebhoy (1785-1859 A.D.) proposed and established agencies in Madras, Bengal, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Egypt and England. He bought a fleet of seven cargo ships and six smaller vessels for coastal trade. Jamshedji became a leading citizen of Bombay. He was one of the first four traders of the ‘Bombay Parsi Panchayat’. His ‘Kholaseh-i-Panchayat’, written in Gujarati, is full of shrewd wisdom on how the Panchayat should be run.

S. M. Desai observes, in one of the chapters (Parsi Atako\(^{185}\)) of his book ‘Parsi Vishayo’ (in Gujarati) that we never found any division or sort of caste/ sub-caste among the Parsis, however variety of their surnames are there and surnames originally designated occupation/ estate/ place of residence or some particular thing/ event that related to the person.\(^{186}\) In fifteenth century, the Parsis of Navasari were known as ‘Desais’ of Navasari, they were farmers of large territories and enjoyed great influence under the successive Muslim and Maratha Governments. Chang Asa, a wealthy Parsi, was the first Desai.\(^{187}\)

In the area of Navasari, Surat and Broach, Desai was the most popular atak of Parsis during Mughal period. In Navasari, there were different families of Desais and these families were categorized in Mota desai or Big Desais and Polyad Desai or false Desais:

> "वडी मोजाल लक्ष्मानसार ठेवाले वडी अटकर नवसारी, सुरत अने सूरत भादे ज्ञाने हुये।

> ...... नवसारीमध्ये "मोजार देसाई" अने "पोलार देसाई" ठेवा अने जुम्ला जुम्ला आले दागसे मोजालाच भारती होते।"\(^{188}\)

In some other places they adopted their surnames based on English names, like- McFerson, Nicholson, Dalas, Satin, Spencer, Palkos, Dalal, Dandas, Morrison, Bonapart, Panter, Palenteen, Paatak, Baptist and Minis etc.\(^{189}\)

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183 *The Parsis*, p. 88
184 Ibid.
185 *Atak* is a Gujarati word which means – surname.
189 Ibid., p. 8.
The Parsis came in India for the sake of security and to preserve their ancient culture. They settled in different towns and villages of Gujarat and present region of Maharashtra. Gradually they mixed-up with local people and exchanged some customs and cultures. They contributed in different areas of profession, like initially they were pure agriculturists and craftsmen, then they emerged as merchants and shipbuilders, in the second half of the eighteenth century they started growing as industrialists.

Ghanchis:

The Ghanchis were oil merchants. They are spread all over Gujarat. They adopted Rajput tribal surnames, such as – Gohil, Jhala, Padhiair, Parmar, Solanki etc., however then claim of descent from the Banias of Modhera in north Gujarat. They were divided into various groups based on the name of different towns, like – Ahmadabadi, Khambati, Patani, Bharchi, Modh, Sidhpuria, Champaneri, Pancholi, Surati etc.

Ghanchis trace themselves from Modh Ghanchis, and were probably originally one group. The Modh Ghanchis of Sidhpur who settled in Surat become Sidhpuria Modh Ghanchis and inter-marriages cease in consequence. Among the above divisions, Modh and Sidhpuria rank highest. The other divisions could take food cooked by above two. However, these two being highest groups did not inter-dine with the rest.190

The highest concentration of Ghanchis was in Baroda followed by Panchmahal. Traditionally, Godhra was the home-town of the Ghanchis. However a large number came from Saurashtra.191 Ghanchis mostly kept to their hereditary occupation of pressing and selling oil extracted from sesame, coconut, castor and linseed. Some earn a living by lending money. Others sold grain, fruits, vegetables, sweet meats, milk and clarified butter. They were also involved in tillage, labour; and in Kutchh by making bamboo basket.192

Ghanchis follow the Hindu law of inheritance. They adopted varied religious learnings. They were Kabirpanthi, Ramanandi, Ramsanchi, Saiva, Swaminarayan, Vallabhacharya, and worshipers of Bahucharaji. Their family Goddess was at Modhera. They observed the regular rituals of Hindu fasts and feasts.193

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191 *Muslim Communities in Mughal Gujarat*, p. 70.
193 Ibid.
The Itinerant Merchants:

This category included European merchants and Companies. They visited this region for the purpose of trade and returned to their native countries. Fortunately we have rich sources and records, maintained and left by them. We can tap information to understand their attitude towards business. Such sources are- volumes of *English Factories in India* (new and old series), *Letter Received* and travelogues Tome Pires, Barbosa and Ralph Fitch etc. Apart from these sources, some regional sources like *Suratni Mukhtasir Haqiqat* and *Khabhat Shaherno Itihas* also furnish considerable information.

Portuguese: India had maintained commercial contacts with the western world since ancient and medieval times, but direct naval contact with the western world was established in 1496 A.D. At this time Portuguese navigator Vasco de Gama reached Calicut. Though the Portuguese never established any territorial empire in India, but they possessed some ports on the west coast. Their prime aim was to dominate marine trade with India.

In sixteenth century, Portuguese created disturbances in the trade of Cambay. They damaged ships going to Africa and Arab. Their trade with South India and Archeaplegona Island was almost closed. Local merchants lost their important port - Diu, and profit was transferred into the hands of European merchants from local merchants.

"सोंमा सैखां पॉष्टैगिअ लोकोने व्यापारांच्या व्यापारमध्ये जाईल. आयरिज अने वर्ष्टस्तना विठांसाठी पर आयवेला तेंतीला बन्दबनी करत्नाचं आणि. अने हस्तिंच हिंद साळपूर्वीच्या भरस्तलोगांची ग्रांजोडी साळकर तेंतीला व्यापार बंध घडवली होती. शेवटी वर्षपत (1528-28) अने तेंतीला नौकांच्या नास घडवली. अने ही पक्ष हवी व्यापारी तो गुजरातला भ्रमो व्यापारांचा काठवा व्यापारिक देशी व्यापारिक फारस्झी चर्बरे शेख व्यापारीकों हाक्षमां गमो.”

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194 *Khabhat Shaherno Itihas*, p. 23.
Barbosa and Pires mention that ships regularly sailed from Surat to Bengal.\(^{195}\) When ships came back from Bengal, they had to pass through Cambay and this trade was very profitable.\(^{196}\) The Portuguese supremacy disturbed existing trade and they assumed the role of supplying Gujarati goods to Bengal and vice versa. Due to this development, Goa became the chief port for visiting ships from Bengal.\(^{197}\) The Portuguese became important carriers. Thus in this sector direct participation of Gujaratis and Bengalis was eliminated.\(^{198}\) Portuguese also participated in Gujarat-Malabar trade.\(^{199}\) The local merchants of Surat (especially of Machhiwada\(^{200}\)) also faced problems from the ships of Portuguese, who started imposing excise duties on them. Later on they became big merchants and influenced the nawab of city and took permission to establish a factory over here.\(^{201}\) Portuguese factory was popularly called ‘Latina’ in Surat.

\[\text{“श्रीरंजीवेनी इंडिया - भे मक्खीवाडी नामध्य प्रकोष्ठ हे....”}^{202}\]

Gujarati ports used to export horses to the coastal region of Maharashtra and Goa, and earned a huge profit. The Portuguese realized the potentiality of this trade and put an end to their imports to Goa from Gujarat.\(^{203}\)

Fitch mentions that the ships were not required to pay any custom duty at Goa, if their cargoes included horses. If cargoes did not have horses, they had to pay custom duties on all the merchandise.\(^{204}\)

\(^{195}\) Barbosa, Duarte, *Book of Barbosa: An Account of The Countries Bordering to The Indian Ocean And Their Inhabitants*, 3 Vols., I, Ed. Mansel Longworth Dames, Indian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1918-21 (Reprint-1982), p. 146; Pires, I, p. 45.

\(^{196}\) Barbosa, II, op. cit., p. 145.

\(^{197}\) *Commerce and Craft in Gujarat*, pp. 92-93.

\(^{198}\) *Commerce and Craft in Gujarat*, p. 93.

\(^{199}\) Ibid., p. 91.

\(^{200}\) Machchiwada was a popular area in Surat and fishermen lived here that is why this place was called ‘Machchiwada’. Big ships from Rander were used to loaded and unloaded here. *Suratni Mukhtasir Haqiqat*, p. 10.

\(^{201}\) Ibid.

\(^{202}\) *Suratni Mukhtasir Haqiqat*, p. 6.

\(^{203}\) *Commerce and Craft in Gujarat*, p. 85.

According to Duarto Barbosa Portuguese purchased copper from Chaul. Pearson observes that – “An area favoured by private Portuguese traders for their operations was Gujarat, especially the town of Cambay, trade to which had started by at least 1509 A.D. This trade in fact flourished despite opposition to it from both church and political authorities, the former because Portuguese there would have no opportunity to take the sacraments, the latter because they could serve as hostages in the event of war between Gujarat and the Portuguese. When Akbar arrived in Cambay in 1572, he found 50-60 Portuguese in residence, although most of those normally resident had fled to avoid the war. In 1594 there were about 100 Portuguese families in Cambay. Many men apparently settled there permanently and married local women. These Portuguese were mainly engaged in buying Gujarati goods to be sent to Goa on the ‘cafilas’, and from there distributed all over Asia, and to Lisbon.”

Trade was not an easy task for Portuguese because Dutch and British were ready to give them a tough competition in India. Portuguese supremacy was complete when Mughals started paying tolls to Portuguese for the safe passage of their vessels. They were at the mercy of Portuguese on the high seas because without their passes Mughals ships could not go to Mecca on pilgrimage. For these passes they Mughals had to pay 3000 to 8000 mahmudis. Akbar agreed in 1573 A.D. not to shelter Malabar pirates and in return he got a free pass of one year for Red Sea voyage. In 1581 A.D. cartazes were issued to Akbar’s ship for Red Sea voyage. Throughout the seventeenth century, the Mughals got one free cartaz per year. Even Aurangzeb took cartaz for his ships.

Portuguese navy was at its zenith at this time and a ship without acquiring Parwana from them would definitely become victim of their loot. When English got the permission of trade in India from Mughals, then Portuguese started creating problems for the ships going from India to Persia and Arab.

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205 Barbosa, I, p. 160.
206 The Portuguese in India, I, op. cit., pp. 82-83.
208 Mirat-i-Ahmadi, p. 100.
209 History of the Portuguese Navigation in India (1497-1600), op. cit., p. 138.
Trade was important to all the Portuguese living in Asia. There were broadly four occupational groups:

**Occupational Groups of Portuguese**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Officials</td>
<td>Including military and naval commanders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Soldiers</td>
<td>Normally unmarried young men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Casados</td>
<td>Settled or married men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Clerics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All four of these engaged in trade on their own account, either directly or through an agent, though naturally the *casados* were most prominent.  

**Dutch:** The biggest change in the nature of the overland trade of Gujarat occurred when Dutch and English arrived in India. They were keen to export Indian commodities to Europe as well as to other parts of the world. They were organizationally and materially better equipped than the Portuguese. The base of their operations was to explore inland market.

The United East India Company of the Netherlands, which was established in 1602 A.D., played an important role in checking the power of the Portuguese. They were also interested in carrying on trade of spices. The Dutch were interested in textile and spices in Gujarat and they tried to do business like British, but Portuguese destroyed their dream in 1606 A.D. In 1607 A.D. the Dutch began to flourish in Gujarat after

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210 *Suratni Mukhtasir Haqiqat*, p. 16.
212 *Commerce and Craft in Gujarat*, p. 127.
214 *India from Akbar to Aurangzeb*, op. cit., p. 32.
the arrival of Broake as the head of the Dutch East India Company in India.\textsuperscript{215} They were permitted to establish a factory at Surat\textsuperscript{216}, Cambay, Broach, Baroda and Ahmadabad two years later.\textsuperscript{217} Dutch merchants arrived at Surat in 1616 A.D.\textsuperscript{218} At the time when the Dutch established their factory at Surat in 1616 A.D., Gujarat was the major source of products like cotton cloth, which could be exchanged for spices in the Indonesian region.\textsuperscript{219} In 1617 A.D., they established permanent factory at Cambay and their trade flourished there by 1623 A.D.

"उ.स. १६१७ मा नूतन वेल्डोबे तेलापनी नियेती अन्नतम वास्तवी अने सन १६२३ मा तेलापनी नियेती वणात्या बनावतो."

In Surat, port and factory of Dutch were situated near Tapi River. There was a small wall on the main bank of Tapi. Government made a fortress on that place.\textsuperscript{221} Factory was situated near the Athwana Darwajo (a jungle was there) and a cantonment was also there in an open ground in the west of the city.\textsuperscript{222}

The Dutch followed the English example and began to grant licenses to Gujarati ships going to the Red Sea area.\textsuperscript{223} In 1621 A.D., they captured two ships (one from Diu and another from Mandvi) in Red Sea. Ship of Diu returning from Ethiopia was seized by the Dutch. It contained gold and ivory.\textsuperscript{224}

During the second half of the seventeenth century coffee became popular and Europeans were interested to import it, especially English and Dutch.\textsuperscript{225} In 1680s, the

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem[215]{215} India from Akbar to Aurangzeb, p. 38.
\bibitem[216]{216} Suratni Mukhtasir Haqiqat, p. 17.
\bibitem[218]{218} Suratni Mukhtasir Haqiqat, p. 17.
\bibitem[219]{219} Competition and Collaboration: Parsi Merchants and the English East India Company in Eighteenth Century India, p. 10.
\bibitem[220]{220} Khambhat Shaherno Itihas, p. 27.
\bibitem[221]{221} Suratni Mukhtasir Haqiqat, p. 5.
\bibitem[222]{222} Ibid., p. 6.
\bibitem[223]{223} EFI, 1618-21, p. 300.
\bibitem[225]{225} Commerce and Craft in Gujarat, p. 37.
\end{thebibliography}
Dutch began buying Arabian coffee in Surat.\textsuperscript{226} Their purchases at Surat increased, especially after they closed their factory at Mocha in 1684 A.D.\textsuperscript{227} in 1635, they brought copper from Japan.\textsuperscript{228}

The Dutch made Batavia (Jakarta) their main centre of activity. Throughout the second half of the seventeenth century, the Dutch continued to transport Javan sugar from Batavia to Surat.\textsuperscript{229}

**British:** The first attempt was made by English to trade with India in 1583 A.D. Creech, Weeds and Newberry – three English merchants came via Persian Gulf to Gujarat, with a letter of Queen Elizabeth to meet ruler of Cambay, Akbar.\textsuperscript{230}

After inflicting a naval defeat on the Spanish Armada in 1588 A.D. the British acquired naval supremacy. This encouraged certain merchant adventurers of London to form a company and received a charter from Queen Elizabeth I of England on 31 December 1600 A.D., under this charter a company was established with the title of “The Governor and Company of Merchants to the East indies”. After some mercantile expeditions had been dispatched to India, a ship named ‘Hector’ under the command of Captain Hawkins, arrived at the mouth of river Tapi in August 1608 A.D.\textsuperscript{231} During the initial years of existence, the company undertook ‘separate voyages’ and distributed the profits from each voyage among the subscriber.\textsuperscript{232}

Regular trade with India was started in 1608 A.D. when the company tried to establish a factory at Surat. The British captain Hawkins tried to get the permission from the Mughal Emperor Jahangir for this purpose, but the efforts failed due to the hostility of the Portuguese.\textsuperscript{233} In January 11\textsuperscript{th}, 1612 A.D., Captain Baste came at the court of Jahangir with a request to resolve issues with Portuguese. The Mughal emperor ordered an *Ailchi* or *Vakil* should stay in the Mughal court in order to work as a


\textsuperscript{228} *India from Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p. 184.


\textsuperscript{230} *Khambhat Shaherno Ithias*, p. 25.

\textsuperscript{231} Rajyagor, op. cit., pp. 248-249.

\textsuperscript{232} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{233} Rajyagor, p. 248.
mediator between Mughal officials and English merchants. He was also to make the Mughal emperor aware about the conflicts with Portuguese.

"सन १५१२ ने जनेवारी जून अगर दक्षिण भारत भेजे जहांगीर बादशाह पासे सन १६ लाखापी लीपी तारे हिंदूस्तानी क्षण पसंदता रखा। वे सनानी मतवाल आडे एकसंकर बेड बेलतनी (पूर्वी) योगदानी दरबार मा रहे, अने अंग्रेजीने कोठा दुःख दे अश्वय तेजोने हक हुकारी तो तेवा कामनो हेतूली कोडे अवघे दे लो धाव......"^{234}

In 1612 A.D., two of the English vessels reached Surat and inflicted a defeat on the Portuguese fleet.\(^{235}\) A conflict occurred in the January 1614 A.D. between English and Portuguese. The Portuguese lost their 350 people.\(^{236}\) The English and Dutch made Surat the focal point of their activities. This was done because the Portuguese based themselves in Diu and Daman. They could not interfere with the shipping at Surat.\(^{237}\) In 1613 A.D., the English succeeded in securing permission from Jahangir to establish their first factory at Surat\(^ {238}\) and a factory at Cambay as well.

"यह स १५१२ ने टाउनी ना जहांगीर बादशाह तराडी अंग्रेजी अंग्रेज लोकीने कोठी स्थापनने परवारली मगधी."\(^{239}\)

In Surat, English factory was established near the house of Mulla Badkani (a hospital was also in close proximity). This place was used for trade from 1612 A.D. to 1800 A.D.

"अंग्रेजीने कोठील्या मुखल मुक्ता बड़क्कीली फतह हृद्दीतात्तल हली ते देखूने हँडु..."\(^{240}\)

\(^{234}\) *Suratni Mukhtasir Haqiat*, p. 16.

\(^{235}\) Ibid., p. 16.

\(^{236}\) Ibid., p. 17.

\(^{237}\) *Commerce and Craft in Gujarat*, p. 153.

\(^{238}\) *Rajyagor*, p. 3.


\(^{240}\) *Suratni Mukhtasir Haqiat*, p. 6.
The English were interested in purchasing textiles for the markets of south-east Asia.\textsuperscript{241} Gujarat offered them a wide selection. Hence they chose to secure the internal markets of the province.\textsuperscript{242}

The British continuously maintained a full complement of personnel viz. president, chaplain, factors, writers and apprentices since 1613 A.D. These men were responsible for ordering and gathering the company’s investment or yearly stock of Indian goods destined for England.\textsuperscript{243}

In 1615 A.D. Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador arrived at Surat\textsuperscript{244} and obtained some privileges including the right to establish factories in certain parts of the Empire. By virtue of this concession, the English established factories at Surat, Agra, Ahmadabad and Broach within the next four years.\textsuperscript{245}

In 1622 A.D., the English decided to purchase goods for Red Sea region from the brokers of Khurram in Cambay and Baroda,\textsuperscript{246} and in March 1623 A.D. Khurram decided to buy all the coral imported by the English in Gujarat. Khurram agreed to pay 1 lac \textit{mahmudis} immediately, 1 lac in duration of one month and rest in September-October.\textsuperscript{247} In 1662 A.D., the English hired a ship of Benidas for 10,000 \textit{mahmudis} to transport their goods to Mocha.\textsuperscript{248} But in the matter of purchasing, it was convenient and cheaper for the English to obtain Mocha goods at Surat from the local merchants. They made an arrangement with a merchant for the supply of coffee, myrrh and olibanum and agreed to pay 2% commission to him on receipt of goods at Surat.\textsuperscript{249}

In 1642 A.D, first time the English sent coral from Surat to Goa for sale.\textsuperscript{250} In October they sent coral, textile and lead.\textsuperscript{251}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{241} Letter Received, 1, p. xxxii.
\item \textsuperscript{242} \textit{India from Akbar to Aurangzeb}, p. 36.
\item \textsuperscript{243} \textit{Competition and Collaboration: Parsi Merchants and the English East India Company in eighteenth century India}, p. 10.
\item \textsuperscript{244} \textit{Suratni Makhnasir Haqiat}, p. 17.
\item \textsuperscript{245} Rajyagar, p. 250; \textit{Social Cultural and Economic History of India (Modern Times)}, p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{246} \textit{EFI}, 1622-23, p. 148.
\item \textsuperscript{247} \textit{EFI}, 1622-23, p. 205.
\item \textsuperscript{248} \textit{EFI}, 1661-64, p. 109.
\item \textsuperscript{249} \textit{EFI}, 1670-77, p. 216.
\item \textsuperscript{250} \textit{EFI}, 1642-45, p. 18.
\item \textsuperscript{251} Ibid., p. 61.
\end{itemize}

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By 1648 A.D. the English started exploring the Maharashtra coasts for a number of commodities. They brought coir from Goa. They sold lead at Vengurla and Rajapur had become the focal point of their activities.

They purchased goods from Ahmadabad for sale in Bantam. In 1658 A.D. they sent three ships to Bantam. In 1664 A.D. they sent a ship to Bantam on behalf of Surat merchants. Gujarati traders adopted this method because of Dutch hostility. They had to maintain commercial links with Bantam. Many times the English ships carried goods on behalf of Gujarati merchants to Bantam. The English carried Japanese copper to Surat, some of which was secured in Bantam.

The collaboration between the English and the big merchants of Gujarat took place during the second half of the seventeenth century.

**French:** The French were also keen to acquire certain commercial benefits from India. The French were the last to enter the race for trade with India. French East India Company was established in 1664 A.D. This company was basically different from other European companies, because it was largely financed by the state. Their first factory was established in 1668 A.D. at Surat, followed by a factory at Masulipatanam in A.D. 1669.

**Austrian:** A new company of European traders visited Surat during the early eighteenth century. This was the Ostend Company which was established in 1717 A.D. under the protection of the emperor of Austria. In 1719 A.D. this company sent a ship to trade at Surat. The heads of the Dutch and English factories joined doing ‘all disservices possible’ to the people of this ship. The deputy governor of the city however favoured them and two more ships that arrived in 1719 A.D. would seem to have been allowed to trade without disturbance. Later on opposition revived and in 1727 A.D. rose to such a

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252 EFI, 1647-50.
253 Ibid., p. 250.
254 Ibid., pp. 15, 34, 194.
255 EFI, 1651-54, p. 106; EFI, 1655-60, pp. 163, 199.
256 EFI, 1655-60, p. 141.
257 EFI, 1661-64, p. 74.
258 EFI, 1670-77, p. 281.
259 EFI, 1665-67, p. 2.
260 Commerce and Craft in Gujarat, p. 67.
261 Social Cultural and Economic History of India (Modern Times), p. 4.
height that the Austrian emperor was forced to suspend the Ostend Company's charter.²⁶²

The European Companies had factories and stations at various places in India, along the eastern coast of Coromandel and in Bengal. There were also representatives at the principal market and production centres of inland trade. There were representatives of companies at Ahmadabad, Baroda, Agra, and Patna concerned with acquisition of the products of Mughal India and transporting them to Surat and Bengal for export.²⁶³

On the basis of information given in the *English Factories in India*, Tripta Verma believes that some private karkhanas also operated in Gujarat. Dutch and English both felt need for karkhanas of their own to control and organize their trade. They had saltpeter refineries at Ahmadabad.²⁶⁵ They employed Indians in their karkhanas.²⁶⁶ The "private" merchants of London were also there who attempted to make their fortune in Indian trade.²⁶⁷

In 1700 A.D., the European companies carried most extensive business in Gujarat. The European Indian companies were also a significant mercantile group in seventeenth century Gujarat, although their importance was not as great as it subsequently became in the eighteenth century.²⁶⁸

One can thus conclude that there were a number of Indian and foreign merchant communities operative in Gujarat. They acted sometimes in coordination and others independent of each other, for example, the Bania brokers helped the foreign merchants in various manners.

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²⁶² Gujarati State Gazetteer-Surat district, p. 140.
²⁶⁴ *EFI*, 1618-21, pp. 149-152.
²⁶⁶ *Karkhanas under the Mughals from Akbar to Aurangzeb*, op. cit., p. 103.
²⁶⁷ *Competition and Collaboration: Parsi Merchants and the English East India Company in eighteenth century India*, p. 11.
²⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 9.