



THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY AND THE MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION

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NADRA ASHFAQUE

Under the Supervision of

Dr. ISHRAT ALAM

**CENTRE OF ADVANCED STUDY
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Dedicated
To
My Loving Parents

(Mr. Ashfaq Ahmad & Mrs. Akhtarun-Nisa)



CENTRE OF ADVANCED STUDY

Ishrat Alam
Lecturer

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh-202002, U.P. (India)

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This is to certify that the thesis, **“The Dutch East India Company and the Mughal Administration”** by **Ms. Nadra Ashfaq** is the original research work of the candidate, and is suitable for submission to the examiners and for the award of the Ph.D. degree.

Ishrat Alam
(Dr. Ishrat Alam)
Supervisor

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ABBREVIATIONS

AMU	Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (India)
<i>Ain</i>	<i>Ain-i-Akbari</i>
<i>Akhbarat</i>	<i>Akhbarat of Prince A‘zam (1702-04)</i>
Ashin Das Gupta	<i>Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat</i>
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale, (Paris)
BPP	<i>Bengal Past and Present</i> , Calcutta
Bruce	John Bruce, <i>Annals of the East India Company</i>
Caland	<i>Remonstrantie van W. Geleynssen de Jongh’s</i> Gravenhage, ed. Dr. W. Caland.
Corpus Diplomaticum	<i>Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum</i>
<i>DFI</i>	<i>The Dutch Factories in India 1617-1623</i>
<i>Dagh-Register</i>	<i>Dagh-Register gehouden in’t casteel van Batavia</i>
<i>EFI</i>	<i>The English Factories in India 1618-1669</i>
<i>EFI (NS)</i>	<i>The English Factories in India 1670-1684</i>
Francois Bernier	<i>Travels in the Mogul Empire</i>
Fryer	John Fryer, <i>A New Account of East India and Persia being Nine Years’ Traveels, 1672-81</i>
G.M.	<i>Generale Missiven van gouverneurs- general en Raden aan Heren XVIII der Verenigde Oost-Indische compagnie</i>
<i>IESHR</i>	<i>Indian Economic and Social History Review</i>
<i>JASB</i>	<i>Journal of Asiatic Society of Bombay.</i>

<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i> , Leiden.
<i>JIH</i>	<i>Journal of Indian History</i>
<i>Letters Received</i>	Letters received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East
<i>PIHC</i>	<i>Proceedings of Indian History Congress</i>
<i>Storia Do Mogor</i>	Nicolao Manucci, <i>Mogul India (1653-1708) or Storia do Mogor</i>
Streynsham Master	<i>The Diaries of Station Master</i>
Tavernier	Jean Baptiste Tavernier, <i>Travels in India, 1640-67</i>
Van Dam	<i>Baschrijvinge van de Oost-Indische Compagnie</i> , ed., Peter van Dam
VOC	<i>Verenigde Oost Indische Compagnie</i> (Dutch East India Company).
W.H. Moreland	<i>From Akber to Aurangzeb</i>

Chapter - 1

The Background: The Dutch East India Company's Establishment of Commercial Activities in India and the Establishment of Dutch Factories in Mughal Territories

Chapter: 1

THE BACKGROUND: THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY'S ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES IN INDIA AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DUTCH FACTORIES IN MUGHAL TERRITORIES

In 1602, the year that saw the foundation of the Dutch East India Company by a Charter granted by the States-General of Netherlands. The founding of the Company had been preceded by a number of voyages to the East on the account of the so- called pre- Companies. The Early traders had found that the most important medium used by Asian merchants to procure the Indonesian spices was Indian textiles which were in great demand in the region and afforded a high profit.¹ The three chief sources for the supply of Indian textiles were Gujarat, Coromandel and Bengal.²

The attraction of the European traders to Asia at the beginning of the Sixteenth Century was mainly spices such as pepper, cloves, nutmeg and mace. Both Sumatra and Malabar Coast was famous for the production of pepper in India, while the other spices was produced, in the eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago, known as the Spice Islands.³

During the greater part of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese enjoyed a monopoly of the Sea-borne trade between Asia and Europe. The Dutch were appeased to act as the main distributors of commodities, which the Portuguese

1 Om Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India, 1617-1623: A Collection of Dutch East India Company documents pertaining to India*, New Delhi, 1984, p. 1.

2 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel*, 's-Gravenhage, 1962, p.2.

3 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 1.

transported from the East Indies to Lisbon. When in 1580, Philip II, who was the king of Spain at that time, forbade the Dutch from purchasing Eastern commodities at Lisbon, which they were selling to the northern parts of Europe. The Dutch were forced to seek a direct access to the spice markets in the South- East Asia. Thus, the Dutch started direct trade with the East.⁴

As we know that commercial companies for trading in the East Indies sprang up like mushrooms in the Netherlands until the States- General, on the 20th March 1602, ordered their alliance into one monopolistic association. In the Charter granted by the States- General to the United Netherlands Chartered East India Company , the Company was given the monopoly right over trade and navigation east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Straits of Magellan for an initial period of 21 Years.⁵ The Company was also given many other rights to make peace or war with the Eastern Princes, build forts, choose its own governors, and maintain troops and to appoint officers for the conduct of the police and the administration of justice.⁶

Dutch made their first appearance in India when Portuguese maritime supremacy was in its height during the reign of Mughal emperor Akbar. Their main aim was to break-down the Spanish-Portuguese monopoly. Later they found themselves competing with the English, to whom they finally gave way and the English emerged as victors. But, it was the Dutch and not the English who eliminated the Portuguese in India.⁷

4 Tapan Raychaudhuri , *op. cit.*, p. 1.

5 Owen C.Kail, "Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay* (henceforth *JASB*), vol. 43-44, 1968-69, (new series), pp. 156-57.

6 *Ibid*, p. 160.

7 *Ibid*, p. 159.

Therefore, the advent of the Dutch in Eastern waters transformed the whole political condition in India, especially in the South-West. Soon, Dutch realized that foreign trade depended on the generosity and harmony of the rulers who dominated the trade routes and who governed the areas neighboring these trade posts, and by a good combination of negotiation, consideration and religious toleration to which was added competent defense and government, the Dutch made sure that their trade was safeguarded from hazard.⁸

According to Moreland, Their earliest ventures were strictly commercial. It is true that from about 1603 onwards, the Dutch fleets went out prepared to fight as well as trade, but for nearly ten years previously their ruling policy had been to reach the East without encountering Spanish or Portuguese, and to establish commercial relations with those Asiatic Countries which were not under direct Portuguese influence or control. In theory three routes to the East were available, round the north of Asia, round the South of America, and round the Cape of Good Hope⁹

The projectors of first voyage did not even provide for the establishment of “Factories” or agencies in the Eastern markets: their intention was merely that their ships should visit Eastern ports, sell their goods, and return as soon as suitable cargo had been procured. The gradual change of organization, from trading voyage to Factory, from factory to fort,

8 *Ibid*, p. 157.

9 W. H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb: A Study in Indian Economic History*, First published, London, 1923, Reprinted Delhi, 1999, p. 14.

and from fort to territorial sovereignty, resulted mainly from the conditions prevailing in the Eastern markets, conditions which, as events proved, were imperfectly realized by the first projectors.¹⁰

The great attractions and most suitable objectives for the Dutch adventurers were western Java [Bantam and Jakarta] and Achin in Sumatra, and by the year 1602 Dutch merchants were known not only in Bantam and Achin, but also on the East Coast of Ceylon, in the Spice Islands, and at the important Siamese mart of Patani.¹¹

As we have found that the early voyages were planned so as to avoid the Portuguese, but the experience gained in them yielded two lessons, the ubiquitous hostility of that nation, and its weakness on the sea.¹² In the early years, the English and the Dutch had directed their ships towards the Indonesian archipelago and the Spice Islands, towards places where the Portuguese opposition was likely to be the weakest. The naval superiority of the Dutch fleets over slower and bulky Portuguese carracks soon enabled the VOC at least to abandon this policy of caution and to adopt a more hostile and aggressive attitude to its main European rival in the eastern seas.¹³

Consequently, the Dutch captured the Portuguese fort of Amboina in 1605. They abruptly realized that a profitable trade with the Indies could not

10 *Ibid*, pp. 14-15.

11 *Ibid*, pp. 15-16.

12 *Ibid*, p. 19.

13 K.N. Chaudhuri, 'XIII. Foreign Trade 1. European Trade with India', in Tapan Raychaudhuri & Irfan Habib (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, c.1200-c.1750, vol. I, Cambridge, Reprinted Delhi, 2004, p. 386.

be carried out without India.¹⁴ When Hendrick Brouwer, who was later to become the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, described in 1612 that the Eastern Coast of India the Coromandel, was the “Left arm of the Moluccas, and the surrounding Islands because without textiles that come from there [the Coromandel Coast], the trade in the Moluccas will be dead.”¹⁵

In the first decade of the Seventeenth Century, the subsequent activities of the Dutch and the English and their extension of trade in the well known trading cities such as Masulipatam and Surat owed a great deal to the exigencies of inter-Asian trade. The Dutch largely replaced and took over the inter-Asian trade previously carried on by the Portuguese. The English Company also attempted strenuously to break into the country trade, though its measure of success in this branch was less than that of the VOC.¹⁶

K.N. Chaudhuri stated that the one of earliest Dutch plans for a comprehensive organization of their Asian commercial network was a memorandum written at the direction of Admiral Cornelis Matelieff, who commanded the outgoing fleet in 1605. Apart from emphasizing the need to monopolize the trade in cloves, nutmeg, and mace, Cornelis Matelieff also recommended that immediate relations should be established with the Coast of Coromandel because of the textile trade. Gujarat was obviously another region which merited attention but at a later date.¹⁷

14 Satish Chandra; *Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughals, Mughal Empire (1526-1748)*, vol. II, New Delhi, 2000, p. 397.

15 *D.F.I. 1617-1623*, p. 2. See also K.N. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.* p. 387. See also Satish Chandra; *Medieval India*, vol. II, p. 397.

16 K.N. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.* , p. 387.

17 *Ibid*, pp. 387-388. For more details See W.H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

By 1605 the Dutch were known and accepted by the people of Gujarat, Malabar and Coromandel .The Golconda trade though lucrative was hazardous and uncertain and the Dutch turned their eyes towards Bengal, which also produced cloth. They also considered the possibility of using the Bengal ports as substitutes for Surat for the transportation and purchase of indigo from the regions of Delhi and Agra. Peter Willemsz, under-merchant at Masulipatam made the voyage to Bengal and returned in 1608 with high hopes but not much merchandise.¹⁸

The only policy the Dutch followed in India was maximum profits at minimum expense and to a large extent this was successful. In India, the Dutch had three elements of activity such as- the purely commercial, territorial and political. They had two independent directorates in the Empire of the Great Mogul, one at Surat and the other at Chinsura for Bengal and Bihar; they had no territorial jurisdiction or political influence. They lived as European merchants on the backbone of a *farman* received from the Imperial court, which was renewed several times (Surat *farman* was renewed 28 times between 1618 and 1729) and on each occasion considerable sums of money had to be paid for fresh privileges.¹⁹

In Coromandel, Dutch East India Company started trading like all other European business communities in South India, where the enactment or the creation of commercial extra- territoriality subsisted. And on the East

¹⁸ Owen C. Kail, "Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India", p. 163.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 213.

Coast of India from Bimlipatam to Tuticorin, they owned or had leased under agreements, the ground on which their forts, factories and residences stood. They had territorial authority over the villages and lands adjoining to their establishments.²⁰

Another important sphere of Dutch policy was the capture of the cinnamon trade of Ceylon and the elimination of the Portuguese pepper factories in Malabar. From 1636 for ten successive years Goa was blockaded every trading season.

Malacca fell in 1641, after a determined resistance, and the policy of conquest reached its final fruition with the conquest of Colombo (1655-6) and Cochin (1659-63).²¹

In Malabar, English factors wrote letters, ensuing the fall of Cochin, which indicate that the Dutch policy on the Coast would run on the line of the classic coercive method adopted in Indonesia, whereby a subjugated local ruler bound himself by a formal treaty not to suffer any buyers or sellers in any port of his Country except with the agents of the VOC.²²

According to K.N. Chaudhuri, throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, the commercial organization of the north European trading companies in India rested on a common structural form. Its main feature was a head settlement or factory situated at or near some major Indian port with subordinate stations in

20 *Ibid.*

21 K.N. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

22 *Ibid.*

the interior where many of the export goods were produced. The head settlements were normally independent of one another's authority, though close operational ties were maintained between them. The principal factories of the VOC were at Surat, Cochin, Pulicut, Negapatam, Masulipatam, and Hugli.²³

The Dutch East India Company wanted to monopolize the trade of Spice Islands of South- East Asia, as there was great demand of Coromandel cloth (Golconda textiles) in these Islands and these commodities could prove ready barter for local spices. Thus in 1603, under Admiral Steven van der Haghen, the VOC sent a fleet to the east. In February 1605, the yacht *Delft*, one of the fifteen ships in Van der Haghen's fleet, sailed from Achin to Masulipatam under the command of Paulus van Soldt in the spring of the same year and thus the Dutch reached Golconda in 1605 and started negotiations with the government of Golconda for establishment of a factory on the Coromandel Coast at Masulipatam and trade concessions.²⁴

Therefore, the first Dutch factory on the Coromandel Coast was established at Petapuli (or Nizampatam) in north Coromandel in 1606 followed by another in neighbouring Masulipatam the same year.²⁵ In the beginning, the two factories at Masulipatam and Nizampatam were

23 *Ibid*, pp. 391-92.

24 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp.15-16; See also *Relations of Golconda in the Early Seventeenth Century*, ed./ trans. W.H. Moreland, Hakluyt Society, 1931; The 'Relation' are those of Methwold (1625), Schorer (1615- 1616) and an anonymous Dutch Factors (1614), pp. xxi-xxii. George D. Winus & Marcus P.M. Vink, *The Merchant-Warrior Pacified: The VOC (The Dutch East India Company) and its changing political economy in India*, Oxford, 1991, pp. 12-13.

25 *D.F.I. 1617-1627*, p. 6. W. H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

independent of each other but in 1608 Nizampatam was placed under the authority of Masulipatam.²⁶

During the first half of the 17th Century when the Dutch and English established their trading factories in Golconda, they received concession in custom duties from the Kings of Golconda. In 1606, with the help of Mir Jumla, Dutch secured a *Farman* from the king of Golconda²⁷ which guaranteed a fixed duty of 4 percent on their exports and imports.²⁸

Further, they were exempted from the payment of the stamp duty (*chhap-dalali*) on cloth, which came to about 12 percent²⁹ and had to be paid by all other traders including the king's subjects.³⁰

The Dutch faced constant problems with the local officials in 1607 at Masulipatam, the local governor (*Havaladar* and *Shahbandar*) Sidappa, forced the company to lend them 3,000 *pagodas* without interest, as the price of ratification of the royal *Farman*.³¹

In the course of time the Company expanded its base in Golconda and established factories at Palakollu, Nagalwanze, Sadraspatam, Bimlipatam, Hyderabad and Golconda.³²

26 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

27 *Ibid*, p. 16.

28 *D.F.I.1617-1623*, p. 6. Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p.16.

29 *Ibid*; *Ibid*.

30 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.* p. 16

31 *Ibid*, p.17.

32 Streynsham Master, *The Diaries of Streynsham Master, 1675-80, & Other Contemporary Papers Relating Thereto*, ed. R.C.Temple, Indian Records Series, 2 vols., London, 1911, vol. ii, pp.115-116.

Dutch soon learned that in the delta of Kistna, where their first Indian factories were located, was not the best place to provide all the requirements of their trade.³³ In this way, the Dutch were looking for new trade prospects in South Coromandel to consolidate their position in Golconda.³⁴ Though, they moved further South, where the early VOC's factories were located in the delta between the Krishna and the Godavari rivers. This was the area from which much of the cotton cloth which was preferred in the Indies was produced. These considerations encouraged the Dutch factors to seek commercial concessions first at Tegenapatam (1608-9) in the territory of the nayak of Gingi and later in Pulicut itself (1610), which eventually became the main centre of Dutch trade in Coromandel until the headquarters were shifted to Negapatam in 1690.³⁵

Pulicat was favourably situated for their trade in cloth. Moreover it was in the middle of Coast from where the Dutch influence could spread north and south. Besides the price of cloth being low, there was a good market for lead, tin, copper, sulphur, nutmeg, mace, cloves, sandalwood, pepper, lac (of many colours), porcelain cups, tortoise shell, mercury and leaf brass. While the Dutch trade rose and expanded on East coast, Portuguese fortunes waned. They made several attempts to restore their influence and to impede Dutch activity, but to no avail.³⁶

33 W.H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p.32.

34 Tapan Raychaudhuri; *op. cit.* p.18.

35 K.N. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 388. Satish Chandra, *Medieval India*, vol. II, p.397. Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp.18-22. Moreland's *Relations*, pp. xxii-xxiii.

36 Owen C. Kail, "*Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India*", p. 177.

During the first half of the 17th Century, powers of the Coromandel hinterland were generally attracted to the idea of European Companies settling in their ports. They were given concessions in custom duties to carry on a permanent trade there. Thus, in the period of imperial decline, the rulers of Vijayanagar not only permitted them (Dutch) to build a fort at Paleacat in 1612, but also provided a concession on tariffs and judicial and police powers within their jurisdiction.³⁷

When Golconda rulers annexed the territories of the Vijayanagar Empire and became political rulers over Paleacat and Madras, they continued the policy of the trade concessions to the Europeans as were given by the Vijayanagar rulers. Such as in the 1647, in the Kaul granted by the Mir Jumla (Muhammad Said), given on behalf of the Sultan of Golconda, in which the Dutch were well favoured. They were given exemption from embarkation and disembarkation duty on their goods in the port of Paleacat. Certain neighbouring villages dependent on Paleacat namely Erikan, Mangievakam and Auverivakam were granted to the Dutch by a Qutb Shahi Farman.³⁸

At Masulipatam, the Dutch had their factory, within a compound wall and in one of the suburban villages of Masulipatam the Dutch had a plot of land given to them by the rulers, where they built residences to which the official retired for amusement and recreation. Here too there were storehouses for textiles and facilities for washing finished goods.³⁹

37 S. Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies & Commerce on the Coromandel Coast* (1650-1740), Delhi, 1986, pp. 65-66.

38 *Ibid*, p. 66.

39 *Ibid*, pp. 67-68.

During the whole of the Seventeenth Century both the Dutch and English Companies always received responsive deliberation from the kings of Golconda. From whom they not only received concessions in custom duties but they were also permitted to establish their own cotton weaving, painting and iron industries. They were also allowed to farm the towns of the kingdom. It is interesting to note that the Dutch had acquired the town of Palakollu on rent, paying 2,000 old *pagodas* annually and established there extensive weaving, painting, iron and indigo industries.⁴⁰ Here also they had a large building of stone, where 8 to 10 officials housing and about 70 Indian labourers worked.⁴¹

In 1674, the Dutch were freed of all customs duties in the ports north of Masulipatam by a *Farman* from the king.⁴² Besides this in 1675, at Narsapur, the Dutch were also granted a piece of land by the Golconda king, Qutb Shah, where they built a house, a carpentry workshop and an iron-smithery.⁴³ Again, the Dutch were given integral freedom from excise duties in the kingdom of Golconda by the *Farman* of 1676.⁴⁴

It is interesting to note that the relations between the Sultan and the Dutch merchants in his kingdom were extremely cordial. He visited

40 William Foster (ed.) *The English Factories in India 1618-1669*, 13 vols., Oxford, 1906-1927 (henceforth *E.F.I.*), *E.F.I.* 1665-67, p. 330. Thomas Bowery, *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, 1669 to 1679*, ed. R. C. Temple, Cambridge, 1905, pp. 105n.2 & 106. Streynsham Master, vol. II, pp. 116, 164.

41 S. Arasaratnam, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

42 *Ibid*, p. 72.

43 *Ibid*, p. 69. Streynsham Master, vol. II, p. 160; See also Ishrat Alam, 'Iron Manufactures in Golconda in the 17th Century', in *Tradition and Innovation in the History of Iron Making, An Indo European perspective*, Nanital, 2002, p. 99.

44 F.W. Stapel (eds.), *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum*, vols. 3-4, The Hague, III (1934), IV (1935), (henceforth) *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. III, (1676-1691), PP. 12-15.

Masulipatam in 1678 and attended the service in the Dutch church. Thereafter, he invited the Dutch ladies to meet his wives, and as a sign of friendship, abandoned the payment of port dues and other tolls for one year.⁴⁵

In 1680's the commercial activities of the Dutch seem to have been affected by the political condition of Golconda. The Mughal invasion of Bijapur and Golconda in 1685-86 and the eventual conquest of Bijapur in 1686 severely affected all trade between Golconda and the regions to its west and north.⁴⁶

When Aurangzeb descended upon Golconda in 1687, the Dutch became legitimately anxious. After disputes over customs exemptions granted by a *Farman* of 1676 and the protection by Golconda's chief minister of a merchant called Chirum Chodanda, who had build up a huge debt to the Company, Jacob Jorisz. Pits, the Dutch *Gouverneur*, used this as an excuse to take over the city of Masulipatam to enforce the restoration of all privileges and the settlement of Chodanda's debt.⁴⁷

During the whole of 17th century, the Dutch Company always received responsive concessions from the king of Golconda. But unfortunately for the Dutch, it was taken over by the Mughals and they had to arbitrate with the Mughal government. Therefore, on 28th August 1689 Johannes Bacherus was sent as ambassador to Aurangzeb by the Dutch, who secured a *farman* from the Emperor confirming their commercial privileges enjoyed in the days of

45 Owen C.Kail, *The Dutch in India*, Macmillan, 1981, p. 88

46 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

47 George D.Winius & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51. cf. S. Arasaratnam, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

the Qutb Shahi kings. Thus, the *farman* utterly laid out the extent of the concession and the restrictions of Dutch liability to taxation.⁴⁸

During the second half of the 17th Century, the Mughal Emperor hastily recommended the concessions given to the European Companies and local governors added their own impulse for their trade. For instance, in 1698 the Dutch were well favoured by the havaldar of Pulicat, Muhammad Ali Beg⁴⁹ and also by the *Nawab* of lower Karnatak during the same period.⁵⁰

For the period of five years, the port of Sadraspatnam and the villages of Umarimayur, Kulpakkum, Eddayur and Alathur were handover to the Dutch in 1701 by the *faujdar* of Chingleput for a total annual sum of 3,000 *pardao*.⁵¹ In 1705, Daud Khan, Mughal general of south Karnatak, granted the lease of Sadraspatnam to the Dutch.⁵²

After the death of Aurangzeb (in 1707), another ambassador was sent to the Mughal Court for renewal of the charters of trade privileges with the new Mughal Emperor, Jahandar Shah. For instance, on 11th August 1712, Joan Josua Ketelaar was sent as an ambassador to Jahandar Shah by the Dutch, who received a *farman* from the Emperor (Jahandar Shah), *farman* given to the Ketelaar restated alike conditions of *farman* of 1689, which was granted by the Emperor Aurangzeb.⁵³

48 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Vol. III, (1676-1691), pp. 509-510.

49 *Ibid*, Vol. IV, (1691-1725), p.129.

50 *Ibid*, pp. 140-142.

51 *Ibid*, pp. 201-203.

52 *Ibid*, pp. 251-253.

53 *Ibid*, pp. 413-419.

It is interesting to note that the Dutch went to Gujarat for the same reasons for which had gone to the Coromandel Coast.⁵⁴ Dutch contact with Gujarat and western India can be divided into three different periods: first, the voyages of the *Voor Compangnieen* and the early futile ventures of the VOC, second, the establishment of a somewhat permanent trading factory in Surat, and third, the development of the VOC into the trading centres of northwest India.⁵⁵

Since the beginning of the 17th Century the Dutch examined the feasibilities of Indian trade. They realised the potentials of Gujarati trade in South East Asia.⁵⁶ To explore feasibilities of that trade, before the establishment of the Dutch Company in 1602, two Dutch factors Hans de Wolff and Lafer representing the Zeeuwsche Compagnie (one of the so-called pre-companies which were merged in 1602 to form the VOC) had been sent to Surat from Achin with two Indian ships,⁵⁷ with letters from Sultan Alauddin testifying to their credentials.⁵⁸ They were well received at Surat and wrote encouraging reports. But in the course of a trip to Calicut in April 1603, they fell into Portuguese hands with the help of the local raja of Tanur and taken to Goa and were killed. The first contacts with Gujarat on behalf of the Company were made by two ships of the fleet of Admiral Matalief that

54 Ann Bos Radwan, *The Dutch in Western India 1601-1632: A Study of Mutual-Accommodation*, Calcutta, 1978, p.21.

55 *Ibid.*

56 Karl Fischer; "The beginning of Dutch trade with Gujarat", *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, Allahabad, 1965, P. 207.

57 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 14. Karl Fischer, *op. cit.* p. 208. George D. Winus & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

58 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce-Southern India 1500-1650*, Cambridge, 2004, p. 168.

called at Cambay probably in 1606. It came to an end in the following year when Van Deynsen, the Dutch factor, was reportedly harassed so much by the authorities at the instigation of the Portuguese that towards the end of 1607 he committed suicide at Burhanpur.⁵⁹

Thereafter, the Dutch left the Gujarat alone until 1615 when Pieter Gillisz. van Ravesteyn was sent from Masulipatam to Surat.⁶⁰ He gave a very rich potential description of the Surat trade. As he remarked that at Surat spices, camphor, benzoin, ivory, sandalwood, silk, zinc, tin, lead, copper, quicksilver, porcelain and other goods, could be sold at good prices, and indigo and various textiles could be procured in substantial quantities.⁶¹ For this purpose, Jan pietersz. Coen, the Director-General, decided in favour of establishing a factory at Surat, and despatched Pieter van den Broecke to Surat via Mocha for this task in August 1616.⁶² His attempts to secure trade privileges from the Mughal authorities were of no avail and finally the charge of Surat affairs was given to P.G.Ravesteyn.⁶³

The Commercial success of the Dutch on this side of India dates from 1620, when Van den Broecke himself was posted to Surat, not as a mere factor but as 'Commander and Director',⁶⁴ of what were called the 'Western

59 *D.F.I.*1617-23, p. 14. W. H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, pp.31-32. George D. Winus & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.* pp. 24-25.

60 *D.F.I.*1617-23, p. 15.

61 Karl Fischer, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-209.

62 *D.F.I.*1617-23, P. 15. Karl Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 209. Owen C. Kail, "Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India", p. 166.

63 Karl Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

64 W. H. Moreland, "Pieter van den Broecke at Surat (1620-1629)", *Journal of Indian History* (henceforth *JIH*), vol. x, May 1923, p. 236.

Quarters' comprising North and West India, Persia, and Arabia. In the course of the next seven years his talents and exertions secured for his employers a definite predominance in the trade of these regions, largely superseding the English merchants who had been first in the field.⁶⁵ During his tenure a number of subordinate factories were established in Gujarat and elsewhere to obtain supplies of textiles and indigo.⁶⁶

Therefore, primary object of this extension was to obtain a supply of cotton goods from Gujarat, the establishment of a factory at Agra was necessitated by two important considerations. In the first place, no European merchant in India could afford to neglect the indigo- trade, and the best indigo was grown in the vicinity of Agra. In the second place, the Dutch at this time relied mainly on sales of spices to finance their purchases, and Agra, or rather the Mogul court, was the most extensive spice- market in India.⁶⁷

Accordingly, we find that the Dutch Factory at Agra was established in 1621, when Van den Broecke dispatched two factors, Wouter Heuten, and Pelsaert, with some assistants. The former held that position until his death in September 1623.⁶⁸ But English factors reported that Van den Broecke was thinking of F. Pelsaert as the most suitable candidate and probably he was incharge of the Agra factory from that time onwards.⁶⁹

65 The story of the Dutch establishment in western India can be read at length in Dr. H. Terpstra's *Opkomst der Western-Kwartieren van de Oost-Indische Compagnie*, The Hague, 1918 ; quoted in Francisco Pelsaert (1626), *Remonstrantie*, transl. W.H. Moreland & P. Geyl ed., *Jahangir's India*, Cambridge, 1925, p. x.

66 *D.F.I.*1617-23, pp. 16-17.

67 Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. xi.

68 *D.F.I.*1617-23, p. 16. F. Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. xi.

69 *E.F.I.* 1622-23, p. 281.

In Surat the Dutch had no territorial jurisdiction or possession such as their fortress of Geldria at Pulicat. They lived as foreign merchants on the strength of the *farman* received from the Imperial Court. This *farman* was renewed 28 times between 1618 and 1729, and on each occasion considerable sums of money were paid for the grant of fresh privileges.⁷⁰ Factories were established at Broach, Cambay, Ahmedabad, Burhanpur and Agra, where the main business was to procure textiles, piece-goods and indigo.⁷¹

The first remarkable success achieved by the Dutch was in 1618 when Jahangir visited Ahmadabad⁷² and after labouring hard, Van Ravesteyn succeeded in obtaining the *farman*, a translation of which has been given by Karl Fischer.⁷³ The main provisions of this *farman* are available in a *nishan* of Prince Khurram in 1618,⁷⁴ who at that time was the Governor of Gujarat⁷⁵ and had issued the *nishan* which allowed the Dutch factors stationed at Surat that they were permitted to settle their business without any fear of molestation or interference.⁷⁶ The Prince also issued a document addressed to the *mutasaddi* of Surat and the *faujdar* of Burhanpur, Ahmedabad and Cambay asking that the Dutch be provided all protection and exempted from tolls on goods transported by them from Burhanpur to Cambay and Ahmadabad.⁷⁷

70 Owen C. Kail, "Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India", p. 167.

71 *Ibid.* For more details See *D.F.I.* 1617-23, pp. 15-16.

72 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 15.

73 Karl Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

74 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 59.

75 Mutamad Khan, *Iqbalnama-i-Jahangiri*, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1865, p. 104.

76 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, pp. 15 & 59.

77 *Ibid.*

The Dutch were granted a permission to establish their commercial relations with the Mughal officials. In this connection, the Dutch received from the Mughal authorities a *farman* from Shahjahan, which are available in Gujarat documents.⁷⁸ This document contained their relations with the Mughal officials during different points of time. These *Farmans* were issued in 1627,⁷⁹ 1637⁸⁰ and 1642.⁸¹

The securing of the VOC's developed role in Western India can be attributed to the potential increase in revenues derived from custom charges and tolls, however, there remained a veritable web of local and specific difficulties facing the Company.⁸² Therefore, the VOC's success in coping with this condition was due to the diplomatic skill and personal frame of mind of Pieter Van den Broecke.⁸³

As we have already mentioned that the Dutch trade began to flourish in Gujarat after the arrival of Broecke as the head of Dutch East India Company in India.⁸⁴ At times the Dutch formulation and initiatives made business difficult for the English.⁸⁵ Because the Dutch were very active in internal markets. They made their acquisition in all important places such as Surat,⁸⁶

78 *Bibliothèque Nationale, Supp. Persian* 482. A Microfilm copy of it is available in the Library of Centre of Advanced Study, Deptt. Of History, A.M.U., Aligarh.

79 *Supp. Persian* No.482, ff. 88(b)-89(a).

80 *Ibid*, ff. 68(b) - 69(a).

81 *Ibid*, f. 8.

82 Ann Bos Radwan, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

83 *Ibid*.

84 W. H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

85 *E.F.I.* 1622-23, pp. 87, 98, 159.

86 *Ibid*, 1624-29, p. 94.

Broach, Cambay, Ahmedabad, Dholka.⁸⁷ Even the sale of vessels was an enacted practice in Coastal towns. The Dutch purchased vessels at Gandevi,⁸⁸ and Broach.⁸⁹

From the beginning of the 17th Century, the importance of Gujarati trade had well been realized by the Dutch. Ahmadabad was of special interest for the Dutch owing to the availability of textiles and indigo besides a number of other commodities here.⁹⁰ Thus at Ahmadabad a factory was established and was subordinate to Surat factory.⁹¹ The Dutch bartered the Gujarati clothes “against pepper and gold on the Coast of Sumatra, with the rials and clothes from the pepper from Bantam...”⁹²

The indigo trade became more important than textiles and in 1624 the first Dutch ship sailed from Surat direct to Netherlands.⁹³ In 1628, Johan van Hasselt, who succeeded Pieter van den Broecke as a director of Surat, describes the situation in Surat: “The moors were not pleased that the Dutch began to trade in tobacco and rice etc. which they brought to Persia...”⁹⁴ Van Hasselt also described that it was unsafe for them to walk on the streets of Surat, Dutchmen became so unpopular.⁹⁵

87 *Ibid*, 1622-23, pp. 98, 159, 185, 197.

88 W. H. Moreland, “Pieter van den Broecke at Surat (1620-29)”, *JIH*, vol. x, p. 242.

89 *Ibid*, vol. xi, 1932, p. 4.

90 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 235.

91 *E.F.I.* 1618-21, p. 308. *E.F.I.* 1647-50, p. 121.

92 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 111.

93 Owen C.Kail, “The Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India”; p. 168.

94 Owen C.Kail, *Dutch in India*, p. 70.

95 *Ibid*.

On gaining a footing in Surat, they (Dutch) determined to make the settlement as their chief factory in India and next to Batavia (headquarter of their commerce in the east). They tried to injure English trade in Surat by selling foreign commodities at a loss and by buying Indian articles at high prices. Even though none of these procedures succeeded the Dutch trade in Gujarat was absolutely advantageous and Surat became the Directorate for 15 other factories: ⁹⁶Gombroon(Bandar Abbas), Basra, Lar, Shiraz, and Isfahan in Persia, Mocha in Arabia. Surat, Vengurla, Agra, Ahmedabad, Cambay, Broach, Baroda, Sarkhej and Thatta in India.

But many of these factories did not remain long under Surat. For instances, the factories in Persian establishments were remained under Surat Directorate from 1622 to 1633. Mocha remained with Surat from 1620 to 1686, after which they were placed under the direct administrative control of Batavia. Of the Indian factories only Broach remained under Surat. Cambay, Sarkhej and Baroda were Dutch factories and were abandoned in 1670; Vengurla was handed over to the '*Commandeur*' of Malabar in 1677.⁹⁷ The Dutch retired from Agra in 1720. Ahmedabad, Broach and Thatta in Sind were opened along with the factory in Surat and functioned as such till 1744.⁹⁸

At Surat, custom duties on the merchandise of Dutch and English was 3 ½ % ad valorem⁹⁹ and 2 % was to be paid on bullion that is gold or silver.¹⁰⁰

96 Owen C.Kail, "Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India", p. 168.

97 *Ibid.*

98 Owen C.Kail, *The Dutch in India*, p. 71.

99 *Letters Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East*, 1602-17, 6 vols. , vol. I, edited by F. C. Danvers., Vols. II-VI, edited by W. Foster, London, 1896-1902

But in 1667, custom duty was lowered from 3 ½ % to 2 % on the goods of the Dutch and the English had asked for a similar favour.¹⁰¹

Like the English the Dutch also operated through a number of native brokers in Surat in the conduct of their business. The foremost broker for the Dutch was Mohandas Parekh. But they also dealt with two other leading merchants Virji Vora and Haji Zahid Beg.¹⁰²

Much of their early success was due to the services rendered by a Gujarati merchant prince named Virji Vora, whom the Rev John 1' Escalot, the East India Company's Chaplain in Surat in 1664, called 'the richest merchant in the world.'¹⁰³ When the Dutch faced financial difficulties, at times loans were raised. The Dutch borrowed money from him (Virji Vora)¹⁰⁴

By and large their factories and establishments in Surat and elsewhere in India were run on sound business principles- all other considerations being subordinated to the development of trade. As a result these factories afforded the highest benefits. Dutch imports at Surat were gold, silver, lead, mercury, ivory, tin, copper, cloves, nutmegs, pepper, mace, porcelain and seventeen other items including "toys".¹⁰⁵

(henceforth *Letter Received*), *Letter Received*, vol. III, (1615), p. 5. *E.F.I.* 1624-29, p. 92. M. S. Commissariat, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India*, (A.D. 1638-39), London, 1931, p. 9.

100 Mandelslo's, *Travels*, p. 9. W. W. Hunter, *A History of British India*, Vol. II, London, 1900, pp. 51-52.

101 *E.F.I.* 1665-67, pp. 273-274; *E.F.I.* 1668-69, pp. 35, 116, 228; John Bruce, *Annals of the East India Company*, 3 Vols., London, 1810 (henceforth Bruce), Bruce, II, pp. 216-17.

102 B. G. Gokhale, *Surat in the Seventeenth Century*, Bombay, 1979, p. 167.

103 Owen C. Kail, *The Dutch in India*, p. 73.

104 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 286.

105 Owen C. Kail, "Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India", p. 169.

For the European markets, they (Dutch) needed indigo which was mainly used for dying wool. The area around Lahore, Delhi and Agra produced the purest indigo, whereas the Sarkhej indigo¹⁰⁶ productions were adulterated with mud. Saltpetre was an important constituent in the production of gunpowder. And the third important item of export was cloth of all descriptions; other items of export were raw cotton and yarn, wax, borax, cinnamon, carpets, diamonds, spices etc.¹⁰⁷

In general, the Europeans became more and more restive as they became aware that Mughal power was waning. Not only did the Marathas twice raid Surat in 1664 and 1670, but the local Mughal officials became more self-seeking and tended to fleece both the Europeans and the Indian mercantile community. And by the 1690's, not only the English but also the Dutch increasingly resorted to blockade and armed action to avoid harassment.¹⁰⁸

If the possession of fortified trading settlements, well secured by the power of the 'great guns' was one of the accepted methods of European trade in Asia, another equally strong tradition was the use of the naval blockade. In the important trading areas, such as Surat or Hugli, where the Europeans lived and traded under the jurisdiction of Mughal officers, the threat of a maritime blockade preventing the indigenous ships from having the ports was the European answer to their vulnerability on land.¹⁰⁹

106 For detail description of indigo See chapter 2 (c).

107 Owen C. Kail, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-70.

108 George D. Winius & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

109 K.N. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

Bengal offered such obvious attractions that it is difficult to understand why the Dutch neglected that region for so many years. The explanation is to be found in the conditions which prevailed locally: the Country itself was too unsettled for peaceable trade, while the seaports were difficult of access, and were dominated by the Portuguese.¹¹⁰ In 1612, Dutch factors were reported to have visited both Bengal and Bihar and Van Berchem, the director of the Coromandel factories, was reported to be planning the establishment of a regular factory (1615) in Bengal.¹¹¹

It is important to realize that the Dutch interest in the trade of Bengal at this stage was derived not so much from the possibility of procuring cotton textiles as from that of obtaining quantities of rice, sugar, saltpeter and, above all, slaves needed to provide the labour force in Coen's scheme of developing and securing Dutch colonies in Indonesia.¹¹² The factors at Coromandel sent ships to the Bengal region on a fairly regular basis in 1615. But these vessels confined their operations to Balasore and Pipli in Orissa and the volume of trade conducted by them was extremely limited.¹¹³

The rivalry of the European nations was no less keen in Bengal. In 1615, for the first time, the Dutch ships arrived in Bengal. The Dutch fleet joined the king of Arakan and fought the Portuguese near the coast of Arakan. Thereafter the Dutch began their trade in Bengal although they did not

110 W. H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

111 Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce; The Dutch East India Company in the Indian Ocean Trade*, (chapter III), Variorum, Great Britain, 1994, p. 260.

112 *Ibid.*

113 *Ibid*, pp. 260-61.

permanently settle in the province until towards the middle of the seventeenth century when they established their factory in Hugli.¹¹⁴ Fortunately for the Dutch, the Mughal forces in Bengal drove the belligerent Portuguese out of Hugli in 1632,¹¹⁵ the way was now left open for the English and the Dutch companies to establish their trade in an area of India that was even now known as the sub-continent's food granary and which was later to become the chief textile-producing area in the Mughal Empire.¹¹⁶

Dutch extension to Bengal was gradual. The first ventures and voyages were in the vicinity of Cuttack, later on, ships were taken farther north to the ports of Pipli and Balasore. And in 1634 instructions were sent from Batavia to attempt trade with Hugli itself. The early experiences of the Dutch at this port were not encouraging as the monopoly of all trade had been granted to two local merchants and the authorities were not friendly.¹¹⁷ It was around this time (1634) that the Dutch obtained a farman from Azam Khan, the Mughal *subahdar* (Governor) of Bengal which a year later was followed by a second from his successor Islam Khan and a third from the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan himself in the following period.¹¹⁸ As a fairly favourable agreement was settled with the Viceroy of Bengal at Dacca, but it did not prevail against the local obstacles; and in 1636 the factors decided to move down to Pipli,

114 J. J. A. Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, Patna, 1979, pp. 124-25.

115 Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter III), p. 261.

116 K.N. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 391.

117 W. H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

118 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. I, 1.8.1635, 266-7 and 268-9; quoted in George D. Winius & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

where Bengal goods could be obtained without the oppression and extortion met with at Hugly.¹¹⁹

On assuming the office of subahdar of Bengal in 1639, prince Shah Shuja had written to the Dutch governor at Pulicat suggesting a reopening of the Hugli factory. This suggestion had been ignored, however, and it was not until sometime between 1645 and 1647 that the Company reestablished the factory at Hugli.¹²⁰ On the strength of Shahjahan's *farman* of 1645, when additional concessions were granted to Arnold Bernard Muiskensz, the director of Surat, the Dutch were officially allowed to set up an agency at Hugli. Shortly after the factory started functioning, its warehouses were swept away by floods. New buildings were erected further inland and the Dutch continued to operate from Hugli till 1656 when they were allowed to build a much larger establishment at Chinsura.¹²¹

More *farmans* pursued from Shahjahan and several ensuing *subahdars* which put the Dutch position in Bengal on a firmer establishment, apparently, the local authorities had come to apprehend that the Dutch were not to be pushed around and were quite able to bite back if they chose. Soon after that the Dutch, besides their presence at Pipli, established factories in Balasore, Dacca, Patna, Kasimbazar and Chinsura (a village in the proximity of

119 W. H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

120 Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630-1720*, 1st published Princeton, 1985, India Reprint, OUP, 1988, p. 39.

121 Owen .C.Kail, *The Dutch in India*, pp.126-127.

Hugli).¹²² The factories established in Bengal were placed under the authority of the Coromandel government. A separate directorate was created for Bengal as late as 1655.¹²³ It is interesting to note that the volume of Dutch trade with Bengal gradually rose from a lakh of rupees in magnitude in the years before 1650 but in 1661 it was close on 20 lakhs.¹²⁴ Consequently the sum of assets shows that Dutch trade in Bengal was patently far greater than that of the English who, with their limited income or possessions were obviously lagging far behind.¹²⁵

The factories in Bengal were the chief money- makers in India for the company. Positively, at the time of their establishment, the VOC was the single most powerful European presence in the subcontinent, and when cotton and silk cloth came to replace spices as the most advantageous return goods to Europe, the Company recognized this by an ever-increasing commitment of its resources to the region.¹²⁶

The trading potential of the Bengal region consisted of such merchandise as silk, opium, saltpeter and textiles, which, in accordance to the general pattern, were financed primarily by the import of large magnitude of precious metals, particularly silver.¹²⁷

122 George D.Winius & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, p.22.

123 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p.209.

124 W.H.Moreland, *op. cit.*, p.181. *cf.* Chatterjee Anjali, *Bengal in the reign of Aurangzeb 1658-1707*, Calcutta, 1967, p.190.

125 *E.F.I.* 1661-64, p. 71.

126 George D. Winus & Marcus Vink , *op. cit.*, p. 54.

127 *Ibid*, p. 55.

In 1662, Dirk van Adrichem, the director of Surat factory (from 1662 to 1665), was sent as an ambassador to Aurangzeb by the Governor of Batavia. He succeeded in getting a 'concession' (or *farman*), dated Delhi, 29th October 1662, from Aurangzeb, which granted important advantages upon the Dutch in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa,¹²⁸ and the Dutch were exempted from transit duties in these three provinces. But when a copy of the *farman* reached *subahdar* Mir Jumla, he intentionally misapprehended it to entail that the Company was obliged to pay transit and other duties like everyone else.¹²⁹ But even as the factors were reflecting upon the means to bring the *subahdar* round, the latter died.

As everywhere else in India, the Dutch in Bengal applied the successful middleman system for production of cotton goods. The key to this mode of operation in Bengal was the *dalal* (broker), whose job it was to identify the merchants with good reputations who were likely to fulfil their contractual obligations. These merchants were called *Paikars* or *Gomashtas*, an extremely varied group in which the Hindu *banyas* were predominant.¹³⁰

Bernier says that the Dutch have sometimes seven or eight hundred natives employed in their silk factory at Kassem-Bazar (Kasimbazar), where, in like manner, the English and other merchants employed a proportionate

128 Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire* A.D. 1656-1668, Reprint, Delhi LPP, 2005, p. 127n.3. Niccolao Manucci, *Mogul India* (1653-1708) or *Storia Do Mogor* (in 4 vols. Bound in 2), transl. William Irvine, Delhi, 2005 (henceforth *Storia do Mogor*,), *Storio do Mogor*, vol. II, p. 57n.55. J.E.Heeres, *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico Indicum*, 1-2 vols., I(1907) and II(1931), The Hague, *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Vol.II, (1650- 1675), pp. 217-20.

129 Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce*, pp. 271-72.

130 George D. Winus & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

number.¹³¹ Tavernier wrote that Kasimbazar was the silk emporium of Bengal from where the Dutch exported 6,000 to 7,000 bales annually to Japan and Holland. They used to carry their silks and the other goods they obtained in Bengal by the canal which connects Kasimbazar with the Ganges and bring it to Hugly from where they sent their goods downward to the harbour or landing- place.¹³²

As regards the saltpetre trade the Dutch were in a good position in comparison to the English. As Bernier noted that Bengal was also the principal emporium for saltpetre. One of the principal refineries of saltpetre was at Chuprah (Chapra), about 25 miles from Patna, where the French, Dutch, and Portuguese had factories.¹³³ According to Tavernier, the Dutch had a depot at Chapra in Bihar from where they sent saltpetre to Hugli and for refining saltpetre, they used to import copper boilers from Holland.¹³⁴ Besides these, they also used to carry Bengal indigo to Masulipatam¹³⁵ and gum lac to Persia.¹³⁶

The Company also had its own mint at Rajmahal, in which silver brought out from Europe was re-minted into Bengali 'Sicca' rupees for use in Company purchases, both at Hugli and in the other factories at Pipli, Balasore,

131 F. Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 440.

132 Tavernier, *Travels in India* (By Ball) edited by William Crooke, vol. II, New India, 1977, pp. 2-3.

133 F. Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 440 & n.2.

134 Tavernier, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 10. Tavernier, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 100.

135 *Ibid*, p. 8.

136 *Ibid*, p. 18.

Chinsura, Dacca, Bernagore (Baranagar) and Karimabad.¹³⁷ Tavernier says that the Dutch, finding that their goods were not adequately safe in the common houses of Dacca they built a very excellent house for the purpose of establishing their trade relations with that place (Dacca).¹³⁸

To the Dutch were leased the village of Chinsura and that of Baranagar and they were allowed to build factories at Pipli and at Balasore. Chinsura became the headquarters for all their agencies and factories in Bihar, Bengal, and Orissa. In the 18th Century when the demand for opium amplified, their profits from this one item were so immense that it could meet the costs of all the Bengal factories.¹³⁹

However, the Arakan pirates, both Magh and Firingi, used constantly to come by the water route and plunder Bengal and cause loss to the traders at the mouth of the Ganges.¹⁴⁰ When Shaista Khan came as Governor to Bengal, in succession to Mir Jumla, he tried to put a stop to these exploits.¹⁴¹

When Shaista Khan made provision for examining the Arakan pirates, he demanded help from both the English and the Dutch in his war with Arakan in 1664.¹⁴² According to Charles Stewart, one of the first acts of Shaista Khan's authority was to assemble, in the year 1075 A.H. (A.D.1664-

137 George D. Winus & Marcus Vink , *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

138 Tavernier, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 105.

139 Owen C. Kail, *The Dutch in India*, p. 129.

140 Chatterjee, Anjali , *op. cit.*, p. 24.

141 Stanley Lane-Poole, *Aurangzeb and the Decay of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi, p. 129.

142 *E.F.I.*1661-64, pp. 395,399,403. *cf.* Chatterjee , Anjali , *op .cit.*, p. 25.

1665), at Dacca, a numerous fleet of boats, and an army of 13,000 men.¹⁴³ Again it is also stated that on this occasion he demanded the assistance of some European gunners, from the Dutch and English factories, and upon their pleading inability, he threatened to stop their traffic in saltpeter.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, the Dutch provided vessels with men and ammunition.¹⁴⁵

In spite of Imperial *farmans* and grants, local officials along the Hugli were inclined to impede the Dutch ships carrying grain, opium, saltpeter, and sugar. Though, the Dutch preferred to triumph over these difficulties with their own make of commercial diplomacy, sometimes using threats, at other times with presents and bribes. Hardly ever did they interfere in the politics of Bengal, preferring always to occupy their trade.¹⁴⁶ There were a few instances as in 1672, Bhola Ram Chaudhuri, the keeper of the Dutch Company's tolls and customs-accounts and a merchant-middleman died suddenly, who owed Rs.30000/- to the Company and also owed the *faujdar* Malik Qasim of Hugli an amount of Rs.35, 000.¹⁴⁷ The director of the Dutch factory sent his agent to the *Nawab*'s court at Dacca to complain against Malik Qasim's conduct in extorting money from them that they did not owe. But Malik Qasim succeeded in provoking the *Nawab* and the *Diwan* against the Dutch that orders were issued to all parts under Shaista Khan's government prohibiting the Emperor's subjects from trading with them or serving them. Therefore,

143 Charles Stewart, *History of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1910, p. 297.

144 *Ibid*; p. 297n.

145 *Hugli Factory Records*, Vol. I, p.16; quoted in Chatterjee, Anjali, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

146 Owen C. Kail, *The Dutch in India*, p. 130.

147 Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce*, p. 286.

the Dutch trade at any rate was hampered. At Hugli they were not allowed to export rice which they had bought for that purpose. However, the Dutch settled the matter by paying money to the *Nawab* and his officers.¹⁴⁸

Again in 1684, when the looting started at Baranagar, Martinus Huysman called for a Dutch squadron to escort their ships. Thereafter, squadron opened fire on the robbers and all further obstruction stopped. In the following year, a more serious incident took place, and Huysman evacuated their factory there when in 1686 a trouble broke out between the local authorities and the English they were back again in possession and made full use of the estrangement to their own profit.¹⁴⁹

The Dutch were also given the opportunity of fortifying Hugli. For example in 1696, in retaliation against the rebellion of the *Zamindar* Sobha Singh in the region, the Mughal fort there was captured and the higher authorities requested Dutch assistance. Despite standing VOC orders requiring its servant's strict neutrality under any and all circumstances, the newly arrived *directeur*, Pieter van Dishoek, gave his assent and therefore he drove the rebels out of Hugli.¹⁵⁰

Thereafter, the *subahdar*, Ibrahim Khan gave permission to all European companies to strengthen their defences and even build fortifications. But having already overstepped his instructions, the *directeur* declined the

148 Chatterjee , Anjali , *op. cit.*, p. 192. Om Prakash , *op.cit.* , pp. 286-87. *cf.* Streynsham Master, vol. II , pp. 22-23.

149 Owen C. Kail, *The Dutch in India*, p. 130.

150 George D. Winus & Marcus Vink;*op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

offer and all defences thrown up around the Dutch factory at nearby Chinsura were dismantled.¹⁵¹

The period from 1686 to 1690 is considered to be that in which the Dutch trade with Bengal was in the most prosperous condition. When in 1686 the English East India Company declared war against the Mughal, the Dutch East India Company's directors were concerned more with profit than with the acquisition of territory.¹⁵²

Finally, the Dutch were not destined to enjoy their ascendancy for long. The growing resources of the two rival English companies and their increasing exports to Europe undermined the Dutch activities in Bengal.¹⁵³

151 *Ibid*, p.61.

152 Anjali, Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, p.196.

153 *Ibid*.

Chapter - 2

Early Phase of Relations with Mughal Authorities until 1658

Chapter-2

EARLY PHASE OF RELATIONS WITH MUGHAL AUTHORITIES UNTIL 1658:

(A) PROBLEMS OF TRADE CONFLICT WITH LOCAL MERCHANTS AND MUGHAL AUTHORITIES: SURAT & INLAND FACTORIES

Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie (VOC), (Dutch East India Company), ever since its arrival on the Western Coast (1606), maintained contacts with local administration and through them with the Imperial Power. The Mughal administration, on the other hand, intervened on different occasions upon petitions received from the Dutch Company. These orders have attracted the attention of Scholars from time to time.¹ Undoubtedly, the VOC was one of the major sources for importing bullion into the Indian market and exporting large volume of commodities from India.

The Dutch East India Company sent various factors, ambassadors and commissioners to seek concessions from the Mughal emperors at different points of time. They procured *Farmans* to reduce custom duties or sought Imperial protection and patronage for safe passage of their goods from place to place.² In this background the Gujarat documents in *Bibliothèque*

1 Cf. Karl Fischer , “The Beginning of the Dutch Trade with Gujarat”, p. 209; Jawaid Akhtar , “Shahjahan’s Farmans to the Dutch”, *PIHC* , Goa, 1987, pp.251-260; Farhat Hasan , “ Mughal officials at Surat and their relations with English and the Dutch merchants : Based on a collections of Persian Documents of the reign of Jahangir and Shahjahan” , *PIHC*, Golden Jubilee Session , 1989-90 , pp. 284-293; Ishrat Alam , “Dutch Trade in Awadh : Farmans of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb” , *PIHC* , Bhopal , 2001 , pp. 256-262.

2 *D. F. I. 1617/1623*, pp. 1-18.

*Nationale*³ and the Dutch and English Company records provide us valuable information regarding the various stages of relationship developing between the Mughal officials and VOC at Surat and various port-towns and in the hinterland during the first half of the seventeenth century.

Question of establishing horizontal relationships, of European Companies, with the Mughal authorities was both heterogeneous and continued almost impenetrable till the end. The dilemma of relations with the Portuguese and Dutch was more troublesome as it depended upon relations between England and Portugal and Holland as also the character and ardour of commercial rivalry among them at times.⁴

It is interesting to note that the dilemma of relations with the Dutch was not agreeable to such rapid and easy answers. These relations were acclimatized by the Dutch animosity to English hazards in the East Indies, enmity between England and Holland in Europe and the Anglo- Dutch rivalry for Indian goods at Surat and somewhere else in India.⁵

At Surat and Agra, Dutch relations with the Mughal authorities were marked as those of the English relations. The Dutch complained of Mughal randomness and autocratic attitude while they themselves depended on corporation in the trade with provinces in Asia under their military and political control.⁶

3 *Bibliothèque Nationale , Supp. Persian 482.* A microfilm copy is available in the library of Centre of Advanced Study, Deptt. of History , AMU , Aligarh.

4 *E.F. I.* 1634-36, pp. vii-ix.

5 *Ibid.*, 1651-54, pp .138-39, 214, 278. , *E.F.I.*1661-64, p. 331.

6 B. G. Gokhale, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

The governor's relationships with European Companies or traders remained on somewhat unstable basis. The Europeans were by no means as helpless as were the indigenous merchants. The steady aggravations were the question of the quantum of custom dues to be paid though these were apparently administered by Imperial agreements and contention by the governors on "presents" and bribes. The foreigners paid the inducement and gave gifts from time to time but at times the governor's greed developed disproportionate even for that place and age.⁷

On the governor's part it may be pointed out that very often he legitimately complained of piracy by Europeans though the Companies implicated rejected that the pirates were acting in their name or behalf. During the second half of the 17th century increasing European piracy in the Arabian Sea became a source of major and reverting collision. But, by and large, both the governors and Europeans knew the confines of each other's persistence and in spite of continual complaints; the Europeans prolonged their business in Surat because of the high profits they made in Indian trade. Therefore, these relationships, then, assorted from friendly to antagonistic the average being benevolent of each other.⁸

Gujarat became one of the most important theatre of the Company's activities in India in the early part of the seventeenth century. As early as 1602, two Dutch factors Hans de Wolff and Lafer representing the

7 *Ibid*, pp. 56-57.

8 *Ibid*, p. 57.

Middelburg Company (one of the so- called pre-companies which were merged in 1602 to form the Dutch East India Company) had travelled from Achin to Surat with two Indian ships⁹, with letters from Sultan Alauddin testifying to their credentials.¹⁰ They were welcomed in Surat and wrote hopeful reports, but in the course of a trip to Calicut in April 1603, they were tempted, or perhaps decoyed, to Calicut by promises of trade, and at Calicut they were handed over to the Portuguese by the local Raja of Tanur and carried to Goa and executed there.¹¹

The first contacts with Gujarat on behalf of the Company were made by two ships of the fleet of Admiral Matalief that called at Cambay probably in 1606. But David Van Deynsen, the Dutch factor, was reportedly harassed so much by the authorities at the instigation of the Portuguese that towards the end of 1607 he committed suicide at Burhanpur.¹²

The tragic end of Van Deynsen was not forgotten. Therefore, the VOC officials planned to attack Mughal ships to avenge Van Deynsen's death. The Mughal knew about their vulnerable position on the sea and realized the need of a compromise with the Dutch.¹³ However, in 1614 when the Mughal authorities in Surat found themselves engaged in a naval war with the

9 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 14; George D.Winius & Marcus Vink , *op. cit.*, p. 24.

10 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

11 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 14. W. H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32. George D Winus & Marcus Vink , *op. cit.*, pp.24-25.

12 *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*, *Ibid.*, For detail information about the harassment and death of Van Deynsen See Ann Bos Radwan , *op. cit.*, pp. 23-25.

13 Owen C. Kail , "Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence In India, p.164.

Portuguese, they invited the Dutch Company to support them.¹⁴ Khwaja Hasan Ali, *Shahbandar* of Surat invited the Dutch to reopen their commercial relations with Gujarat.¹⁵ Accordingly he wrote to the Dutch at Masulipatam offering to hand over the goods left behind by Van Deynsen.¹⁶

Van Deynsen's goods and personal effects eventually became the subject of much dispute. Being worth about 20,000 guilders the Dutch were anxious to secure it. Wemmer van Berchem, the founder of Fort Geldria at Pulicat threatened Mughal officers with reprisal.¹⁷ The *Shahbandar* in his rejoinder sent to the governor of Surat, Muqarrab Khan objected to the tenor and contents of the letter and, on the contrary, defended Mughal officials. He argued that the Mughals had protected Van Deynsen's goods by taking them into their custody. He proposed that the Dutch could either collect the goods or accept payment for them and further hinted that if one or more Dutch ships could be sent to Surat they could be used for capturing Daman and Diu from the Portuguese.¹⁸

In 1615, Hans de Haze, governor of the Coromandel factories instructed Pieter Gillis van Ravesteyn and Heindrich Adriaens (Hendrik Adriaansen) to go to Surat. Their task was two-fold: firstly, to reclaim the Company's goods that remained in Gujarat after the death of David van

14 K.N. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

15 Owen C. Kail, "Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India", pp. 164-65.

16 *Ibid*, p. 165

17 *Ibid*.

18 *Ibid*.

Deynsen, and Secondly, to gather detailed information on the commercial and noncommercial environment in Gujarat.¹⁹

When Van Ravesteyn and Adriaens arrived in Surat, it became apparent that except for a veneer of cordiality, the local authorities were displeased with the Dutch response to their request for aid.

The one remaining possibility for an equitable settlement of Dutch claims and the securing of trading concessions was through the personal influence of the new governor of Surat, Zulfikar Khan, representative of Prince Khurram, who was reputed to be a just man.²⁰ On August 16th (1615), Van Ravesteyn had an audience with Zulfikar Khan and at that time he informed the governor about lack of co-operation that the Dutch were experiencing regarding the return of their possession.²¹ Zulfikar Khan denied any knowledge of the apparent disloyalty of the other Mughal authorities, presenting gifts to the Dutch as proof of his sincerity.²²

On November 30th (1615) the secretary informed the Dutch that the Khan Khanan was prepared to reimburse them 4,000 *mahmudis* which should be collected from the governor in Surat.²³ Van Ravesteyn's estimate of the value of the goods was 20-30 thousand mahmudis but all that he could do was to refuse to accept the Khan Khanan's offer.²⁴ Unable to force the Mughals to

19 Ann Bos Radwan , *op. cit.*, p. 26.

20 *Ibid*, p. 27.

21 *Ibid*.

22 *Ibid*, p. 28.

23 *Ibid*, pp. 28-29.

24 *Ibid*, p. 29.

reconsider their decision, Van Ravesteyn departed for Masulipatam on 15th December, 1615.²⁵

But on his return to Coromandel in February 1616, Van Ravesteyn confirmed the rich potential of the Surat trade.²⁶ As he (Van Ravesteyn) commented that at Surat spices, camphor, benzoin, ivory, sandalwood, silk, zinc, tin, lead, copper, quicksilver, porcelain and other goods could be sold at good prices, and indigo and various textile would be procured.²⁷ This led Jan P. Coen the Governor General, to decide in favour of establishing a factory at Surat, and this task was entrusted to Pieter van den Broecke.²⁸ His efforts to secure trade privileges from the Mughal authorities were of no avail and finally the charge of Surat affairs was given to P. G. van Ravesteyn.²⁹

In Surat, the Dutch had no territorial jurisdiction or possession such as their fortress of Geldria at Pulicat. They lived as foreign merchants on the strength of the *firman* received from the Imperial court. This *firman*, by the way, was renewed 28 times between 1618 and 1729, and on each occasion considerable sums of money were paid for renewal of the company's privileges.³⁰

The first noteworthy success achieved from the Mughal authorities by the Dutch was a *Farman* of Jahangir.³¹ When in 1618 Jahangir visited

25 *Ibid*, p.32.

26 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 15. Van Ravesteyn had more success in acquiring information on the commercial environment of Gujarat , See Ann Bos Radwan., *op. cit.*, p. 29.

27 Karl Fischer, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-209

28 *Ibid*, p. 209.

29 *Ibid*.

30 Owen C. Kail; "Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India", p. 167.

31 Karl Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

Ahmadabad, Van Ravesteyn took benefit of the presence of Emperor and on the appeal of the Dutch granted a *Farman*.³² This document enclosed the following pledges.³³

For example in 1618, Van Ravesteyn succeeded in obtaining freedom of trade, reduction of custom duties, protection and patronage for safe passage of their goods from place to place, security of their lives and property and the privilege of deciding their own judicial matter and protection from religious conversions. If any of the Dutch was to die in India their effects were to be returned to their people.

There is also a reference to Prince Khurram's *nishan*³⁴ issued to the Dutch for trade at Surat in 1618.

The clauses of the *Farman* as reproduced in Prince Khurram's *nishan* are as follows:

The Dutch factors stationed at Surat were permitted to settle their business without any fear of molestation or interference and native merchants would be allowed to buy whatever they wanted from the Dutch. The effects of any deceased Dutchman would be allowed to be handed over to his people. Disputes among themselves would be settled by their own superiors and no Dutchman would be converted to Islam by force.³⁵

32 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 15; Karl Fischer, *op. cit.* p. 209.

33 Karl Fischer, *op. cit.* p. 209.

34 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 59: *Nishan* is wrongly designated as *Farman* noticed by the translator.

35 *Ibid.*

The Prince also issued a document addressed to the *mutasaddi* of Surat and the *Faujdars* of Burhanpur, Ahmedabad and Cambay asking that the Dutch be provided all protection and exempted from tolls on goods transported by them from Burhanpur to Cambay and Ahmedabad.³⁶

By 1620, the VOC had extended and consolidated its control over the spice trade which in turn increased the need for access to the cloth of western India.³⁷ The increasing European demand for indigo and saltpeter also contributed to the VOC's recognition of western India's commercial importance, as evidence of this growing demand, more capital, ships, and men were sent to Surat.³⁸ Thus the commercial success of the Dutch on this side of India dates from 1620, when Van den Broecke himself was posted at Surat, not as a mere factor but as 'Commander and Director', with the charge of the company's interests in Arabia and Persia, as well as in the north and west of India³⁹ and he stayed there till 1628. During his tenure a number of subordinate factories were established in Gujarat and elsewhere to obtain supplies of textiles and indigo.⁴⁰

However, the Dutch relations with the Mughal authorities soon took a violent turn. In April 1622, Dutch plundered ships carrying goods belonged to Indian merchants and noble of the stature of Asaf Khan, Prince Khurram's

36 *Ibid*, pp. 15 & 59.

37 Ann Bos Radwan, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

38 *Ibid*.

39 W. H. Moreland, "Pieter van den Broecke at Surat (1620-29)", vol. X, p. 236; *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 15.

40 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, pp. 15-16.

father-in-law.⁴¹ On March 31, 1622, Agha Ali, an agent of Saif Khan, governor of Cambay, requested Van den Broecke to return 3,855 ducats, 388 rials and some silver work, property of the governor that had been seized by the *Weesp* from the vessel at Chaul.⁴² It was explained to him that the Dutch had only captured ships belonging to persons who were both their as well as the Mughal's enemies.⁴³ When the Dutch failed to comply with the order, two Dutch factors named Hendrick Adriansz. and Marten Fredericks were arrested.⁴⁴

However, in retaliation to this attack on the Indian ships by the Dutch, the Mughal authorities took action against the English factors at Agra and arrested them. To that the English complained that the Indians could not distinguish between the Dutch and the English. The Mughal suspicion was that the two companies shared their joint profits.⁴⁵

The ships [which belonged to Dabhol, Chaul and Diu etc.] that were attacked carried the goods belonging to a number of Muslim and *bania* traders of Ahmadabad, Cambay and other places.⁴⁶ This attack compelled the local authorities to prohibit the Dutch and the English from trading at Ahmadabad, Broach and Agra.⁴⁷ It was only after Van den Broecke paid a large indemnity that the Cambay factory could be recovered.⁴⁸

41 *Ibid*, pp. 191-92; Owen C. Kail, "The Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India", p. 167.

42 Ann Bos Radwan, *op. cit.*, p. 55; *D.F.I.* 1617-23, pp. 191-93.

43 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 196.

44 *Ibid*.

45 *Ibid*, pp. 196-97.

46 *Ibid*.

47 *Ibid*, pp. 210-28

48 Owen C. Kail, "The Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India", pp.167-68.

Speaking about administration, Wollebrand Geleynssen de Jongh found, “The administration of the town is vested mainly in three chief individuals, the *governor*, the *Kazi* and thirdly, the *Kotwal* or *Provost*. There are also two or three *monsterheeren* (inspectors) who inspect and train the soldiers in all parts of Gujarat. All merchant, but particularly the Dutch , English and Portuguese, must make friends of these inspectors because their letters of recommendation are indispensable for all ordinary journeys with merchandise..., and without letters from these inspectors, or from governors, it would be impossible to pass without paying guard-fees, or [?] *Chauki* as they say; but payment is avoided by such letters, which are of the nature of a pass, or in their language *Formanna*.”⁴⁹

He further noted that “ the governor of Ahmadabad is held in great respect in all parts and towns of Gujarat, and merchants, particularly the Dutch and the English must therefore, keep on friendly terms with him, as much as with the governor of Gujarat and this can not be done without presents. In Gujarat, the Dutch East India Company had established a vast network of factories and appointed officials to take the interests of the Company. They had to deal with different Mughal officials at different levels. While on the one hand they had to establish relations with the Emperor and governor, on the other they sought the help of the local subaltern officers. The VOC officials interacted with the Mughal officers of different ranks ever since

49 Extracts tr. By W. H. Moreland, “A Dutch Account of Mogul Administrative Methods”, *JIH*, IV, (1926), Madras , pp. 75-76.

they landed in Gujarat to pursue their trade. The Dutch and the English had their factories in all prominent cities and towns of Gujarat like Surat, Broach, Baroda, Cambay, Nausari, Dabhol”.⁵⁰ It appears that the VOC officials stuck to these principles while dealing with the officers in future.

As we have already mentioned that during the second half of the 17th century increasing European piracy in the Arabian Sea became a source of major and reverting collision.⁵¹ The disagreement between the European merchants and the Mughal government also caused turmoil in Surat from time to time.⁵²

For instance, in March 1622, some local merchants claimed that the English company had extorted money from a junk of Chaul. The English Company argued that the vessel was captured not by them but by the Dutch.⁵³ By April 7th, the English factors had convinced Rustam Khan, the governor of Ahmadabad, that, in the dominions of the Great Mughal at all events, the Dutch and the English ‘nations’ were trading independently, yet when, a few days later, Halstead, the English chief, went to Rustam Khan to lodge a complain against detention of his colleague and their broker by one of the aggrieved merchants. Rustam Khan in open *darbar* declared that the Dutch were the only culprits and ordered the English to be released on giving

50 *Ibid*, pp. 79-80.

51 B. G. Gokhale, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

52 *Ibid*, p. 23.

53 *E.F.I.* 1622-23, p.xvi.

security.⁵⁴ Here, we find that the Dutch relation with this governor was not good.

On October 31, 1623, Saif Khan, governor of Surat requested Van den Broecke, the Dutch factor, to recover the Mughal junks and men from the control of the English and give protection to Mughal sea-borne commerce in future against such ‘piracies’ by presenting them the monopoly of the trade.⁵⁵ Van den Broecke pleaded his incapability to make a promise to expel the English from the Mughal territories (since only Batavia was competent to handle the matter). Thereupon, Saif Khan in a rage declared that the Dutch were in association with the English. The Dutch factories at Surat and Broach were ordered to be encircled, the warehouses forced open and an inventory of the goods made. The same day the factor Hendrick Adrianssen, who arrived from Cambay with goods, was also arrested.⁵⁶ Five days later, Khan-i-Azam who was the father-in-law of the young Prince Bulaki asked Van den Broecke for help and was forced to provide Dutch assistance.⁵⁷

On 23 November, 1623, the English came to correspond with the Surat Muslims. They were given the equivalent of 350,000 guilders for the blood-coral that they had not been allowed to sell for the last two years. Other outstanding claims at Agra, Ahmedabad and Burhanpur were also settled... and Van den Broecke thought that the accord was heavily in favour of the

54 *Ibid.*

55 *Ibid*, p. xxxi.

56 *D.F.I.*1617-23, p.283; *E.F.I.*1622-23, p. xxxi; W. H. Moreland; “Pieter van den Broecke at Surat (1620-29)”, *JIH*, vol.xi, Madras, 1932, pp. 3-4.

57 *E.F.I.*1622-23, pp.xxxi-xxxii; *D.F.I.*1617-23, pp. 283-84.

English company's servants in respect of their private trade rather than the company itself.⁵⁸

Soon after the conclusion of this accord, Van den Broecke was again summoned by Nawab Saif Khan and told about the removal of all restrictions on the Dutch trade.⁵⁹ Once an adequate amount of textiles had been provided for the southern quarters for a period for 2 to 3 years, it might not be inadvisable to take revenge from the Muslims in some form. That would persuade them to treat the Dutch better than the English.⁶⁰

It is interesting to note that on November, 20th 1623 complains that the Dutch had monopolized all carts.⁶¹ And in 1624 Van den Broecke assisted Surat junks against the English by flying Dutch flags on them.⁶²

On 30th March, 1625, Van den Broecke sent senior factor Hendrick Adrianssen Vapour, with a cassowary bird from Amboyna, on an embassy to the Emperor Jahangir to obtain a new *farman*, he went with the caravan by way of Ahmadabad, at the urgent request of the governor Saif Khan.⁶³ In Gujarat documents there is also a reference about bird, as It account that the Dutch have brought an ostrickling ("black in colour with feathers radiating like sun") from their country (*Vilayat-i-khud*) to present to the court or Jahangir.⁶⁴

58 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 284.

59 *Ibid*; For more detail see W. H. Moreland; "Pieter van den Broecke at Surat (1620-29)", *JIH*, vol.xi, p. 4.

60 *D.F.I.* 1617-23, p. 284.

61 *E.F.I.* 1617-23, p.324.

62 *Ibid.*, 1624-29, pp. vi-vii, 6-7; W.H. Moreland , "Pieter van den Broecke at Surat (1620-29)", *JIH* , vol. xi, p. 6.

63 W. H. Moreland , "Pieter van den Broecke at Surat (1620-29)", *JIH* , vol. xi , p. 11.

64 *F.* 129(a).

In 1627, Shahjahan ascended the throne and he granted trade concession to the European merchants when they presented him rare and novel articles and the *Batavia Journal* of 1643 tells us that the Dutch merchant presented a copper lantern to Shahjahan. He was delighted and granted important trade concessions.⁶⁵ But both the Dutch and English asserted inventiveness in this respect. For instance, Van den Broecke, the Dutch factor at Surat, asserts that he was the first European from Surat to visit Shahjahan.⁶⁶ On the other hand, according to Kerridge, the English were the first to do so, while the Dutch at Surat presented him a belated welcome with gifts and were positively received.⁶⁷

In this connection, the Dutch received from the Mughal authorities was a *farman* from Shahjahan⁶⁸, which is available in Gujarat documents.⁶⁹ This document contained information about their relations with the Mughal officials during different points of time.

One of the documents, a *Farman* issued on 19th December, 1627⁷⁰ declared that the *mutasaddi* of *pargana* Olpar in Sarkar Broach and also the *rahdars* (road officials) on the Burhanpur, Ahmadabad route should desist from collecting tolls (ie. *Rahdari* and *Chaukidari*) from the Dutch and provide

65 W. H. Moreland, *op.cit.*, p. 70.

66 Voyage, p. 107. (Extracted from *E.F.I.* 1624-29, p. 205n.).

67 *E.F.I.* 1624-29, p. xxv.

68 The translation of the *Farman* is given in M. Jawaid Akhtar, "Shahjahan's Farmans to the Dutch", pp. 251-260.

69 *Bibliothèque Nationale Supp. Persian* 482.

70 *Ibid*, ff. 88 (b)-89 (a).

them carts on hire and similar *Farman* was also provided to the English.⁷¹ This document was issued at a time when there was a dispute regarding the customs which the Dutch and the English had to pay at both Swally and Surat.⁷² Then on the request of the Dutch, another order was procured which exempted them from paying dual customs to the Mughal official. Thus the Dutch were possibly quite pleased with this *farman* because their major demands were addressed.

In 1628, Johan van Hasselt, who succeeded Pieter van den Broecke as a director of Surat, describes the situation in Surat: “The moors were not pleased that the Dutch began to trade in tobacco and rice etc. which they brought to Persia...”⁷³ Van Hasselt also described that it was unsafe for them to walk on the streets of Surat, Dutchmen became so unpopular.⁷⁴

The governor also resorted to the practice of extorting gifts from the English and the Dutch. On 1 January, 1628, English factors reported that the governor of Broach, Yaqub Khan had taken away lead to his house.⁷⁵ And also his son-in-law, Mansur Khan had demanded that both the English and the Dutch should pay 20 *covids* of broad cloth. The Dutch broker had given a part of the demand in the absence of Wollebrand Geleynssen de Jongh, the Dutch factors. He threatened the Dutch of dire consequence. Then Sultan Khurram

71 *Ibid*, f. 89 (a).

72 Farhat Hasan, *State and locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c.1572-1730*, Cambridge, First South Asian Edition 2006, p. 115.

73 Owen C. Kail, *Dutch in India*, p. 70.

74 *Ibid*.

75 *E.F.I.* 1624-29, p. 190.

issued an order and sent Nahir Khan to enquire about Yaqub Khan's excesses.⁷⁶

European piracy began in the Indian waters with the Portuguese. The Dutch and the English followed diligently in their path. They did not avoid using piratical measures in seizing Indian ships at sea.⁷⁷ Therefore, the entry of the Dutch and the English and their quarrels with the Portuguese prosecuted in the waters of north-western India and southern Arabia unsettled the trade and caught the Indian merchants of Surat in the middle of this conflict.⁷⁸

For instance, when in 1630, the new Viceroy of Goa, the Conde de Linhares, sent a representative to the *mutasaddi*⁷⁹ of Surat with the request to expel the English and the Dutch from Mughal India in order to restore their trading opportunities at Surat.⁸⁰ But the negotiations proved abortive. A Surat vessel, the *Musahi*, returning rich from the Red Sea, was seized on arrival by the Portuguese, who hoped to seize its still richer consort, the *Shahi* belonging

76 *Ibid*, pp. 190-91.

77 Ruby Maloni , “ Intra-European Rivalries in the Indian Ocean Trade: A Study of the Surat Factory Records (1630-1668)”, *PIHC* , 47th Session , Srinagar , 1986 (1987) , pp. 357-358.

78 Ashin Das Gupta and M.N.Pearson , *Indian and the Indian Ocean 1500-1800* , Oxford , 1987 , p. 110.

79 The *Mutasaddi* of Surat was referred to as the governor by the English. In 1630, this personage was Mir Musa, Muizzul Mulk. He traded extensively with the English. The latter spoke of him as “a friend to merchants... but as hard as flinte in his bargain, but a good paymaster.” (E.F.I. 1622-23, p. 329). Mir Musa was equally friendly with the Dutch. The steady progress of Surat as a port is shown by the fact that he found it worth his while to give a large sum to the government to secure his continuance in office; See Ruby Maloni , *European Merchant Capital and the Indian Economy Surat Factory Records 1630-1668* , New Delhi , 1992 , p. 106n.2.

80 *E.F.I.* 1630-33, p. viii.

to Shahjahan.⁸¹ At the urgent request of the Surat officials, Thomas Rastell sent the fleet on September 26, 1630 itself to meet and escort the *Shahi* into harbour. The cruise proved fruitless, and the fleet returned on October 14, without having seen the missing vessel or the Dutch squadron from Batavia with whom they were supposed to unite.⁸²

Mir Musa had suggested that if the English ships were to meet the Dutch before locating the *Shahi*, the fleet should be divided, part returning with some Dutchmen, to Surat to land their cargo, and the rest remaining to convoy the *Shahi* and other *junks*. Thomas Rastell in this letter agreed with this, “even if the Dutch refused to let any of their ships remain behind to protect the Indian vessels...”⁸³

Therefore, Mir Musa had negotiated a peace with the Portuguese, who agreed to surrender the ship *Musahi* and their other captures in return for the release of the goods and men seized by the Indian authorities. The Portuguese dropped their demand for the expulsion of the English and the Dutch from the Mughal territories. But on the other hand, they secured a promise that the Indian *junks* should, as in earlier years, take out Portuguese passes.⁸⁴

As we have already mentioned that the Europeans were by no means helpless like the indigenous merchants. These foreign traders gave gifts and

81 Ruby Maloni, *European Merchant Capital and the Indian Economy: Surat Factory Records 1630-1668*, p. 106n.3; See also Shireen Moosvi, “Mughal shipping at Surat in the First half of Seventeenth Century,” *PIHC*, Calcutta, 1991, reproduced in Shireen Moosvi, *People, Taxation and Trade in Mughal India*, Delhi, 2008, pp.260-262 where *shahi*’s biographical sketch has been given by the author.

82 *Ibid.*

83 *Ibid*, p. 107 n.7.

84 *Ibid*, p.188n.3.

also paid bribes to the governors from time to time to seek favour.⁸⁵ For instance, English

Factors reported that Mir Musa , governor of Surat always extorted gifts or presents from the foreign merchants. He declined permission until and unless the English would give him a present like the Dutch had done.⁸⁶ At this time at least governor's relation with the Dutch was better than with the English.

Mir Musa was pleased with gifts and presents (12 Nov., 1633) from the Dutch factors to such an extent that he gave a fine garden near Surat worth 10-12000 *mahmudis*.⁸⁷

There was an increasing demand for indigo from India, both the English and the Dutch companies at Surat were major buyers for its export. In 1633, Shahjahan monopolized indigo trade. The English and the Dutch Company stopped purchasing indigo at artificially raised prices.⁸⁸

It is reported that in 1634, Mir Musa was given the title of Muiz-ul-Mulk by the emperor Shahjahan.⁸⁹ Towards the end of 1635, Mir Musa (Muiz-ul-Mulk) was recalled and in his place Hakim Masih-uz-Zaman was appointed.⁹⁰ In 1636 Mir Musa was appointed as a governor of Cambay.⁹¹

85 B.G.Gokhale , *op. cit.* , pp. 56-57.

86 *E.F.I.* 1630-33, p. 148.

87 *Ibid*, p. 326.

88 *Ibid*, pp. 325, 327-28. *E.F.I.* 1634-36, p. 7.

89 *Ibid*, 1634-36, p. 61.

90 *Ibid*, p.xv.

91 *Ibid*, pp.204, 263; See Athar Ali, *The Apparatus of Empire, Awards of Ranks, Offices and Titles to the Mughal Nobility (1574-1658)*, Delhi, 1985, p. 130, S.1106.

The Dutch were pestered by Mir Musa, the governor of Surat in 1634 and had started purchasing horses brought from Persia for himself at a lower tax, but that had reduced advantage of importing them to Surat.⁹² The English had started sending them to Coromandel to avoid losses at Surat and the Dutch had resorted to sending them directly to Batavia for selling them at Achin, Mataram etc. where they hoped to gain more profit.⁹³

Towards the end of 1634, Muiz-ul-Mulk, the governor of Surat, finding the failure of indigo monopoly, petitioned the Emperor to change the policy.⁹⁴ Thus, on April 14, 1635, indigo monopoly was dissolved by the King.⁹⁵ At the same time was read another *Parwana*, declared freedom of trade in indigo trade.⁹⁶

However, prices were still too high to tempt the English merchants to invest. Later in the year some purchases were made at Ahmadabad, but these were chiefly entered into for the purpose of interfering with the investments of the Dutch. The same unfriendly rivalry took place at Agra.⁹⁷

The changed attitude of the English towards the Portuguese, and Methwold's schemes in relation to Ahmadabad and Cambay, excited both anger and apprehension in the minds of the Surat officials and merchants.⁹⁸

Receiving news of Anglo- Portuguese cease-fire from Mir Musa, the governor

92 *Generale Missiven Deel I 1610-1638*, p. 467, f.n.I.

93 *Ibid.*

94 B.G.Gokhale, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

95 *E.F.I.* 1634-36, pp. xi, 138, 141.

96 *Ibid*, pp. xi, 173.

97 *Ibid*, pp. xi-xii.

98 *Ibid*, p. xii.

of Surat, the Emperor sent a reply (April, 1635) in which he expressed strong disapproval of the new alliance and directed Mir Musa to inquire from the Dutch chief at Surat whether his superiors at Batavia would concur to enter into alliance with the Mughals for driving the Portuguese and English out of Mughal India, in return for the grant of identical commercial privileges with the English. But the authorities at Batavia, however, were not inclined to allow themselves to be drawn into any entanglements of the King. Pieterszoon was therefore instructed (August 1635) to inform Shahjahan that the Dutch could not engage in hostilities against the English without permission from Holland, and the proposal was discarded. This brought Shahjahan's scheme to an end.⁹⁹

The Mughal officers sometimes favoured one company against the other for example; the Dutch complained that the governor of Baroda was displaying a partisan attitude towards the English.¹⁰⁰

In 1636, Hakim Masih-uz-Zaman desired a *farman* to prevent both the English and the Dutch from bringing arms into the town of Surat. Mir Musa on behalf of the Companies pleaded that they were bringing arms to protect their caravans against plunder. But Afzal Khan did not agree¹⁰¹ and Asaf Khan Khan-i-Khanan *Sipah Salar*¹⁰² assured the English that he was trying to obtain a *Farman* “ to confirm all privileges which was granted in the Kings

99 *Ibid*, pp. xii-xiii.

100 *Ibid*, 1634-36, pp. 270-71

101 *Ibid*, pp. 288-89.

102 Athar Ali , *The Apparatus of the Empire* , p. 128.

first which when it comes to my hands I shall better know thereof....”¹⁰³ The *Nawab* had sent his *Parwanna*(*Parwana*) for Bandar Lahri, to the *Shahbandar* that till the time of monsoon the English were permitted to trade without establishing a factory.¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile, the Dutch had received a *Farman* confirming privileges and permissions.¹⁰⁵ The governor Hakim Masih-uz-Zaman appeared well disposed towards the Dutch.¹⁰⁶

On 23rd February 1637, Shahjahan issued another *Farman* imposing certain restrictions on the Dutch and the English. A captain of superior rank of each was always to remain at Surat. All men upon disembarking should not bring in their arms, or deposit them with Mughal authorities to be reclaimed upon departure. An amount equal to Rs. 12 lakhs should always be invested in the Mughal territories and no frigate should be built by them in India.¹⁰⁷

English factors reported that in 1639, Mir Musa used to detain the Dutch goods for considerable period of time and then purchase at a lower cost than the market rate. In this manner he profited by 12,000 *mahmudis* in a business in gold brought by the Dutch from China the year before. This meant corresponding loss for the Dutch Company.¹⁰⁸

Mir Musa tried, during his reign as governor, to accumulate money by all means. English factors reported that “In your costumes you are

103 *E.F.I.* 1634-36, p. 289.

104 *Ibid.*

105 *Ibid.*

106 *Generale Missiven Deel I* , 1610-1638, p. 562, f.n.I

107 *Supp. Persian No. 482*, ff. 68 (b)-69 (a). See also *E.F.I.* 1637-41, p. 108.

108 *E.F.I.* 1637-41, p. 207.

exceedingly injured, and not you only, but the Dutch, yea, all other merchants, whose goods this governor, Mazel Mulck (Muizz-ul-Mulk), makes no scruple to rate at double their cost, thinking by this means to raise the somme he covenanted to pay the King, which more then doubly exceeds what his praedecessor agreed for. Besides which force exercized in the matter of customes, he practizeth another more prejudiciall then the former...., he taketh on each maund of goods sometimes two, three, yea, four rupees, according as they are in value”.¹⁰⁹

In 1639, Sarkhej indigo had declined in quality and had become dearer due to the competition between the Dutch (who had purchased 2,800 bales) and the English. The governor of Ahmadabad succeeded in selling “a small quantity belonging to his wife” to both the English and the Dutch.¹¹⁰

The Mughal authorities tried to take corrective actions against malpractices common in the dye-business. Such an event has been referred to by the English factors, when the case of adulteration in indigo was brought to the notice of Azam Khan, the great governor of Ahmadabad, that the indigo manufacturers were adulterating it by mixing sand and oil. He (Azam Khan) responded by calling a meeting of 100 such manufacturers and admonished them and threatened that adulteration would cost their lives. It had a salutary impact on indigo manufacturers because for sometimes such reports were not

109 *Ibid*, p. 279.

110 *Ibid*, p. 111.

received.¹¹¹ It had desired results, in the following years, the quality of Sarkhej indigo largely improved.¹¹²

The practice of increased valuation of goods for assessment of custom dues, known as *Sawai*, was very common.¹¹³ There were no rules for valuation of merchandise. Thus on the request of the Dutch, for proper assessment of prices and to check the abuse of overvaluation, Shahjahan issued a *Farman* on 5th November, 1642 A.D. According to the *Farman*, goods purchased at Akbarabad (Agra) were to be assessed after raising the cost price by 20 % ('ten-twelfth') and those purchased at Ahmedabad by 5 % ('ten-half'). And the assessment of goods bought at Surat, Baroda and other places in the vicinity of these places was to be at their cost price stated in the account book (*bihchak*).¹¹⁴

The biggest crisis that faced the Mughals in respect of freedom of navigation was in the 1640's when the Dutch attempted to take on the mantle of the Portuguese to control and redirect Indian Ocean trade.¹¹⁵ After the Dutch conquest of Malacca in 1641, trade connections of Gujarati merchants with the archipelago was disturbed.¹¹⁶ The Dutch denied passes to Indian ships leaving the ports of Gujarat and Bengal to sail to Southeast Asia ports,

111 *Ibid*, 1637-41, p. 274.

112 *Ibid*. 1642-45, p. 5.

113 *Letter Received*, vol. III (1615), p. 5; *E.F.I.* 1622-23, pp. xxx-xxxi. *E.F.I.* 1637-41, p. 207; *E.F.I.* 1642-45, p. 99; *Ms. Blochet 482 BN*, ff. 139 (a)- 140 (a) .

114 *Ms. Blochet 482, BN*, ff. 7 (b)-8 (a), 45 (a). The translation of the *Farman* is given in Jawaid Akhtar, "Shahjahan's Farmans to the Dutch", *PIHC* , 48 Session (Goa 1987), New Delhi , 1988, pp. 251-260. This *Farman* has also been referred to by the English factors, which informs us that the prices of goods purchased at Ahmadabad was to increased by 10 % which, in the *Farman*, as it is quite evident, the rate affirmed is 5 % . *E.F.I.* 1642-45, pp. 159-60.

115 Satish Chandra, *Medieval India*, vol. II, p. 415.

116 George D. Winus & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.* , pp. 63-64.

on the ostensible plea that they were at war with the rulers of Aceh, Perak and Kedah.¹¹⁷ It was in June 1647, after concluding monopolistic treaties with these local rulers, the *Gouverneur-Generaal* and the Council declared the whole area as off limits to other traders.¹¹⁸ Dutch showed that they meant business by blockading Surat, and seizing ships as prizes. The Mughals retaliated on land by seizing all the Dutch factories, and arresting their agents. This led to hostilities which continued between 1648 and 1652.¹¹⁹

When passes for Aceh were refused, the Mughal authorities banned the loading of the Dutch ships at the port. In April 1648, the local Dutch factory was stormed by a force of 150 men, in which one Dutchman, Andries van Deutekom was killed, two others wounded and goods worth f. 27,000 plundered.¹²⁰ The Dutch claimed that this action was contrived by the *mutasaddi*, Mir Musa.¹²¹

Johan Tack, Company's servant, made representation to the Court asking for the restitution of the plundered goods. Thus, with the help of one of *amirs* at the Court, Haqiqat Khan, who was generally favourably inclined towards the Company, an audience with Emperor Shahjahan was obtained. To compensate the Company for the plundered goods, the Emperor Shahjahan

117 Satish Chandra, *Medieval India*, vol. II, p. 415.

118 George D. Winus & Marcus Vink, *op.cit.*, pp. 63-64; English factors reported that in 1647, Dutch decree at Surat to the result that they shall encounter every ships going to Achin., *E.F.I.* 1646-50, p. 163.

119 Satish Chandra, *Medieval India*, vol. II, p. 415.

120 Van Santen, *De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Gujarat en Hindustan*, pp. 21-24; quoted in Om Prakash, *The New Cambridge History of India: European Commercial Enterprise in Pre-colonial India*, Cambridge, 1998, p. 142; See also George D. Winus & Marcus Vink, *op.cit.*, p. 64.

121 George D. Winus & Marcus Vink, *op.cit.*, p. 64.

promised to issue a *Farman*. But a delegation of the Surat merchants arrived at the Court, before the *Farman* could be issued. They could not prevent the grant of the *Farman*, but ensured that it was a very different kind of document. The Dutch factors saw no point in even bringing the document to the attention of the *mutasaddi*. Though, the Company then decided to retaliate on the sea. Thus, in September 1649, it captured two richly laden Gujarati ships returning from Mocha carrying a cargo worth more than one and a half million guilders. Following negotiations between the Company, the local authorities and some of the leading merchants of the city, the Company's twofold demand for compensation for the plundered goods and a promise to stop the Surat ships's attempted voyages to Aceh , Perak , Kedah and Phuket , etc. was accepted. In return, the Company released the seized ships and the cargo to the lawful owners.¹²²

The arrangement lasted only for a short while because (in the words of the *Gouverneur-Generaal* and Council at Batavia): '... the Company has encountered many troubles and noteworthy obstacles in its outstanding affairs with Coromandel, Bengal, Surat, and Persia, as a result of the refusal of passes to the Moors...' ¹²³ As a first concession, that part of the prohibition applicable to Atjeh was lifted in 1651 and two years later two Company servants (who had probably been bribed) complied with the *firman* of the

122 Van Santen, *De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Gujarat en Hindustan* pp. 21-24; quoted in Om Prakash , *European Commercial Enterprise in Pre-colonial India*, p. 142; See also George D. Winus & Marcus Vink , *op. cit.*, p. 64.

123 ARA, VOC 673, *Resolutie G G & R*, 27.3.1651; Quoted in George D. Winus & Marcus Vink, *op.cit.*, p. 64.

Mughal Emperor, Shahjahan, obliging the Company to extend pass to all Indian vessels to Atjeh's and other quarters.¹²⁴ By 1652, the Dutch could issue more passes freely. Indian trade with south-east Asia was thus resumed.¹²⁵

We may now turn to the greatest broker and independent merchants. The greatest broker for the Dutch was Mohandas Parekh. Another Dutch broker was Trikam who worked in Surat as well as Broach buying textiles and indigo for the Dutch. Independent merchants were largely concentrated in and around Agra, Ahmadabad and Surat. The greatest of these was the Jain merchant Prince Virji Vora.¹²⁶

Virji Vora was a leading merchant and banker in his own right, able to deal freely with the English, the Dutch and the French as well as other Indian merchants on his own terms. In 1633 he offered to buy 12,000 *tolas* (1 ounce= 2 ½ total) brought in by the English fleet that year at the rate of 21 ½ *mahmudis* a piece, and 20 *mahmudis* a piece for the 20 shilling piece. He also bought quantities of ivory, English and Dutch textiles, quicksilver, vermillion and copper.¹²⁷

In April 1648, he bought large quantities of cloves from the Dutch at Rs.45 per maund and sold them at Rs.62 to 65 per maund. A year later, in 1649, he was reportedly pressing the Dutch to fulfill their contract for supplying him with spices which they had brought from Java and the other

124 ARA, VOC 1201, OBP 1654, fls. 729V-731V , *Translaat vanuit het Perzisch Van de Achinse Passen*, 1.3.1653; quoted in George D. Winus & Marcus Vink , *op. cit.*, p. 64.

125 *Ibid.*

126 B. G. Gokhale, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

127 *Ibid*, pp. 138-39.

islands. He wanted to buy the whole quantity worth fl.10, 000. This practice continued in later years also¹²⁸ In 1650 Virji Vora, in alliance with the Dutch broker Mohandas Parekh, bought up all the goods brought by the Dutch to Surat.¹²⁹ Dutch often sold selected goods from the cargoes brought by them from Indonesia to Parekh. This included spices and tin. On one occasion, in January 1654, he tried to pass off Dutch goods as those of Muslim merchants in order to circumvent the English blockade.¹³⁰

M. Athar Ali pointed out that the Mughal nobles by virtue of their Jagirs were able to accumulate vast fortunes but persons like Mir Jumla and Shaista Khan were exceptions in the sense that they indulged in trading activities.¹³¹

Shaista Khan during his viceroyalty indulged in saltpeter trade by taking away the saltpeter from the Dutch factors on 23rd September 1647.¹³²

Now the strict tentacles of Shaista Khan comprehended the cloth trade of the European merchants. For instance, in October 4, 1647, English factors reported that, “the Dutch are in a like predicament, having in their house vast quantities of cloth which they had intended to make into ‘cloth’, & c. If the ‘chinters’ either compound with the governor or agree to work at ‘Mummadavad, the factors will do their best to keep ahead of the Dutch, in

128 *Ibid*, p. 143.

129 *Ibid*.

130 *Ibid*, p. 125.

131 M. Athar Ali , *Mughal nobility under Aurangzeb*, Delhi, 1997, pp. 155-56.

132 *E.F.I.* 1646-50, pp. 156-57.

order that their goods may be brought to market earlier.”¹³³ Thus, the Dutch were facing troubles.

As a result, the English and the Dutch factors asserted that “Shaista Khan has wholly ruined the trade of Ahmadabad by oppressing and plundering men of all qualities, especially merchants, either directly by seizing upon their goods, or indirectly by sharing in their profit of whatever was bought or sold.”¹³⁴ The Dutch merchants complained that Shaista Khan at Ahmadabad had extorted money from their saltpeter buyers.¹³⁵

In 1651, the Dutch were selling their coral at such a low price that they had quite spoilt the market. Shaista Khan forced the Dutch to sell tapestry to him at a price of 20 rupees per yard.¹³⁶

On December, 1652, it is reported that the “Coral has been either sold here or dispatched to Agra, ten chests will sell yearly, if the quality be good. The tapestry is still on hand. Shaista Khan, for whom they were intended, has been notified and has promised to send his man to see them. The quicksilver was in better condition than usual, but the market was depressed, first by the sales of private traders and then by the arrival of a Dutch ship with a very large quantity. On getting private notice of this, they at once sold all their stock for what they could get.”¹³⁷

133 *Ibid*, pp. 160-61.

134 *Ibid*, p. 187.

135 *Ibid*, p. xvii.

136 *Ibid*, 1651-54, p. 42

137 *Ibid*, p. 140.

The letter from Surat to the English Company says, “The governor of Ahmadabad, pretending orders from the King to that effect, refuses to allow any saltpetre to be exported thence, and has further stopped all coming through from Agra.”¹³⁸

In 1654, the Dutch wanted to obtain saltpeter from Shaista Khan. The Dutch factors were not in favour of giving exorbitant bribe asked for releasing saltpeter. At the same time the Dutch factors “were endeavouring to procure a royal *Farman* from Agra for the release of not only Ahmadabad saltpeter but also that stopped at Patna by the governor there. Meanwhile Prince Murad Bakhsh, fourth son of Shahjahan, replaced Shaista Khan. Who had been reappointed viceroy of Gujarat, from whom factors expected for better dealings. Though such a *Farman* means an outlay at court, it is better to spend money thus than to bribe the local officials, who are never satisfied.”¹³⁹

As regards the saltpeter detained at Ahmadabad, they took the opportunity of Shaista Khan’s approaching departure to negotiate its release and deferred the purchase of further articles needed by the Company till the arrival of Murad Bakhsh. He permitted them to purchase saltpeter freely.¹⁴⁰ However, when part had been received and was being refined, an order came from the King’s *Diwan* prohibiting them from buying or transporting any saltpeter from thence.¹⁴¹ In this way, saltpeter became the monopoly of the King.

138 *Ibid*, p. 215.

139 *Ibid*, pp. 251-52.

140 *Ibid*, 1651-54, pp. 299-300.

141 *Ibid*, p. 300.

On 13 December, 1655, Anthony Smith wrote from Ahmadabad, advising the Surat factors that, “Haveing, after much trouble with the petulant Dewan, Rymutt Ckawne [Rahmat Khan], who is almost madd hee can not force neither the English nor the Dutch to take the King’s saltpeter, gott leave to send away the Caphila [Caravan:*Kafila*], he had dispatched to them the goods provided at Ahmadabad, together with those received from Agra. They were under the escort of twenty-five soldiers, who were to be paid one rupee each on arrival at Surat.”¹⁴²

The relation of the Dutch and the English with the Mughal authorities were strained in Surat over the question of sale of arms and ammunitions by these two European companies to the Mughals in Surat. For instance, (in 1657) Murad Bakhsh had sought the help of the Dutch.¹⁴³ The rumour had spread that the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan had died and his youngest son, Murad Bakhsh who as the ‘vice-king’ ruled over the lower country for his father, seized the castle of Surat, to hold it in case of fight for the crown started among his brothers. He had promised the Dutch East India Company officials a freedom from all kinds of tolls at Surat port in return for of their support in capturing the fort.¹⁴⁴ Since the Dutch had realised that the possibility of Murad Bakhsh maintaining himself was remote the offer was not heeded.¹⁴⁵

142 *Ibid.* 1655-60, pp. 17-18.

143 W. Ph. Coolhaas, ed. *Generale Missiven Van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (henceforth G.M.),* S-Gravenhage, 1968, vol. III , 1655-1674, p. 227. For detail information about the assistance of both the Dutch and the English in capturing the castle of Surat ; See chapter 5th .

144 Rijcklof Van Goens, *Commissaris en Veld Overste der Oost-Indische Compagnie, en Zijn Arbeids Veld* 1653/54 en 1657/58, Groningen, 1916, p. 193.

145 Rijcklof Van Goens , p. 193.

According to Mandelslo, the governor and the custom officials both forced the merchants to part with at the price they thought fit to offer, those goods and commodities, which the merchants had brought for their own private use.¹⁴⁶

On the whole it appears that the European merchants found a conducive atmosphere in general with little intermittent obstacles.

146 Mandelslo's *Travels*, pp. 2-3.

CUSTOMS & TRANSIT DUES

Customs and transit duties (*rahdari*), even though important duties, were not the Mughal Empire's main source of revenue, but the Mughals nevertheless took lively ladder to promote trade. In the early years of Akbar's reign traders from many parts of the world engaged in trade with India without any complexity. The roads were safe, traveling comparatively trouble-free, while, *tamgha* (stamp tax for import), *baj* (toll levied by the road patrol), *rahdari*, *Peshkash*, were remitted: no taxes were realised from merchants.¹ The interest of the Mughal Emperors in trade and commerce was responsible for the remission of taxes on merchandise. From Jahangir to Aurangzeb, every Mughal ruler on his accession ordered the remission of the imports and duties levied by his predecessor.²

The customs charges and transit duties were for revenue purposes. Foreign merchants enjoyed exemption, while native merchants had to pay both (the customs charges and transit duties). Foreign-merchants had to give costly presents to the King which more than made up for the advantages they enjoyed from exemption. At ports, duties were *advalorem* and transit duties were on the load without reference to the value of the goods. Transit-duties were charged in each sub-division the load passed through.³

1 Arif Qandahari, *Tarikh-i-Akbari*, Rampur, 1962, p.38.

2 Gulbadan Begam, *Humayun-Namah*, ed. R.A. Nadvi, Lahore, 1966, p.166.

3 D. Pant, *The Commercial Policy of the Mughals*, Delhi, rept. 1978, p.89.

“In spite of repeated prohibition by the rulers, transit duties were levied by local officers and *zamindars* in distant provinces. The system of farming out various sources of revenue greatly aggravated the evil”.⁴

Chawki (a Customs post) was established at Swally during the first half of the 17th Century.⁵ But, at that time, there was a disagreement between the *shiqdar* of Olpar and the *mutasaddi* of Surat on the authority over the Swally customs. The *shiqdar* of Olpar, Khwaja Abul Hasan alleged custom dues on the ground that Swally assimilated to his *pargana*.⁶ As a result, the members of the Dutch and the English Companies paid customs at both Swally and Surat. Then, on the request of the Dutch against exaction of double customs, On 19th December, 1627, Shahjahan issued a *farman*, that the *mutasaddi* of *pargana* Olpar in *Surkar* Broach and also the *rahdars* (road officials) on the Burhanpur, Ahmedabad route should desist from collecting tolls (*i.e. rahdari and chaukidari*) from the Dutch and provide them carts on hire and similar *farman* was also provided to the English.⁷ Thus the Dutch must have been quite pleased with this *farman* because their major demands were addressed.

The duties on imports and exports were fixed by the Emperor, and the privilege of collecting them was farmed, or occasionally assigned, to the governor or some other authority.⁸ Usually, customs duties were imposed at

4 “History of Indian Tariffs”, by N.J.Shah,p.15.,quoted in D.Pant,*op.cit.*,p.89.

5 *Supp. Persian* No.482,ff.121a-122a.

6 *E.F.I.*1624-29, pp. xxvi, 175-76.

7 *Supp. Persian* No.482, ff.88a-89a.

8 W.H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p.273.

the ports. They were taxed at custom-house where dues were collected under the clinch of *mutasaddi* and passes were issued permitting commodities to be detached.⁹ The official rate for the custom charges at all Mughal ports, in theory, was 2.5% *advalorem* on all commodities imported or exported, except bullion (gold and silver), which paid 2% only. Under Akbar the custom duties did not exceed two and a half percent, as Abul Fazl stated that “the State takes certain taxes in harbour places., but they never exceed two and a half percent., which is so little compared with the taxes formerly levied, that merchants look upon harbour taxes as totally remitted., and again he stated that the rule is that one-half or one-third of the tolls thus collected go to the State (the other half goes to the boatmen), and Merchants are therefore well treated, and the articles of foreign Countries are imported in large quantities”.¹⁰ Jahangir ordered that customs officers should not assess duty at more than one in forty (2.5%).¹¹ William Finch, who arrived at Surat in 1608, found that the customs amounted to “two and half for goods, three for victuals, and two for money”.¹²

But subsequent statements suggest that sometime in the year 1611-1612 custom charges were increased to 3.5% in the name of the customer's brokerage or *dasturi*. When Thomas Best came to Surat in 1612, he found the

9 Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, 2 vols. & *Supplement*, Baroda, 1927-1928, 1939, p. 155.

10 Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, transl. H. Blochmann, Calcutta, Third Edition, 1977, pp. 291-292.

11 Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, ed. Syed Ahmad, Aligarh, 1864, pp. 206-207.

12 W. Foster, *Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*, Delhi, rept. 1999, p. 134.

duty on commodities to be at 3.5%.¹³ The letters from the English Factory records also confirm that custom duties at Surat were now 3.5%.¹⁴ Another letter from the English factors at Surat, dated 1616, it was reported that although the official rate stood at 2.5%, they (custom officials) charged one per cent more for the customer's brokerage, but the natives were exempted from that levy.¹⁵ Dutch Factor, Pelsaert, visiting India during the later years of Jahangir, says that "Custom duties are here three and an half percent on all imports and exports and two percent on both gold or silver specie".¹⁶ Another Dutch Factor, Pieter Van Dam Broecke, writing in 1628, mentions 1% as *dasturi* on all incoming and outgoing goods which means a commission for custom services.¹⁷ According to Mandelso (in 1638), "the duty was three and a half percent *advalorem* on all commodities, except on gold and silver, whether in coins or in bars, which paid two Percent only."¹⁸ According to Tavernier, Private individuals pay as much as 4 and 5 percent duty on all their goods, but as for the English and the Dutch Companies, they pay less.¹⁹ But it did not actually get a large amount from their privilege was positively the view of Tavernier. As he states: "I believe that, taking into account what it costs them in deputations and presents, which they are obliged to make every

13 Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus Purchas or His Pilgrimes*, Glasgow, 1905, vol. iv, p. 16

14 *Letters Received*, vol. III (1615), p. 5; *E.F.I.* 1624-29, p. 92.

15 *Ibid*; vol. iv (1616), p. 331. *Ibid*.

16 F. Pelseart, *op. cit.*, p. 42; *D.F.I.* 1617-1623, p. 133.

17 *Pieter Van den Broecke, Surat' Diary*, 1620-29, transl. W.H. Moreland, *JIH*, X, May 1923, pp. 235-50, XI, 1932, pp. 1-16, 203-18.

18 Mandelslo's *Travels*, p. 9.

19 Tavernier, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 7.

year at court, the goods cost them nearly the same as they do private persons.”²⁰

The rate of 3.5% (2.5% Official rate and 1% customer’s brokerage) sustained up to 1664. In 1664, as a measure of relief after Shivaji’s raid of Surat, Aurangzeb remitted customs for one whole year to all merchants, including the English and the Dutch.²¹ It is also reported that at the request of Surat merchants, both Indian and European, on 14th March the same year Aurangzeb, issued an order for a frequent reduction in the custom permitting the merchants to pay 2% instead of 2.5%.²² In 1667-68, Sir George Oxinden, availing himself of the services he had rendered to the Mughal government, “in repelling the attack of Sevagee, continued his applications to Aurungzebe, and obtained a *Phirmaund* dated 25th June 1667, which reduced the customs, payable by the English, from three to two percent.:- In the preamble to this *Phirmaund*, the Emperor referred to the services of the English, as his motive for granting the privilege., but it is remarkable, that the concession of exacting two instead of three rupees in the hundred, is explained to be the placing the English in the same favoured situation which the Dutch had enjoyed, though, on the invasion of Sevagee, the Dutch had not assisted, to repel his depredations”.²³ The English like the Dutch and the

20 *Ibid.*

21 *E.F.I.* 1661-64, p.311.

22 *Ibid*, pp. 313-315.

23 Copy of the *farman* from Aurungzeb, in favour of the English, reducing their customs from three to two percent, dated 25th June 1667.-(MSS. in the Indian Register office, vol.xxv.No.2321), quoted in John Bruce, *Annals of the East India Company*, 3 vols.,

Portuguese, kept on paying customs at the rate of 2% until 1679-80, when Aurangzeb, in lieu of *Jizya* (poll tax), raised it to 3.5%.²⁴ This prospect, however, was obstructed, by an order from Aurangzeb to impose a heavy contribution on all his subjects, and, among others, on the European factories at Surat:- “On compliance being refused, as being contrary to grants and privileges, an order arrived to re-establish the ancient duty of three and a half percent. Customs, instead of two percent: - this order obliged the Presidency to offer, in conjunction with the French and the Dutch, a present to the Governor, of thirty thousand rupees, provided, by his interest, the former rate of two percent. Customs should be allowed to continue”.²⁵

The practice of enhanced assessment of merchandise for appraisal of custom dues, known as *Sawai*, was very frequent.²⁶ As soon as merchandise was landed at Surat it had to be taken to the custom-house, which adjoins the fort. The officers were very strict and searched persons with great care.²⁷ There were no regulations for valuation of merchandise. The practice of over-valuation was more serious. The schedules were *advalorem*, but, while the

1810, Bruce, II, pp.216-217. A similar narrative is also provided by the English Factors, in 1667, the Dutch approached the Emperor (Aurangzeb) and he favoured them with a royal *farman* dated 25th June 1667, addressed to the Governor and other officers at surat. According to this *farman*, custom duty was lowered from 3.5% to 2% on the goods of the Dutch. A little later the English had asked for a similar favour...*E.F.I.*1665-67, pp.273-74; *E.F.I.*1668-69, pp.35, 116,228.

24 *E.F.I.* vol. III(NS), pp.255-56.

25 Letters from the Court to the President and Council at Surat, 18th October 1680, quoted in John Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 456. Such type of information is also available in English Factory Records, It materialize that the order was thoroughly instigated, and efforts by the English to get it annulled, including a combined offer by the Dutch, the English and the Portuguese of a bribe of 30,000 rupees to the ‘Governor and other high officers at Surat’ authenticated ineffective. *E.F.I.* vol. III (NS), pp.255-56.

26 *Letters Received*, Vol.III, (1615), p.5; *E.F.I.*1622-23, pp.XXX-XXXI; *E.F.I.*1637-41, p.207. *E.F.I.*1642-45, p.99. *Supp.Persian No.*482, ff. 139a-140a.

27 Tavernier, *op. cit.*, vol.I, p.7.

rates were fixed by superior authority, the valuation of goods was left to the discretion of the officers on the spot, who could, if they chose, double their demands by doubling the values placed on the consignments passed through the Customs.²⁸ Thus, on the request of the Dutch, against the abuse in overvaluation, Shahjahan issued a *farman* in 1642, framing rules (*Zabita*) for fixing prices of goods for the assessment of custom dues. As said by the *farman*, goods purchased at Akbarabad(Agra) were to be assessed after raising the cost price by 20%('ten-twelfth')and those purchased at Ahmadabad by 5%('ten-half'). And the assessment of goods bought at Surat, Baroda and other places 'in the vicinity' of Surat was to be at their cost price affirmed in the account books (*bihchik*).²⁹ The English also get the advantage of these regulations spelt out in this *farman*.³⁰

As far as, the method of imbursement of custom dues was concerned, there was no fixed rule. The Dutch did not pay custom dues in cash. They used to pay tax on their imports in goods.³¹ From English Factory Records, it seems that the English also did not pay custom dues in 'ready cash'.

28 W.H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p.275. Mir Musa tried, during his reign as governor, to accumulate money by all means. English Factors reported that, "In your customes you are exceedingly injured, and not you only, but the Dutch, yea, all other merchants, whose goods this governor, Mazel Mulck(Muizz-ul-Mulk), makes no scruple to rate at double their cost, thinking by this means to raise the somme he covenanted to pay the King, which more then doubly exceeds what his praedecessor agreed for. Besides which force exercized in the matter of customes, he practizeth another more prejudiciall then the former..., he taketh on each maund of goods sometimes two, three, yea, four rupees, according as they are in value", *E.F.I.*1637-41,p.279.

29 *Supp. Persian No.*482, ff.7b-8a, 45a. The translation of the *farman* is given in Jawaid Akhtar, "Shahjahan's Farmans to the Dutch", *PIHC*, pp.251-260. This *farman* has also been referred to by the English Factors, which inform us that the prices of merchandise purchased at Ahmadabad was to enhanced by 10% while, in the *farman*, as it is fairly apparent, the rate affirmed is 5%., *E.F.I.*1642-45, pp.159-160.

30 *E.F.I.* 1642-45, p.214.

31 This is evident from the Dutch appeal submitted at the Court, of Shah Alam in 1712, cited in C.R. Wilson, *The Early Annals of the English in Bengal, being the public consultations for the first half of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. II, New Delhi, rept.1983, P.292.

Streynsham Master, writing in 1670, informs us that during the preceding sixty years (*i.e.* 1610-70), the English paid customs, by a conventional agreement with the port officials, not in 'ready money' but a 'year after'.³² In 1657, Revington, an official of the English Company, sold a number of guns to the *mutassaddi* of Surat under the agreement that, 'part of the purchase money should be deducted annually out of the sum to be paid as customs'.³³

The officials of the Mughal custom-house at Surat had a bad reputation among the early European traders for severity and extortion.³⁴ Such as, the delay in clearing goods is referred to so frequently that it was not only common practice at Surat custom-house but throughout India. And it was practiced with object of extorting bribes from the merchants.³⁵ The English merchants attributed such delays to the "innate accustomed villainy" of the officials, who, they added, "Will do nothing without bribes, which, however extorted, is made a continual custom, enforced as a duty".³⁶ According to Thevenot, "This did not complete requirements of the customs. I (Thevenot) had the good fortune to be admitted with the first batch. Others, however, had to wait for many days, sometimes even for a month, before they could get out of their baggage".³⁷

32 *E.F.I.* 1670-77, vol. I, (NS), p. 199.

33 *Ibid*, 1661-64, p. 13.

34 J. Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat in the year 1689*, ed. H.G. Rawlinson, rept. London, 1929, p. 239; Pietro della Valle, *The Travels of Pietro della Valle in India*, transl. Edward Grey, *Hakluyt Society*, 2 vols., London, 1982 (Travelled in India, 1623-24), pp. 23, 126.

35 *E.F.I.* 1618-21, pp. 232, 282, 317-18; *E.F.I.* 1630-33, p. 326. John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia being Nine Year's Travels, 1672-1681*, ed. W. Crooke, 3 Vols., Hakluyt Society, London, 1909, 1912, 1915, rept., New Delhi, 1992, Fryer, I, pp. 247-48; W.H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

36 W.H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

37 Jean de Thevenot, *The Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, ed. Surendranath Sen, New Delhi, 1949, p. 4.

Besides the practice of over-valuation and delay, the Surat custom officials also made a profit by forced dealings in merchandise which came into the custom-house. They could rebuff delivery of the merchandise for a long time and could pay for it at their own will. Merchants complained that their merchandise were taken up and paid for at insufficient rates.³⁸ According to Moreland, “If we take account of bribes, forced sales and over-valuation, we shall find that the schedule of duties sinks into insignificance in comparison with the demands which might have to be met in practice”.³⁹ Mandelslo informs us that,” It was the practice for the governor of the city to make the passengers or merchants coming from foreign ports part with any commodity for which he took a fancy at the price which he thought fit to put upon it....The governor of Surat took up the bracelet of yellow amber, which he found in the baggage of Mandelslo, promising to return it later”.⁴⁰

As we have already mentioned that from Jahangir to Aurangzeb, every Mughal ruler on his accession ordered the remission of the imports and duties levied by his predecessor.⁴¹ Jahangir, at the very inception of his regime, issued an ordinance “forbidding the levy of cesses under the names of *tamgha* and *mirbahri*(river tolls)),and other burdens which the *jagirdars* had imposed for their own profit”.⁴² Three decades later Aurangzeb also had to

38 *Letters Received*, vol. iv (1616), p.79; *E.F.I.*1618-21, pp.101, 187,319; *E.F.I.*1655-60, pp.312-13.

39 W.H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p.276.

40 Mandelslo's *Travels*, pp.2-3.

41 Gulbadan Begam, *Humayun-Nama*, p.166.

42 *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* or *Memoirs of Jahangir*, translated by Alexander Rogers edited by Henry Beveridge(in 2 Vols. Bound in 1),vol. I, Reprinted LPP, Delhi, 2006, p.7.

issue a similar ordinance. A Mughal chronicle of Aurangzeb's reign says that the Emperor "according to his usual generosity the collection of road-tolls (*rahdari*) on the transit of grains and other articles was abolished forever". That "Forever" hardly held for in 1666 a Gujarat chronicle informs us that the Emperor in 1666 inveighed against the demand for payment, by his officers, of numerous taxes among which were transit dues. For Example, an order was issued to the *Diwan* of the *Subah* that the *Firangis* and the Dutch should not be molested for taxation in Ahmedabad. Taxes from them should be collected at Surat port.⁴³

43 Saqi Must'aid Khan, *Maasiri-i-Alamgiri*, transl. Sir Jadu-Nath Sarkar, Calcutta, 1947, p.16; Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, transl. by M.F. Lokhandwala, Baroda, 1965, p.235.

(C) THE INDIGO MONOPOLY

During the first half of the 17th Century, organic indigo produced in India, was in great demand in all the Countries of Western Europe for supplying the blue dye required by the staple woolen industry. The Portuguese carried indigo to Lisbon in moderate quantities, and the prospects of the trade were such as to induce the King of Spain to monopolize it in the year 1587.¹ It is clear that indigo was the commodity chiefly sought by the English and the Dutch merchants on their first arrival at Surat, and for many years it held the first place in their exports to Europe.² The quantity exported by the English to London was re-exported to the continent of Europe especially Eastern Europe. The Dutch carried it to Amsterdam and from there to Mediterranean regions.³ Later on, the English and the Dutch controlled the whole of the trade so much so that the total Dutch and English exports absorbed the produce of 30,000 to 40,000 acres.⁴

Both these European Companies sent their agents to Ahmadabad and Agra, where they also set up branch factories from time to time, to buy indigo directly from the producers or their brokers and had it transported by caravans to Surat for export to Europe.⁵

1 M.S.Commissariat, *History of Gujarat*, Vol. II, Bombay, 1957, p.304. W.H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p.108.

2 *Ibid.*, *Ibid*; pp.108-09. The Dutch Factors who reached Surat in 1601 wrote of it as the most important local product., their successor Van Deynsen was arranging to buy indigo in the year 1607., the report sent home from Surat by William Finch in 1609 gives indigo the place of honour among possible exports., and the instructions sent out from England by successive fleets furnish ample proof that at this time the company relied more on indigo than on anything else for the development of the Indian trade. In Sir Thomas Roe's phrase, it was the "prime commodity",.Moreland, *op.cit.*, p.109.

3 Moreland, *op.cit.*, p.117.

4 *Ibid*,p.118.

5 B.G.Gokhale, *op. cit.*, p.105.

According to Abul Fazl,” The chief provinces engaged in the cultivation of indigo were Lahore, Agra, Malwa, Allahabad, Gujarat, Delhi etc.⁶ During the Seventeenth Century, there were three main centres of indigo production in northern India *i.e.* Biyana near Agra, Sarkhej near Ahmadabad and Sehwan in Sindh. The Dutch enjoyed a near-monopoly over indigo in the Coromandel.⁷ Biyana and Sarkhej were open to all Indian, European and other foreign merchants.

There were two commercial descriptions of indigo- Sarkhej and Lahori. A few miles from Ahmadabad were the small town of Sarkhej where a large quantity of indigo was made. The quality of this indigo was next only to that produced in Biana.⁸ The article produced at Sarkhej was made up in the form of cakes, and is described as ‘flat’. Lahori indigo came from the Gangetic *duab*, but most of it was produced in Biana. The indigo produced at Biana was much purer and which was designated as ‘round’ from the fact that it was made up in balls. Sarkhej indigo had an admixture of sand and that about three pounds of Sarkhej were equivalent to two of Lahori. But In spite of the inferior quality of the Ahmadabad (Sarkhej) product, due to the admixture of sand, the two kinds of indigo-dyes stood on a footing of comparative

6 Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, 2 vols., Nawal Kishore’s edition, Lucknow, 1879-80, pp.4-47.

7 Ghulam Ahmad Nadri, ‘Indigo Production and its Organization in Sarkhej during the Seventeenth Century’, *PIHC*: 55th Session, 1994, Aligarh, p.336.

8 W.H.Moreland, *op.cit.* , p.109. Om Prakash, *The Dutch Factories in India, 1617-1623: A Collection of Dutch East India Company documents pertaining to India*, New Delhi, 1984, p.136. William Finch, *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, edited by William Foster, Delhi, rept.(in LPP) 1999, p.174.

equality in price, as the northern variety, owing to its very great distance from the sea coast cost more to put on the market.⁹

There is a contemporary authentication which propose that the indigo produced at Biyana was the best and richest in worth.¹⁰ For instance, as Pelsaert says that the best and the richest indigo was known as Agra indigo which was produced in the towns known as Bayana (Biana), Ghanowa (Khanua), Bassouwer (Baseri), Hindaun, Tora (Toda Bhim) near Agra.¹¹ Finch commented that “Cannowa (Khanua) was a small town round about which was made very good nill (indigo) by the reason of the fatness of soil and blackishness of water”.¹² About Biana, Finch commented that “ This citie hath been great and faire, but is now ruinate, save two sarayes and a long bazar, with a few stragling houses”.¹³ But he says that this place was most suitable for the production of nill (indigo) which was the best in India, far superior to Sarkhej, a town near Ahmadabad.¹⁴

Indigo was planted in June in the black sandy soil which used to be sooty sand.¹⁵ First cutting was done in the last week of October or first week

9 M.S.Commissariat, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 304. W.H.Moreland, *op.cit.*, pp.109-110.

10 F. Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, pp.10-13. Finch in *Early Travels*, p.174. D.F.I.1617-23, p.136. Jonnes De Laet, *The Empire of the Great Mogol*, translated by J.S.Hoyland, and annotated by S.N.Banerjee, Delhi, rept. 1975, p.23. Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India, 1640-67*, transl. V.Ball, 2nd edition revised by William Crooke, 2 Vols., New Delhi, 1977, Vol.II, p.7. Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimage*, Vol. III, p.84. Peter Mundy, *Travels*, Vol. II, ‘*Travels in Asia, 1630-34*’, ed. Sir R.C. Temple, Hakluyt Society, London, 1914, Vol. II, pp.221-223.

11 Pelseart, *op.cit.*, p.14&n.1

12 Finch in *Early Travels*, p.151.

13 *Ibid*, pp.151-152.

14 *Ibid*, p. 174.

15 Dr. W. Caland, (ed.) *Remonstrantie van W. Geleynssen de Jongh's* Gravenhage, 1929, p. 46.

of November.¹⁶ First and second cuttings were called *ballera* and the third year cutting was known as *baldewa*.¹⁷ In the first half of the 17th century, Geleynssen de Jongh describes only the dry-leaf process. But by the end of the 17th century, wet-leaf process had also come into vogue at Sarkhej. Mattheus van Heck refers to the application of both the processes¹⁸, although the Dutch East India Company (V.O.C.) was procuring the indigo made from dry-leaf process.¹⁹

Pelsaert stated that Indigo was sown in June, when the first rain had fallen. If the rains were moderate, the crop grown an ell high in the course of four months, and was usually cut at the end of September or early in October, when it was fully ripped.²⁰ Pelsaert²¹ had also described the three varieties or cutting of indigo made in Biana. The first year's crop was known as *Nauti*, the Second year's crop was Called *Ziarie* and was considered the superior in quality to the *nauti*, and the third year's crop was called *Katel* and was of extremely bad in quality.

The method adopted in Ahmadabad seems to be similar to that prevalent in Biana according to Pelsaert.²² Tavernier had described the interesting account of method adopted regarding the production of indigo. As He stated that "Indigo was prepared from a plant which was sown every year

16 *Ibid.*

17 Peter van Dam, *Baschrijvinge van de Oost-Indische Compagnie*, ed. Dr. F.W. Stapel's-Gravenhage, 1939, Vol. II(3), p.73.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 74.

19 *Ibid.*

20 Pelsaert, *op.cit.*, p.10.

21 *Ibid*, pp.10-13. William Finch also gave almost the same description of three cutting of indigo as described by the Pelsaert, See Finch in *Early Travels*, p.153.

22 *Ibid.*

after the rains., and it was cut three times in the year, the first cutting taking place when it was about 2 or 3 feet high. The colour of the indigo made from the first crop was of a violet-blue, and it was more brilliant and more lively than the others, and that of the Second was more lively than that of the third. This difference affected the price. After the plant had been cut, it was thrown into tanks made of lime, which became so hard that they were made of a single piece of marble. These tanks were generally from 80 to 100 paces in circuit, and after they had been half filled with water, the cut plant minus the stem was thrown into them. It was then mixed and stirred up with the water everyday until the leaf had been reduced into slime or greasy earth. This done they allowed it to rest for some days, and when it was seen that all had sunk to the bottom, consequently parting the water above clear, the holes made all round the tank were opened to allow it to escape. The water had been drawn off, then the baskets were filled up with the slime, after which, in a level field, each man sits near his basket, taking the paste in his fingers, which were steeped in oil, and moulded it into small pieces, which were exposed to the sun to dry. And the pieces of the shape and size of a hen's egg cut in two by the indigo makers, that is to say, flat below and pointed above. But the indigo of Ahmadabad was flattened and made into the shape of a small cake".²³

We do not find any reference to the use of boilers, perhaps they were not used in the 17th century. Even the Europeans tried to obtain indigo through

23 Tavernier, *Travels in India*, Vol.II, pp.8-9.

indigenous method.²⁴ Boilers came to India with English “planters” in late 18th century for use in the wet-leaf process.²⁵

But, interestingly enough, boilers seem to have been employed as early as the early 16th century in what has been designated above as the dry leaf process. J. Salbancke says that at Bayana indigo plants “Being cut downe, it lyeth on heapes for half a year to rot, and then by oxen it is trodden out from the stalkes, and afterward is ground very fine and then *boiled in furnaces* (italics mine), and so sorted out in several sorts...”²⁶ Salbancke’s testimony remains unique, for according to modern descriptions of the indigenous practice, the dried leaves are simply put into the steeping and beating vats largely in the same manner as for the fresh leaf.²⁷

Finch observed that in order to prepare the best indigo, “Four things are required, a pure graine, a violet colour, his glosse in the Sunne, and that it be dry and light, so that swimming in the water or burning in the fire, it cast forth a pure light violet vapour, leaving a few ashes”.²⁸

Indigo produced at Sarkhej and its adjoining villages was collectively known as ‘Sarkhej Indigo’²⁹ *Ain* states that Sarkhej indigo found a large market in Turkey and other Countries.³⁰

24 *E.F.I.* 1646-1650, pp. 77, 189, 202-3.

25 F. Buchanan in M. Martin, *Eastern India, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India*, 1st Indian edition, New Delhi, 1976, Vol. III, p. 990; Cf. George Watt, *A Dictionary of the Economic Products of India*, London/Calcutta, 1890, Vol. IV, pp. 428-435.

26 J. Salbancke in Samuel Purchas (ed.), *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Glasgow, 1907, Vol. III, p. 84. It is surprising that such a remarkable piece of information has been missed invariably by all moderns scholars.

27 Watt, Vol. IV, pp. 434-435. In the European planters’ factories, the indigo ‘pulp’ obtained from the boilets was again put into a boiler to prevent fermentation (*ibid.*, p. 436).

28 Finch in *Early Travels*, p.154.

29 John Jourdain, *Journal*, 1608-17, ed. W.Foster, Hakluyt Society, Cambridge, 1905, pp.171-72.

Ahmadabad indigo was poorer in quality than that manufactured in Biana in the Agra region but the demand for indigo was so great that In spite of the poorer quality of the product, Ahmadabad indigo enjoyed a fairly constant demand in the European markets.³¹ Biana indigo was either not adequate or more costly due to the cost of transport or Armenian competition.³² and thus efforts were made to save Sarkhej indigo.

Nicholas Downton describes Sarkhej in 1615 as a “town not big, but counted the best and (most?) perfect soil in all those parts for the making of indigo, all other places being accounted but counterfeit unto it. The trial of indigo made here is chiefly by water, and at Ahmadabad, Jambusar & co., by fire”.³³

Merchants from various Countries and communities such as Dutch, English, Portuguese, Armenians, Muslims, Persians and Jews were active in the trade of Sarkhej indigo.³⁴ But the actual commercial rivals for Sarkhej indigo seem to be the Dutch and the English.³⁵

In 1614 (1615), English Factors informed the Company that indigo round (Biana) and flat (Sarkhej) was very cheap and hope of buying the

30 Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol.II, p.115., & its transl.Vol.I, by H.Blochmann and Vol.II-III (Bound in one) by H.S.Jarrett, Delhi, rept. (in LPP) 2006, p.248.

31 B.G. Gokhale, “ Ahmadabad in the XVIIth Century”, *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, XII/2 (Leiden, 1969), p.190.

32 Pelsaert, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

33 W.Foster (ed.), *The Voyage of Nicholas Downton*, London, 1939, p.111., quoted in Gokhale, “*Ahmadabad in the XVIIth Century*”, pp.191-92.

34 *D.F.I.*1617-23, p.136. The best or Bayana indigo was largely bought by the Dutch and the English as well as the Armenian, Lahore, Mughal and Persian merchants, who also took much of the indigo grown in the Doab near Kol (Aligarh) and Gorsa (Khurja). The variety grown-up in Mewat (is a tract 30 kos from Agra) was mostly meant for markets in India and for local use. , Pelsaert, *op.cit.*, pp.15, 18.

35 *E.F.I.*1642-45, pp.163, 201-202.

maximum quantity of both the varieties.³⁶ On 20th December 1621, James Bickford and John Clark informed the President and Council at Surat that the Dutch had shifted to Sarkhej from Cambay to order to purchase Sarkhej indigo and frustrate the attempts of the English at buying the indigo. They (Dutch) had purchased 90 maunds of indigo at the rate of 9 ½ rupees a maund.³⁷

A Letter from Batavia addressed to the Surat Factor in 1623 informed us, “The directors had asked for F.200,000 worth of indigo Biana and F.100,000 worth of indigo Sarkhej.”³⁸

The indigo trade suffered from administrative interference. The authorities compelled the producers to sell them the whole produce, “Muqarrab Khan engrossed all the indigo, by which means the factors were much hindered in their purchases”.³⁹ In 1618, a Dutch Factor reported that the Governor of Ahmadabad had demanded a lakh of rupees from the industry for giving permission of manufacture.⁴⁰

During the 30's, a new element was added to the commercial environment within which the Companies functioned. The Mughal nobility began to take an active role in commercial activities.⁴¹

36 *Letters Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East*, 1602-17, 6 Vols., Vol.I, edited by F.C.Danvers, Vols. II-VI, edited by W.Foster, London, 1896-1902., *Letter Received*, Vol.II (1613-1615), pp.151-53,188, 214, 247-49, 250 & 252. *Ibid*; Vol.III (1615), pp.25, 39-41.

37 *E.F.I.*1618-21, pp.347-48.

38 *D.F.I* 1617-23, p. 273.

39 *E.F.I.*1618-21, p.28.

40 W.H.Moreland, *op.cit.*, p.114.

41 Ann Bos Radwan, *op. cit.*,p.91.

In 1629, Asaf Khan led the way in this new activity. Who bought all the available Biana indigo, offering it for sale to the English, the Dutch, and the other traders in Agra. In response to this attempt to corner the market, the Dutch and the English planned not to buy any indigo in 1629, which, in their opinions, “Would spoil his game.”⁴² However, the Dutch did purchase indigo from Asaf Khan, explaining to the English that they had taken many orders for the indigo and they could not disappoint their customers. The Dutch did not see Asaf Khan’s actions as having any long term effect on the indigo trade. The Dutch reasoned that the other indigo merchants in Agra, Armenians, Persians, and others, who had powerful friends at Court, would negotiate an end to Asaf Khan’s indigo monopoly.⁴³

The immense and constant demand on the part of both the English and the Dutch Companies at Surat for the Biana and Sarkhej indigo for export to Europe led to Shahjahan in 1633 to make it a royal monopoly just as the Shah of Persia had the royal monopoly of silk in Persia. In the autumn of that year (1633), “a royal edict confining the sale of indigo throughout the Mogul dominions for three years to a Hindu named Manohar Das, who was to be assisted by a loan from the royal treasury, which was to share in any profit that might result. The Dutch and the English protested strongly, but without result, for behind the Hindu merchant stood an influential noble, Mir Jumla.”⁴⁴

42 Ann Bos Radwan, *op.cit.*, pp.91-92.

43 *Ibid.*

44 *E.F.I.*1630-33, pp.xxxiv-xxxv, 325.

To rupture this monopoly, the chiefs of the English and the Dutch factories at Surat consequently entered into a solemn accord to result that no party should purchase indigo for a year except at the prices approved upon. They also settled not to acknowledge any shipment of indigo from Indian merchants for export to Persia in Dutch or English ships.⁴⁵ Thus, the monopoly scheme failed because the English and the Dutch combined to oppose it⁴⁶ and refused to purchase from the farmer at his enhanced price.⁴⁷

On April 14, 1635, news reached at Surat that the indigo monopoly had been dissolved obviously because of the failure of the effort. The governor of Surat, finding that the revenues of the harbor were on the decline by the reduction in the value of the exports, had appealed the Emperor to reinstate the free sale and purchase of the goods.⁴⁸

In 1639, Sarkhej indigo had decline in quality and had become dearer due to the Competition between the Dutch (who had purchased 2,800 bales) and the English. The governor of Ahmadabad succeed in selling “a small quantity belonging to his wife” to both the English and the Dutch.⁴⁹

As the English Factors reported that both the English and the Dutch factors were eagerly competing with each other for this commodity which led the local manufactures of the produce at Sarkhej to make the fullest use of

45 *Ibid*, pp.327-28.

46 *Ibid*, 1634-36, pp.69-70, 141.

47 *Ibid*, pp. xi, xvi, 138, 141, 157-58.

48 *Ibid*, pp.xi, 138, 141, 173.

49 *E.F.I.*1637-41, p.111.

their monopoly and to adulterate it, or, as the factors write, to ‘basely sophisticate’ it, by the admixture of oil and sand.⁵⁰

The Mughal authorities tried to take remedial actions against misconduct rampant in the dye-business. When English traders brought this truth to the notice of Azam Khan, the great Governor of Ahmadabad in 1640. “He apprehended the abuse so truly that he caused more than 100 of those indigo makers to be convented., upon whom after he had discharged a whole volley of revilings for their couzenage, he threatned no lesse then death to him that should hereafter dare to mix sand or oyle or any other substance then what nature give to indico”.⁵¹ It had desired consequences, in the ensuing years, the quality of Sarkhej indigo chiefly enhanced. As the English Factor reported that the ship carries home 814 bales of Sarkhej indigo, part of which (being last year’s growth and making) ‘is the best and purest that ever Serquez vented., made so by the strict injunction and inforcement of the Ahmadabad governor’.⁵² Again English Factors reported that “The order of the Prince (*i.e.* the governor of Ahmadabad) had so good effects and purity of indigo so enhanced that the English would not desire superior.”⁵³

On April 22, 1647, the Dutch and the English made provisional bargain to buy about 600 maunds of indigo together and then share it .⁵⁴

50 *Bid*, pp.273-74.

51 *Ibid*, p.274.

52 *Ibid*, 1642-45, p.5.

53 *Ibid*, 1646-50, p.31

54 *Ibid*, p.121.

Although indigo was the product of main interest and one of the most enviable items of export by the European merchants during the first half of the Seventeenth Century. But during 1660's its export reduced and the prices had fallen low.⁵⁵ Now the European markets were glutted with the West Indies' indigo and Indian trade indigo significantly contracted during the second half of the Seventeenth Century.⁵⁶

55 *E.F.I.* 1655-60, p.336.

56 *Ibid.*

Chapter - 3

The Dutch in Bengal, c. 1650-1707, and Relations with Local Mughal Administration

Chapter- 3

THE DUTCH IN BENGAL, C.1650-1707 AND RELATIONS WITH LOCAL MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION

To the European trading Companies, the provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa jointly comprised a natural unit of operation denoted by the term “Bengal”.¹ It is interesting to note that there was high level of productivity achieved in the various sectors of the economy, which was a significant and unique characteristic of the province of Bengal²

The Dutch had two separate directorates, one at Surat and the other at Chinsura for Bengal and modern Bihar. They had no territorial jurisdiction or political influence. They lived as European merchants on the backbone of a *farman* received from the Imperial Court, and on each occasion substantial sums of money that had to be paid for new privileges. But the incomes of these establishments were the maximum in India, inspite of pestering by local officials and the competition and rivalry of other European traders.³

The Dutch, like the Portuguese and the English, came to the East Indies primarily in the pursuit of alien spices- pepper, cloves, nutmeg and mace.⁴ In beginning, Dutch commercial venture in the East had to face the problem of insufficient capital. Therefore in 1607, Admiral Cornelis Matelief, Dutch factor, pointed out that “throughout the East Indies the people were clad

1 Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal*, p.24.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Owen C. Kail, “Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India”, p. 213.

4 Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter III), p.258.

in Indian cloth and would buy it no matter what it cost”.⁵ Thus the requirements of the spice trade induced the Dutch Company early in its career to look for trade in India.⁶

The three chief sources for the supply of Indian textiles were Gujarat, Coromandel and Bengal.⁷ Therefore, the rich potential of the Bengal trade attracted the Dutch to the region.⁸ In 1612, Dutch factors were reported to have visited both Bengal and Bihar and Van Berchem, the director of the Coromandel factories, was reported to be planning the establishment of a regular factory in Bengal.⁹

It is important to realise that the Dutch interest in the trade of Bengal at this period was derived not so much from the opportunity of procuring cotton textiles as from that of obtaining quantities of rice, sugar, saltpetre and , above all, slaves needed to provide the labour force in Jan Pietersz Coen’s scheme of developing and securing Dutch colonies in Indonesia.¹⁰ The factors at Coromandel sent ships to the Bengal region on a quite regular basis in 1615. But these vessels confined their operations to Balasore and Pipli in Orissa and the volume of trade conducted by them was of limited nature.¹¹

The competition of the European nations was no less eager in Bengal. In 1615, for the first time, the Dutch ships arrived in Bengal. The Dutch fleet

5 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

6 *Ibid*, p. 2.

7 *Ibid*.

8 Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal*, p.34.

9 Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter III), p.260.

10 *Ibid*.

11 *Ibid*, pp. 260-61.

joined the king of Arakan and fought the Portuguese near the Coast of Arakan. Subsequently, the Dutch began their trade in Bengal though they did not permanently settle in the province until towards the middle of the seventeenth century when they established their factory in Hugli.¹² Providentially for the Dutch, the Mughal forces in Bengal drove the aggressive Portuguese out of Hugli in 1632,¹³ the way was now left open for the English and the Dutch companies to establish their trade in an area of India that was even now known as the sub-continent's food granary and which was later to become the chief textile-producing area in the Mughal Empire.¹⁴

Dutch extension to Bengal was gradual. The first ventures and voyages were in the surrounding areas of Cuttack. Subsequently, ships were taken further north to the ports of Pipli and Balasore. In 1634, instructions were sent from Batavia to trade with Hugli itself. The early experiences of the Dutch at this port were not encouraging as the monopoly of all trade had been granted to two local merchants and the authorities were not friendly.¹⁵ It was around this time (1634) that the Dutch acquired an order from Azam Khan, the Mughal *Subahdar* (governor) of Bengal which a year later (1635) was followed by a second from his successor Islam Khan and a third from the Mughal Emperor

12 J.J. Campos, *op. cit.*, pp.124-25; By 1630 the Coromandel factories acquired an important position in the Company's trade with the Countries round the Bay of Bengal. Having secured a firm footing on the Coast, the Dutch now extended their activities to Bengal, Arakan and Burma. (Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 209).

13 Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter III), p.261.

14 K.N. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p.391.

15 W.H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p.47.

Shahjahan himself in the following period.¹⁶ A quite favourable accord was settled with the viceroy of Bengal at Dacca, but it did not provide protection against local obstacles, and in 1636 the factors decided to move down to Pipli, where Bengal goods could be obtained without the coercion and extortion met with at Hugli.¹⁷

In 1638, the Company succeeded in obtaining from Shahjahan yet another *farman* on the lines essentially of the one procured in 1636 except that this one specifically permitted the Company to trade, among other goods, in saltpetre thus negating the ban the *Kaul* granted by *Subahdar* Islam Khan in September 1636 which had imposed restriction on Dutch trade in this item.¹⁸ In the following period (1638), another factory was also set up at Patna but it was closed during the same year due to economic reasons.¹⁹ In 1639, Prince Shah Shuja, on assuming office of the *Subahdar* of Bengal, had written to the Dutch governor at Pulicat suggesting a re-opening of the Hugli factory.²⁰ In January, 1641, by a *nishan* granted by the new *Subahdar* of Orissa the trading privileges at Pipli were confirmed.²¹ Subsequently, in November 1642, the first document which exempted the Company from the payment of transit-duties on the Pipli-

16 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, I, 1.8.1635, 266-7 and 268-9; quoted in George D. Winius & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

17 W.H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p.47. For more detail information See Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter III), pp.263-65.

18 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, 57 (vol. I), pp.327-32. A post-script by Afzal Khan identical to the one that accompanied the 1636 *Farman* was appended to this *Farman* as well., quoted in Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter III), p.266.

19 Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter III), p.266.

20 *Ibid*, pp.266-67: This suggestion had, however, been ignored and it was not until sometime between 1645 and 1650 that the Company re-established the factory at Hugli. cf. W.H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p.48.

21 *Ibid*, p.266.

Agra route which passed through Orissa, Bengal, Bihar and part of northern India.²²

It is interesting to note that on the strength of Shahjahan's *farman* of 1645, additional concessions were granted to Arnold Bernard Muiskensz, the director of Surat, the Dutch were officially allowed to set up an agency at Hugli. Shortly after the factory started functioning, its warehouses were swept away by floods. New buildings were erected further inland and the Dutch continued to operate from Hugli till 1656 when they were allowed to build a much larger establishment at Chinsura.²³

More Imperial orders followed from Shahjahan and several succeeding *Subahdars* which put the Dutch position in Bengal on a firmer foothold, it seems that, the local authorities had come to understand that the Dutch were not to be pushed around and were fairly able to bite back if they chose. Soon afterwards the Dutch, besides their presence at Pipli, established factories in Balasore, Dacca, Patna, Kasimbazar and Chinsura (a village in the proximity of Hugli).²⁴ The factories established in Bengal were placed under the authority of the Coromandel government. A separate directorate was created for Bengal as late as 1655.²⁵

n the seventeenth century, the most significant interesting characteristic in the composition of Bengal merchants engaged in overseas

22 *Ibid.*

23 Owen C.Kail, *The Dutch in India*, pp.126-27.

24 George D.Winius & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, p.22.

25 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p.209.

trade was the presence of *Subahdars*, *Faujdars* and other members of the ruling class in Bengal.²⁶ The Bengali merchants took passes from the Dutch as well as the Portuguese, assuring safe conduct. The Dutch had taken the southern port of Galle in 1640, after which Bengali ships touched on Galle with Dutch passes. It is remarkable to note that the elephants of Sri Lanka were the main attraction of this trade and with the great demand in Bengal for these animals, they were being exported both from the Dutch port of Galle in the South and the Portuguese port of Jaffna in the north. Ships sailing into Sri Lanka brought large quantities of Bengal rice and other foodstuffs such as sugar, butter and edible oils.²⁷

When Prince Shah Shuja tried to monopolise some sectors of the province's overseas trade and made himself the sole purchaser of elephants, one of the chief items in the Company's list of imports, the condition in Bengal became unfavourable.²⁸ Again in 1645 the Company's interests were threatened even more dangerously when the Danes began to confiscate ships belonging to the merchants of Bengal by way of retaliation for injuries suffered at the hands of the local authorities.²⁹

The flight of the merchant-middlemen from the chief ports to escape the excessive tolls imposed by the Prince (Shuja) posed new troubles for the Dutch which they tried to solve by posting permanent agents at the sources of

26 Susil Chaudhuri, "Bengal Merchants and Commercial Organisation in the Second half of the Seventeenth Century", *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol. XC(90), Calcutta, January-June 1971, p.205.

27 S. Arasaratnam, *Maritime India in the Seventeenth Century*, Delhi, 1994, p.156.

28 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p.77.

29 *Ibid.*

supply like Patna and Kasimbazar. Therefore, in 1647 some of their worst difficulties were over. Thus the Prince was more friendly in his attitude, the free sale of elephants was allowed and there was a general improvement in the supply of return cargo.³⁰

In February 10, 1648, by the *farman* granted by the *Nawab* Fidai Khan, who had recently replaced Shah Shuja as the *subahdar* of Bengal, as the Company was exempted from the payment of transit-duties on goods transported between any two points under the *nawab's* jurisdiction.³¹ In this way, in 1649, with the recrudescence of Danish piracy, the authorities once more demanded that the Dutch should guarantee the security of Bengal ships on the high seas. The refusal to grant passes for Shuja's ships, in accordance with the new policy, also alienated the Prince.³² And in 1650 after returning to the office of the provincial *Subahdar* Shah Shuja issued a *nishan*³³ to the Dutch in which they were exempted from transit and other duties between Pipli and Patna route in accordance with the Imperial *farman* (of November 1642).³⁴ Between 1653 and 1656, Shuja issued at least four more *nishans* along similar lines.³⁵

The basic aim of the Dutch company was to direct the foreign trade of the merchants of Bengal to the channels where they did not compete with the Company in the sale of Bengal goods or in the purchase of goods to be sold in

30 *Ibid.*

31 Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter III), p.267.

32 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p.77.

33 *Nishan* is designated as *farman* by Tapan Raychaudhuri in his book *Jan Company*, p.78.

34 Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter III), p.267.

35 *Ibid.*

Bengal. The most effectual weapons in the hands of the Company was the system of 'passports'. Under this system, the European companies insisted that local traders intending to send ships to other ports whether in India or abroad must first obtain their permission in a document called the 'passport' or the 'pass'.³⁶

The biggest crisis that faced the Mughals in admiration of freedom of navigation was in the 1640's, when the Dutch attempted to take on the mantle from the Portuguese to control and redirect Indian Ocean trade. The Dutch denied passes to Indian ships originating from the ports of Gujarat and Bengal to sail to Southeast Asia ports, on the ostensible appeal that they were at war with the rulers of Achen, Perak and Kedah.³⁷ The Governor-General and Council ordered the Hugli factors not to issue any pass at all for these areas, and to tell the Indian traders that if they dared to send the ships without Dutch passes, their ships would be detained by the Dutch fleet.³⁸ As a result, with this attitude of the Dutch traders and some of the officials of the Bengal, for instance, Mirza Malik, the *diwan* of Orissa and Nawazish Khan, the *faujdar* of Rajmahal became so unhappy that they procured an order from Prince Shah Shuja, the *Subahdar* to Ali Beg, the *Faujdar* of Pipli and Balasore to destroy the Dutch factory in Pipli. Thus the order was partly carried out and a

36 Om Prakash, "The European Trading Companies and the Merchants of Bengal 1650-1725", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review (IESHR)*, Vol. I, July-Sept., 1963, pp.46-47.

37 Satish Chandra, *Medieval India*, vol. II, p.415. cf. Om Prakash, "The European Trading Companies and the Merchants of Bengal 1650-1725", p.53.

38 Om Prakash, "The European Trading Companies and the Merchants of Bengal 1650-1725", p.53.

substantial amount of damage was done to the factory.³⁹ But the Dutch East India Company did not quit the policy of completely refusing passes for these areas until the relations with the rulers were again normalized around 1653.⁴⁰

In 1654, the English factors reported that the Dutch were doing their best to make the English unpopular with the local people, but they were themselves unpopular and it is also reported that Shuja, *Subahdar* of Bengal was so insensed against them that “those Dutch in Bengala were forced to stand upon their guard in such part of their warehouses with a large quantity of goods in them, which was done, and two of their men killed, by those natives, and in January last the Dutch Comissary and the Governor of Piple were treating about the businesse, but not any conclusion made when the two Bengala juncks came out of the Bay”.⁴¹ The King of Macassar and Mir Jumla were both very annoyed with the Hollanders and waited for an opportunity to make a break with them, while it was reported that they were already evicted of their Japan trade.⁴²

As we have already mentioned that Shuja tried to monopolise some sectors of the province’s overseas trade and made himself the sole purchaser of elephants.⁴³ Consequently, he (Prince Shuja), had a personal interest in freeing the trade. When any interference in the South East Asian ports was reported,

39 *Ibid.* The Mughals retaliated on land by seizing all the Dutch factories, and arresting their agents. This led to hostilities which continued between 1648 and 1652; cf. Satish Chandra, *Medieval India*, vol. II, p.415.

40 *Ibid.*

41 *E.F.I.* 1651-54, p. 269.

42 *Ibid.*, pp. 269-70.

43 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

the officials threatened reprisals against the Dutch trade in Bengal. They kept harassing the Dutch Company servants in Chinsura and Pipli for passes and safe conduct for their ships to South East Asia. For example, in 1654, on one occasion, Mughal forces threatened to overrun the Company's factory in Pipeli for denying passes to Bengal ships. Dutch trade in Bengal was expanding fast and they did not wish to jeopardize this trade. So their servants in Bengal were forced to grant passes to Tenasserim, Achein, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and ensure that Bengal shipping was not harassed.⁴⁴

It is interesting to note that besides utilizing the power to issue passes for the original reason of ensuring that the foreign trade of the Indian traders was in no way harmful to it, the Company made use of this power in other directions as well. Consequently, for the grant of passes, the Dutch East India Company frequently asked for favours in return. For example, in 1655, the *Nawab* of Orissa asked the *Faujdaar* of Pipli to get a pass and a *steersman* from the Dutch Company for a ship that he planned to send to Persia. In response to this, the Dutch factors told the *Faujdaar* that he should notify the *nawab* that they would be willing to meet his demand provided he, in turn, permitted the Company to build brick-warehouses in Pipli.⁴⁵

44 S.Arasaratnam, *op. cit.*, p. 160. The Dutch Company refused many applications made by 'governor Jaffer' in 1654 for muslim vessels to Khedda, Colombo and Cochin. However, it was ultimately obliged to grant two passes for two of the *nawab*'s vessels to Tenasserim and Achin, and one for the *faujdar*'s to the Islands of Maldiva. The Dutch also issued three more passes for the vessels of *nawab* Nawajish Khan, the *faujdar* of Rajmahal and Ahmad Beg, *ex-faujdar* of Hugli: (Susil Chaudhuri, "Bengal Merchants and Commercial Organisation in the Second half of the Seventeenth Century", pp.205-06).

45 Om Prakash, "The European Trading Companies and the Merchants of Bengal 1650-1725", p. 55.

Another most successful weapon against the extortions and greediness of the local administration was the threat to give up Bengal altogether, putting a total stop to their trade in the region. For instance, in 1655, the Company's relation with Mohammad Yusuf, who was the *faujdar* of both Pipli and Balasore, became so strained that he asked the *nawab* of Orissa to dismiss Mohammed Yusuf from both of his posts. The factors openly threatened that if they did not accept their demand, they would not issue any pass to Indian ships intending to leave the ports of Pipli and Balasore and that if any such ships left these ports, they would be attacked by the Dutch ships on the high Seas. Consequently, Dutch threat was most successful and Mohammad Yusuf was dismissed from the *faujdaarship* of Pipli although he was permitted to continue as the *faujdaar* of Balasore.⁴⁶

Again in 1656 the *Faujdar* of Hugli appealed for a pass for his vessel to Colombo and Shah Shuja had asked for three passes for Colombo, Cochin and Jaffnapatam. But all these requests were politely refused because of Shah Shuja's attempt to monopolise some sectors of the province's external trade. The Dutch Company similarly refused a request for the services of one of their mates for a ship sailing for Persia.⁴⁷

Pieter Sterthemius was appointed as the first director of the factories in the Bengal region. In April 1656, he conditionally chose Kasimbazar but afterward in the year changed his mind and moved over to Hugli, which

46 *Ibid*, p. 56.

47 Susil Chaudhuri, , "Bengal Merchants and Commercial Organisation in the Second half of the Seventeenth Century, p. 206.

continued to be the seat of the Dutch directorate of Bengal for nearly a century and a half. And the Company leased the villages of Chinsura, Baranagoor and Bazar Mirzapur against yearly ground rent of Rs.1, 574.⁴⁸

The trade in Bengal was partially fostered by the contribution of the Bengal officials from the *subahdar* downwards. This was started by Mir Jumla on a large scale and continued till the early eighteenth century when Murshd Quli Khan brought the Mughal system back with some deviations.⁴⁹ To counterpoise the Portuguese support to Shuja, Mir Jumla began to make a diplomatic use of his position as Mughal general in Bihar and Bengal in his relations with the Dutch and the English factors there.⁵⁰

English factors reported in 1659 that Mir Jumla summoned Dutch factors from Kasimbazar to his camp at Suti to join their help in artillery.⁵¹ There is also reference about Dutch chief (Directeur), Mattheus van den Broeke, who was on his way from Hugli to Mir Jumla's head-quarters. Halstead's letter of 3 June mentions a rumour of "Mer-Jumbelowes (Mir Jumla) offering the government of Heugley (Hugli) to the Dutch and the report of their lending him two lack of rupees'. The mission is again referred to in a letter from Sheldon of 5 July (1659), which says: 'The Dutch doctor was here Yesterday, and to[ld] me privately that the Directore had engaged to Mere

48 Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter III), p. 269.

49 Aniruddha Ray, *Adventurers, Landowners and Rebels Bengal c.1575-c.1715*, New Delhi, 1998, p.102.

50 J.N.Sarkar, *The History of Bengal: Muslim Period 1200-1757*, Vol. II, Patna, 1973, p.340.

51 *E.F.I.* 1655-60, p.286. It is reported that Sultan Muhammad and the Mir Jumla would have marched over at a place in the Ganges called Sooty, where at the dry season of the year it is fordable for horse (*E.F.I.* 1655-60, p.283).

Jumbler (Mir Jumla) to afford him all assistance possible, and that he had ordered all their greater guns to be put aboard their sloops for the keeping of the river”.⁵²

As we know that Aurangzeb had great confidence in the ability of Mir Jumla, he was not without apprehension regarding Shuja. Mir Jumla's letter to the Dutch Director Matheus van den Broek, dated 7th October 1660, expressed that apprehension. “His Majesty will not fail in gratitude and will grant you in all parts of his dominions for greater privileges than the English enjoy at present...The Service we demand from you is this- when Sultan Chouse (Shuja) being in Arracan requests you to help him escape to Persia or Mocha in one of your vessels you will take him on board and deliver him here in Hugli in the power of the King. No harm can result to you from this action. I have also obtained many *Farmans* for you from the King. His Majesty now expects this service from you in return.”⁵³ There is no evidence that Shuja was brought back to Hugli by the Dutch ship.

European factory records affirm that (in 1660) Mir Jumla desired European help to conquer Hijli (Hugli). He helped Khan-i-Dauran in subduing Bahadur Khan, the rebel *Zamindar* of Hijli. Subsequently, he (Mir Jumla) induced the Emperor Aurangzeb to transfer Hijli from the jurisdiction of Orissa to that of Bengal, and requisitioned an English sloop and a Dutch galliot, and he was also pressing the Dutch to dispatch a vessel to Arakan in pursuit of

52 *Ibid*, p. 288n.

53 *Hague Transcript*, First Series, Vol. XXIV, P.D.C. LXI; quoted in Anjali, Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, p.17.

Shah Shuja. Thanks to the help rendered by the Dutch, Hijli was now conquered.⁵⁴

The another letter is from Hugli, of 29 January, 1661. It refers to an effort on the part of Mirza Lutfullah Beg, the *Diwan* of Patna, in order to monopolize the sale of saltpetre for the profit of the imperial revenues. He forced the dealers to deliver their saltpetre to him, regardless of their contracts with the Dutch. The Dutch affirmed that these actions were secretly prompted by Chamberlain, acting through the English broker, Ganga Ram, who had promised to purchase saltpetre from the *Diwan*. The Dutch Director at Hugli, Matheus van den Broek, complained both to Mir Jumla and to English agent Trevisa. Trevisa, who disclaimed any participation in these allegations, and agreed with the Dutch chief not to deal with the *Diwan*, and answered that no purchases except at first hand and on the old footing, owing to the dispatch of a *Parwana* from Mir Jumla to Lutfullah Beg, forbidding him to hinder the Dutch from trading freely in that commodity.⁵⁵

In 1662, Dirk van Adrichem, the Director of Surat factory (from 1662 to 1665), was sent as an ambassador to Aurangzeb by the Governor of Batavia. He succeeded in obtaining a 'concession', or *farman* dated Delhi, 29th October 1662, from Aurangzeb, which granted valuable privileges upon the Dutch in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.⁵⁶ And the Dutch were exempted from transit duties

54 *E.F.I.* 1661-64, pp. 68-70.

55 *Ibid*, pp. 69-70.

56 F. Bernier, *op. cit.*, p.127n.3; *Storia do Mogor*, Vol. II, p.57n.55; *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Vol. II (1650-1675), pp.217-20; *Streynsham Master*, vol. II, pp.26-28; Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce*(chapter III), p.271.

in these three provinces. They were asked to pay custom duties according to their former (or ancient) rate,⁵⁷ which was 3% at Pipli and Balasore and 4% at Hugli.⁵⁸ This *farman* also instructed that the officials of these port towns acted in accordance with that *farman*, of 1662 by Aurangzeb, order has been issued that the officials of that place were prohibited from harassing or molesting them (the Dutch) on any account whatsoever and should not obstruct them out of avarice and greed. They should consider it obligatory and shall not deviate from whatever had been ordered.⁵⁹

But when Mir Jumla, *Subahdar* received a copy of the *farman*, he intentionally misinterpreted it to imply that the Company was obliged to pay transit and other duties like everyone else. But even as the factors were deliberating upon the means to bring the *Subahdar* round, the latter died.⁶⁰

On the other hand, the Arakan pirates, both *Magh* and *Firingi*, used continuously to come by the water route and plunder Bengal and inflict loss to the traders at the mouth of the Ganges.⁶¹ As a result, Aurangzeb ordered Mir Jumla to punish the pirates of Chittagong. But he (Mir Jumla) did not stay alive

57 *Corpus Diplomaticum* Vol. II (1650-1675), pp. 220-26; *Streynsham Master*, vol. II, pp. 26-28.

58 *Dagh-Register gehouden in't casteel van Batavia, (1624 to 1682 with gaps)*. Batavia 1889-1928 (henceforth *Dagh Register*), *Dagh-Register*, 1637 (vol. IV), p.102; Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter III), p. 271.

59 *Streynsham Master*, vol. II, pp.26-28.

60 Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter III), pp. 271-72.

61 Anjali, Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, p.24. Before 1666, the Pirates from Arakan and Chatgaon were a terror in the Ganges. Therefore Prince Shah Shuja, the *Subahdar* of Bengal ordered the European Companies to escort the ships of the Indian traders till they crossed the Ganges and reached the open sea. The Dutch, the English and the Portuguese had to comply with the order until 1666 when the conquest of Arakan and Chatgaon put an end to the menace of pirates from these areas (Om Prakash, "The European Trading Companies and the Merchants of Bengal 1650-1725", p. 60.

to finish the task and it therefore devolved upon Shaista Khan, his successor in Bengal.⁶²

When Shaista Khan came as governor to Bengal, he tried to put a stop to these exploits.⁶³ One of the first acts of Shaista Khan's authority was to assemble, in the year A.D.1664-1665, at Dacca, a numerous fleet of boats, and an army of 13,000 men.⁶⁴ On this occasion he demanded the assistance of some European gunners, from the Dutch and English factories, and upon their pleading inability, he threatened to stop their traffic in saltpetre.⁶⁵

In 1664, English factors reported that Shaista Khan demanded help from both English and Dutch in his war against Arakan pirates. Evidently he was expecting more help from the Dutch than from the English, for he dispatched an envoy to Batavia about the matter, carrying a letter and a present for the Governor-General.⁶⁶ The Director of the Dutch Company was anxious to squash the Portuguese power,⁶⁷ willingly consented and dispatched two battleships to join the Mughal fleet in the Bay. Thus the preparations for war against Arakan were made. Shaista Khan on his way from Rajmahal to Dacca met at every port the chiefs of the Dutch East India Company and ordered them

62 *Ibid*, p. 25.

63 Stanley Lane-poole, *op. cit.*, p. 117; Owen C.Kail, *The Dutch in India*, p.129.

64 Charles Stewart, *op. cit.*, p.297.

65 *Ibid*, p. 297n.

66 *E.F.I.* 1661-64, pp.395, 399, 403. *cf.* Anjali, Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, p.25. He (Shaista Khan) compelled the English and the Dutch soldiers to attend him in the war against Arracan. There is still extant a public letter from the Governor of Madras, to Shaista Khan, dated May 7, 1677, threatening that if the English were not better treated, they would entirely withdraw from Bengal; Charles Stewart, *op. cit.*, pp.301-02.

67 Anjali, Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, p.25. *cf.* Stanley Lane-poole, *op. cit.*, p.117.

all to write to the *Firingi* pirates of Chittagong to come over to the *nawab's* service.⁶⁸

Again, in 1665, factors reported that the Dutch had granted the *Nabob* (*Nawab*) six ships, with men and munitions, to assist him in his wars against Arakan.⁶⁹ Thus in 1666, after receiving the news about the victory of Shaista Khan over the Arakans with the help of the Dutch, the English factors felt embarrassed and observed that “with their assistance, they (Dutch) will tend much to their reputation in these parts and throughout India, and much advance their commerce”.⁷⁰

Both the Dutch and the English Companies assisted the Indian traders by loaning them *Steersmen*, sailors and equipment. In this connection, the general instructions of the Governor-General and Council at Batavia to the factors at Hugli were that assistance should not usually be given unless some powerful interest would be served or if the English Company was likely to give the assistance instead. Naturally, assistance was to be provided only if the Company itself was not likely to suffer due to the shortage of sailors or equipment.⁷¹ For example in 1666, the Dutch factors lent a *steersman* and some equipment for the ship of *nawab* Amin Khan (son of late *nawab* Mir Jumla, the *subahdar* of Bengal) which was to go to Tenasserim. In the following year, one

68 *Ibid*, pp. 25-26.

69 *E.F.I.*1665-67, p. 144.

70 *Ibid*, p. 258.

71 Om Prakash, “The European Trading Companies and the Merchants of Bengal 1650-1725”, p.59.

Steersman was given for the ship of the *Faujdaar* of Hugli, Syyed Jalal.⁷² But when the trader was a state-official, the Company refused to give assistance, for instance, in 1667, the Company did not accept the request of the *Faujdaar* of Balasore and refused to lent two *steersmen* for a ship that he intended to send to Achin.⁷³

In spite of Imperial *farmans* and grants, local officials along the Hugli were inclined to impede the Dutch vessels carrying grain, opium, saltpetre, and sugar. Though, the Dutch preferred to triumph over these difficulties with their own brand of commercial diplomacy, sometimes using threats, at other times with presents and bribes. Hardly ever did they interfere in the politics of Bengal, preferring always to engross their trade.⁷⁴

For instance, in the month of May 1664, Charnock, the English factor at Patna, in a letter to the English factors at Hugli informed them “Of the arrival of Shaista Khan’s *darogha* or agent with a commission to buy 20,000 maunds of saltpetre, also with orders to forbid the Dutch and the English from giving out any money to the petre men; and presently he hindered our weighing and receiving of what petre we had formerly given out money for, putting his seal on several places where it lay....Daily persons run away that are the company’s debtors....concerning these abuses, the English on several

72 *Ibid.*

73 *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

74 Owen C.Kail, *The Dutch in India*, p. 130.

occasions made complaints to Shaista Khan for remedies, but they failed to procure any”.⁷⁵

Again Charnock wrote from Patna on July 3, 1664, that Shaista Khan wanted “to take the whole trade of peeter (saltpetre) into his own hands and to sell it again to us (English) and the Dutch at his own rates, knowing that the ships can not go from the Bay empty”.⁷⁶ And it is also noted that Shaista Khan wanted to engross (monopolize) all those goods in which he conceived commercial benefits.⁷⁷

Streylnsham Master observed that Hugli was the nerve-centre of Bengal’s trade and commerce. But when Shaista Khan, *subahdar* (or viceroy) of Bengal obtained Hugli as a part of his *jagir*, he tried to monopolise the trade of that place. Therefore, in spite of the Emperor’s desires, Shaista Khan was averse in granting the Europeans a free-trade in Bengal.⁷⁸

A letter from Winter and Sambrook at Madapollam to Hugli, dated 8 October, 1664, observed, “wee take notice that the Moores threaten to demolish our factories, as also the Dutch and Portugall buildings; by which may bee seen that they do not much desire our stay in their country”.⁷⁹

A Dutch letter⁸⁰ from Hugli of 17 October says that the Governor had informed them of Shaista Khan’s order that the Europeans must be content with

75 *E.F.I.* 1661-64, p. 395.

76 *Ibid*, pp. 395-96.

77 *Ibid*, p. 395.

78 *Streylnsham Master*, Vol. II, pp. 79-80.

79 *E.F.I.* 1661-64, p. 399.

80 *Dagh-Register* 1664, p. 593.

earthen dwellings in place of stone. The Portuguese were obliged to pay 1000 rials for having erected a church without permission; while the English, who had built a stone gateway to their factory, had to compound for 600 rials. The Dutch were resisting, but expected to have to bribe either the *Nawab* or the Governor.⁸¹

In Bengal, the Dutch were not free from dilemma they suffered at the hands of the *nawab* Shaista Khan, in spite of their efforts to evade friction with the local Mughal officers in Bengal, who regularly interfered with the passageway of boats laden with saltpetre and sugar, as well as with the silk and cotton cloth.⁸² For example, the incident in which the Dutch were involved occurred in 1672,⁸³ and is thus described in a letter from Hugli to Fort St. George, dated 20th August, 1673: “The Dutch, notwithstanding the Kings *Phirmaund* which they have few years since procured, are in the same predicament with us in Pattana and have bin worse in Bengala. Their chiefe Banian some months since dying in their debt to a considerable value, they imprisoned, and as tis reported, drubd his wife, who so much resented her

81 *E.F.I.*1661-64, p. 399 & n.1.

82 *H.F.R.*, Vol. VII, p.72; quoted in Anjali, Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, p.191.

83 *Streynsham Master*, vol. I, pp. 145-46. Om Prakash provide us valuable information about the episode of Bhola Ram Chaudhuri, ‘On February 26, 1672, Bhola Ram Chaudhuri, the keeper of the Dutch East India Company’s tolls and customs-accounts and a merchant-middleman died suddenly. Who was indebted to the Company to the amount of Rs.30,000 and also owed the *Faujdar* Malik Qasim of Hugli to the amount of Rs.35,000. Following the usual procedure in such cases, the wife and son of the deceased were fetched to the Company’s factory for a detailed interrogation regarding possible hidden assets. But the Dutch factors failed to elicit any useful information. As a result, the deceased’s wife committed suicide by taking an overdose of opium. Malik Qasim saw in this a golden opportunity to force the Company to meet his claim of Rs.35,000. Therefore, he publicly announced that the Dutch had murdered the women. On May 11, therefore, the *Subahdar* imposed on the Dutch a fine of Rs.300,000 pending the payment of which the Company was ordered to suspend forthwith all its trading activities in the province of Bengal; Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter III-Appendix), pp.286-87.

shame, that she took poison thereupon and died. Upon which the Governour of Hugly procured such a *Mohazer* [*Mahzar*, attested public document] and sent it to Dacca that their whole business was neer five months stopped, their servants taken from them, and provisions at one time here forbidden them. The second, five months attending at Decca, at last concluded the business for 150000 rupees and, with the charges extraordinary, and what bribed particularly that we have no notice of, it can not amount to less than two lack of rupees, for which they have obtained nothing but that the Governour is turned out of his place and a new one come in his roome, by which are in hopes we shall receive equall advantage with them”.⁸⁴

But after returning to Hugli, Malik Qasim provoked the *nawab* and the *diwan* against the Dutch to such degree that orders were issued to all parts under Shaista Khan’s government prohibiting the Emperor’s subjects from trading with them or serving them.⁸⁵ Consequently, the Dutch trade was hampered. At Hugli they were not allowed to export rice which they had bought for that purpose. However, the Dutch settled the matter by paying money to the *nawab* and his officers.⁸⁶

In 1676, the Batavia Council wrote to *Subahdar* Shaista Khan asking for a restitution of Rs.196, 000, which represented the total loss the Company had incurred in association with the Bhola Ram case. In December of the following year, a *farman* was obtained from Aurangzeb instructing the new *subahdar*,

84 *Ibid.*

85 Anjali, Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, p.192. *Streynsham Master*, vol. II, pp. 22-23.

86 *Ibid.*

Muhammad Azam, to examine the Dutch claim in detail and if found valid, to arrange for the restitution of the money. The claim was found valid but as Shaista Khan returned to the post of the provincial *subahdar* soon afterward, nothing was done and the Company found it essential to write the sum off.⁸⁷

The Dutch were as much worried as the English, and met their difficulties in a characteristic manner, for in the same letter, Master informed Langhorne and the Council at Fort St. George that “the Dutch have a brave Fleet of ships here [Hugli] of 10 or 12 saile, and Wiltfangh is commodore of them, they resolving to make these people sensible of the injuries they have received, as they did the Governor of Surat, which business at Sea it seems was mannadged by this commodore Wiltfangh, and to that purpose they have publicquely by letters demanded of the *Nabob* at Dacca the money they have given him formerly not to hinder ther businesse. Whereupon the *Nabob* bids them be gone out of the Country.....”⁸⁸

On the 17th November 1676, there was an open quarrel between the Dutch and Malik Zindi, who refused to allow them to put their rice on board their ship. A skirmish seemed imminent, but ‘upon second thoughts after marching towards the Dutch factory, he ‘returned againe.’⁸⁹ A week later Verburg, the Dutch ‘Directore’, sent a deputation to him, in charge of Fentsell,⁹⁰ his ‘Second’ to offer to settle ‘their differences. Fentsell, however,

87 Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter III-Appendix), p.287.

88 *Streynsham Master*, vol. I, pp. 45-46.

89 *Ibid*, p. 46. See also *Ibid*, vol. II, p.40.

90 In 1681 Fentsell is mentioned as ‘Dutch provisional Directeor’ (Factory Records, Hugli, Vol. III), quoted in *Streynsham Master*, vol. II, p.46 & n.1.

committed a breach of etiquette which so enraged Malik Zindi, that he called him 'giddy' (*gadha*, an ass). Fentsell retaliated with a most opprobrious epithet, 'which the Governor returned to him againe', and the two parties separated. Malik Zindi almost immediately after sent a request to the Dutch 'to return back, to him, which they refused to doe', and, up to the time of Master's departure for Balasore, they acted as the affronted parties.⁹¹

On the 21st November, Master with some members of the Council, paid a visit to the Dutch and found Verburg 'very obligeing'. He was greatly impressed with the spaciousness of the Dutch factory, the solidity of its construction, its gardens, granary, weavers' apartments, and rope walk. Verburg confided to him that "though they had carryed some rice off by force", in despite of Malik Zindi, yet they did not intend to 'breake with these people. But though his words were boastful, Master was of opinion that he and his colleagues 'seemed to be cast downe and not to like the face of their affaire'.⁹²

In 1676, Streynsham Master informs us that the Dutch had left their factory of Piply (Pipli), pulled down their house there, and built a new one at Ballasore, which was a handsome square building. Under the Directoreship of Bengala they had six factories, vizt., Hugly [Chinsurah], Cassambazar (Kasimbazar), Ballasore, Patna, Dacca, and Malda.⁹³

It was during the government of Shaista Khan, that is to say, about the year 1676, that the French and Danes established themselves in Bengal. The

91 *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 46. See also *Ibid*, vol. II, p.46.

92 *Ibid.*, *Ibid*, pp.40-41.

93 *Ibid*, vol. II, p.92.

precise period of the introduction of the Dutch is not recorded; but the agents of these nations prudently obtained ground, to erect their factories, at some distance below Hugli, where the present towns of Chinsura, Chandernagore, and Serampore, now stand. The English agent on the contrary, built his factory in the middle of the town of Hugli, which was the cause of frequent disputes with the inhabitants, and terminated by their being expelled from the country.⁹⁴

In January 1678, the Dutch Company obtained a *parwana* on the lines of the royal *farman* of 1662, under the seal of Wazir Asad Khan.⁹⁵ When intelligence of the death of Fedai Khan reached the Court, the Prince Mohammed Aazim, third son of Aurangzeb, who then governed Bihar, was ordered to take charge of Bengal. He arrived at Dacca on the 19th of Jummad al Akhir of the year 1088 (June 30, 1678), and, towards the end of that year, detached an army to repel the Assamese, who had been, for some time, troublesome of the frontier.⁹⁶

Upon this occasion, the Prince sent for the agents of the English and the Dutch factories at Dacca, and having received them in the most gracious manner, he requested them to assist him with some Europeans, who understood the management of artillery, but, upon their pleading their inability, he did not enforce the demand: however, as he was in want of money, he accepted the sum of 21,000 rupees from the English., for which he granted them his *Nishan*,

94 Charles Stewart, *op. cit.*, p.302.

95 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Vol. III,(1676-1691), pp.116-19.

96 Charles Stewart, *op. cit.*, p.303.

or order, for a free trade, without the payment of any duties.⁹⁷ On other hand, in December 25, 1678, he (Azam Khan) also granted *nishan* to the Dutch Company, instructing officials in province of Bengal and Orissa to put into practice the royal *farman* of 1662 loyally.⁹⁸

In 1679-80, Sultan Mohammed Aazim was recalled to the Court, the *Nawab* Shaista Khan was reappointed to the government of Bengal, and arrived at Dacca about the end of the year 1090 (1679-1680).⁹⁹

Immediately after Shaista Khan's return to Bengal (A.D.1679-1680), he was compelled, in obedience to the regulations of Aurangzeb, to enforce the *Jizia*, or poll-tax, from the Hindoos (Hindus), which circumstance rendered both him and the Emperor very unpopular throughout the province. At Hoogly (Hugli), his officers demanded payment of this tax by all Europeans and other Christians, but the Dutch and English refusing to pay it; the demand was modified into a present of Persian horses for the *Nawab's* use.¹⁰⁰

Again in 20th June 1682, Haji Safi Khan, the Imperial *Diwan* of Dacca, granted a *parwana* to the Dutch Company on the same lines of the royal *farman* of 1662.¹⁰¹

As mentioned earlier that in spite of Imperial *farmans* and grants, petty officials along the Hugli were inclined to impede the Dutch vessels carrying sugar, saltpetre, opium and grain. The Dutch though preferred to triumph over

97 *Ibid.*

98 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Vol. III (1676-1691), pp. 170-72.

99 Charles Stewart, *op. cit.*, p.307.

100 *Ibid*, p. 308.

101 *Corpus Diplomaticum* , Vol. III (1676-1691), pp.295-96.

these difficulties with their own brand of commercial diplomacy, sometimes using threat, at other times with presents and bribes. Hardly ever did they interfere in the politics of Bengal, preferring always to engross their trade.¹⁰² Meanwhile, the Dutch founded a factory for salting pork at Baranagar, north of Calcutta. But they could not continue their policy of non-intervention.¹⁰³

In August 1684, Martinus Huysman called for a Dutch squadron of four ships, arrived at Baranagar from Batavia, apparently to put stress on the local government for the free passage of their boats, when the looting started at Baranagar, the squadron opened fire on the looters, and all further hindrance afterward stopped, in consequence of which their sugar and saltpetre boats were allowed to go down river without interference in November of that year. Although, a little later, they had a fresh quarrel with the Mughal government of Bengal and in the following year a more serious event took place, and Huysman evacuated their factory from there. But when in 1686 a trouble broke out between the English and the local authorities, they were again put in possession of Baranagar so that they made a substantial profit in trade.¹⁰⁴

Between the middle of 1695 and the close of 1697, there was the revolt by the *Zamindar*, Sobha Singh of Chatwa-Barda in Midnapore district in Bengal, which kept the province in a state of serious disorder for nearly two

102 Owen C.Kail, *The Dutch in India*, p.130.

103 Anjali, Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, p.193.

104 Owen C.Kail, *The Dutch in India*, p.130. *cf.* Anjali, Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, p.193. In this situation of the English affairs, the Dutch and French took advantage of the dispute, particularly the former, who having eleven ships in the river, obtained valuable investments of goods, and re-established their factories; which, in consequence of the various oppressions they had sustained, they had previously determined to abandon (Charles Stewart, *op. cit.*, p.316).

and a half years.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, in 1696, in retaliation against the rebellion of the *Zamindar* Sobha Singh in the region, the Mughal fort there was captured and the higher authorities requested for Dutch assistance.¹⁰⁶ Initially, the Dutch factors turned down the request by the provincial administration for assistance in crushing the revolt.¹⁰⁷

The English letter of 25 August 1696¹⁰⁸ writes that the Governor of the fort was taken prisoner. Since the Dutch factory was close to the fort and since they had already some trouble with the rebels, the Dutch decided to intervene with the encouragement of the *Bakhshi-i-Suba*, who had just come from the Imperial Court. The French letter clearly speaks of the negotiation between the Dutch and the rebels, although the latter had only 100 cavalry and 300 infantry.¹⁰⁹ It was then decided to disregard the standing instructions by Batavia to maintain strict neutrality in situations of this sort, and steps were taken to restore the control of the fort to the Mughal authorities. A contingent of Dutch soldiers was deployed to surround the fort, and *Berkensteyn* was stationed in the Hugli river at a point from which its guns could cover the fort. The known superiority of European weaponry persuaded the rebels not to put up a fight. The fort was promptly vacated and the Dutch restored it to the *Bakhshi*, Mirza Hasan Ali's control.¹¹⁰

105 Om Prakash, "Seventeenth-Century India as Seen by the Dutch", in Irfan Habib, ed, *India-Studies in the History of an Idea*, Delhi, 2005, p.151. For more detail description of the revolt of Sobha Singh, See Aniruddha Ray; *Adventurers*, *op. cit.*, pp.117-129. For more detail information about the revolt of Sobha Singh & the Dutch assistance in retaking Hugly from the rebels, See Charles Stewart, *op. cit.*, pp.328-330.

106 George D.Winius & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, pp.60-61.

107 Om Prakash, "Seventeenth-Century India as Seen by the Dutch", p.151.

108 Aniruddha Ray, *op. cit.*, p.130.

109 *Ibid.*

110 Om Prakash, "Seventeenth-Century India as Seen by the Dutch", edited by Irfan Habib, p.151.

Thereafter, the *subahdar*, Ibrahim Khan, gave permission to all European companies to strengthen their defences and even build fortifications.¹¹¹ But having already overstepped his instructions, the *directeur* declined the offer and all defences thrown up around the Dutch factory at nearby Chinsura were dismantled.¹¹²

Dutch trade in eastern India, during the reign of Aurangzeb was regulated by the *farman* of 1662.¹¹³ But it is not known whether Aurangzeb issued any other *farman* to the Dutch in Bengal. Many *Parwanahs* issued later by the provincial officers of Aurangzeb's reign refer to this *farman* on the basis of which they confirmed the Dutch privileges.¹¹⁴ In the year 1700 when Murshid Quli Khan took over as *diwan* of Bengal, the Dutch had already established their trade.¹¹⁵ He found the Dutch enjoying the privilege of trade on payment of 3 ½ % customs. His attitude to the traders was friendly and hence he looked on the Dutch trade with compassion. It is not known what action Murshid Quli Khan took against the Dutch in course of executing the Emperor's *farman* of 1701 which ordered the provincial officers to seize the Europeans and their effects.¹¹⁶

In Bengal, by the end of 1702, circumstances had become complicated. The Emperor had ordered the prohibition of commerce with the Europeans, due

111 George D.Winius & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, p.61. For more detail description of Europeans fortifications See Charles Stewart, *op. cit.*, pp.329-330.

112 George D.Winius & Marcus Vink, p. 61.

113 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Vol. II (1650-1675), pp. 217-220; *Streynsham Master*, Vol. II, pp.26-28.

114 Abdul Karim, *Murshid Quli Khan And His Times*, Dacca, 1963, p.193.

115 *Ibid.*

116 *Ibid*, p. 194.

to the augmented piracy in the Indian Ocean. Consequently, the Dutch and the English were arrested at Chapra and Rajmahal. The Dutch and the English with their families were arrested at Kasimbazar also at the point of their leaving the factory at Kasimbazar.¹¹⁷

But by the end of February 1703, the European Companies got wind of the arrival of the order of the Emperor for lifting the ban.¹¹⁸ The *hasbal-hukm* issued under Asad Khan's seal in the 47th year of Aurangzeb's reign (1703) was addressed to Mir Abul Qasim, the *diwan* of Bihar, who had asked for clarification of a former order about the Dutch. The English translation is as follows: ".....The order you [Mir Abul Qasim] received formerly to take of the Armenians five per cent custome as of those that pay *jeizia* (or a duty account their religious recognition) and they [the Dutch] gave answers they were not Armenians but Dutch to which you replied the Christians gave formerly three and half per cent and that now you must pay five per cent as all those that pay *jeizia*, your saying that you are Armenians, Dutch or any other, that all stands for nothing, all this I observe, but: do you understand that this order relates only to the Armenians, as for the English and Dutch you are to let their business goe on as customary."¹¹⁹ It seems reasonable to assume that a

117 Aniruddha Ray, *op. cit.*, p.165. Om Prakash stated that, In 1703, a number of Dutch saltpetre boats on their way from Patna to Hugli were detained at Rajmahal pending the payment of tolls. The matter was finally settled after the boats had been under detention for 47 days, 7 tons of saltpetre had been forcibly taken out of them and Rs.600 extorted as tolls. A few days later, the boats were detained again just north of Kasimbazar at Balaghat, necessitating the payment of tolls once again; Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce*(chapter III), pp.277-278.

118 *Ibid*, p. 167.

119 Abdul Karim, *op. cit.*, p.233.

very considerable share in the growing export trade of the country was handled by the European companies which enjoyed such advantages.¹²⁰

Thus upon the arrival of Murshid Quli Khan, the Dutch approached their *wakil*, Rajballabh for a fresh *parwanah* in favour of their trade privileges. In 1704, Dutch succeeded in obtaining a *parwanah* by Murshid Quli Khan.¹²¹ It is difficult to say how much the Dutch paid to Murshid Quli Khan to obtain this *parwanah*.¹²² Wilson states that the Dutch paid Rs.30, 000 to the *diwan* as a price of this *parwanah*.¹²³

Consultation dated 29th September 1704 reads that “the Dutch satisfied the duan (*diwan*)”, but does not specify the amount of money. A letter of the English *Wakil* Rajaram to the Council quoting Murshid Quli Khan says that Murshid Quli Khan had decided to collect Rs.60, 000 from the traders, Rs.30, 000 from the two English companies and Rs.15, 000 each from the Dutch and the French.¹²⁴

An example of the responsiveness of the Bengal *farmans* to the changing demand conditions is provided by the following case. In 1706, while urging the imperial authorities to withdraw their order banning the Dutch from trading in Bengal, Murshid Quli Khan, the central *diwan* in the province, wrote to say that following the closure of the Dutch factory at Kasimbazar in 1704, the Hollanders’ demand for raw silk had registered a considerable decline

120 *Ibid.*

121 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, 1691-1725, p.226.

122 Abdul Karim, *op. cit.*, p.194.

123 *Ibid.*

124 *Ibid*, p.195.

leading to a substantial shift of land away from mulberry into rice and pulses. This had had an injurious effect on the exchequer's income from land revenue, in so far as mulberry lands were assessed at Rs.3 per *bigha* (in Bengal, the *bigha* was one-third of an acre) while the corresponding rates for rice and pulses-being lower value crops- were only Rs.0.75 and Rs.0.37 per *bigha* respectively. This could be reversed only if the fresh ban on Dutch trade was withdrawn immediately and the Company was persuaded to reopen their factory at Kasimbazar.¹²⁵

The period from 1686 to 1690 is considered to be that in which the Dutch trade with Bengal was in the most flourishing condition. When in 1686 the English East India Company declared war against the Mughal, the Dutch East India Company's Directors were concerned more with profit than with the acquisition of territory.¹²⁶ In comparison with the English, the Dutch were gradually losing ground in Bengal's trade; they were the next most important exporters of Bengal goods during the period under review.¹²⁷

But the Dutch were not destined to enjoy their dominance for long.¹²⁸

125 Om Prakash, *Precious Metals and Commerce* (chapter V), p.168n.25.

126 Anjali, Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, p.196.

127 Abdul Karim, *op. cit.*, p.226.

128 Anjali, Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, p.196.

Chapter - 4

The Dutch in Coromandel & the Mughal authorities After the Annexation of Golkunda

Chapter: 4

DUTCH IN COROMANDEL AND MUGHAL AUTHORITIES AFTER THE ANNEXATION OF GOLKUNDA

In the first half of the 17th century, it is interesting to note that for both the Dutch and English, India occupied a place of considerable importance from the very beginning of their commercial operations in the east.¹

In 1602, the year that saw the foundation of the Dutch east India company by a charter granted by the States-General of Netherlands. The founding of the Company had been preceded by a number of voyages to the east on the account of the so called pre-companies. The early traders had found that the most important medium used by Asian merchants to procure the Indonesian spices was Indian textiles which were in great demand in the region and extracted a high profit.² The three chief sources for the supply of Indian textiles were Gujarat, Coromandel and Bengal.³

The factories in Coromandel and Gujarat were answerable to the Governor- General and the Council at Jacatra (renamed Batavia in 1621) who, in turn, reported to the Central Board of Directors, the so-called *Gentlemen XVII* who met for six years in succession at the chamber of Amsterdam followed by two years at the chamber of Zeeland.⁴

1 *D. F. I. 1617-1623*, p. 1.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

4 *D.F.I. 1617-1623*, p. 2.

In 1603, under Admiral Steven van der Haghen, the Dutch Company sent a fleet to the east. In February, 1605, the *yacht Delft*, one of the fifteen ships in Van der Haghen's fleet, sailed from Achin to Masulipatam under the command of Paulus Van Soldt in the spring of the same year. Largely through the help of a Jewish merchant named Assalan, the Dutch were able to secure the right to trade at Masulipatam and the *Delft* sailed from Bantam leaving behind Pieter Ysaacx as the chief and several employees of the company to set up the Company's trade at Masulipatam by Van Soldt.⁵

Many of the problems which the Dutch had to face in Coromandel are traceable to the administrative conditions of the region. The main source of the troubles of the Dutch and English companies was the system of revenue- farming. Through which they had to wage a continuous struggle against the illegitimate demands and restrictive measures of the local authorities or buy their favours through expensive presents.⁶

The Dutch first came into contact with the region, north Coromandel, the northern part of the coast between the Godavari and Pennar rivers was included in the Qutbshahi kingdom of Golconda, one of the five Deccan Sultanates which arose after the disintegration of the Bahmani kingdom.⁷

The Southern part of the Coromandel Coast was included in Vijayanagar Empire, which was ruled by a number of semi-independent

5 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p.15. Moreland in *Relation*, pp. xxi-xxii. George D. Winus & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

6 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-8.

7 *D.F.I, 1617-1623*, p. 6. Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

feudatory chiefs. In 1564-65, after the defeat of Vijayanagar, the *nayaks* of Gingi, Tanjore and Madura were chief among them and the part of whose territories covered an ample area on south Coromandel.⁸ Thus under semi-autonomous *nayaks*, who were the real local powers with whom the Dutch had to deal.⁹

As we know that the Dutch East India Company wanted to monopolise the trade of spice islands of south-east Asia, as there was great demand of Coromandel clothes (Golconda textiles) in those Islands and these commodity could prove ready barter for local spices, and thus the Dutch reached Golconda in 1605 and started negotiation with the government or kingdom of Golconda for establishment of a factory on the Coromandel Coast at Masulipatam and trade concessions.¹⁰

Hendrick Brouwer, who later became the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, had described in 1612 that the eastern coast of India, the Coromandel was the “left arm of the Moluccas, and the surrounding islands because without textiles that come from there [the Coromandel coast], the trade in the Moluccas will be dead.”¹¹

Therefore, the first Dutch factory on the Coromandel Coast was established at Petapuli (or Nizampatam) in north Coromandel in 1606

8 *Ibid.*, p. 6. *Ibid.*, p. 4

9 George D. Winus & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

10. Moreland in *Relation*, pp. xxi-xxii; George D. Winus & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13; Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

11 *D.F.I.*, 1617-1623, p. 2; K.N. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 387; George D. Winus & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

followed by another in neighbouring Masulipatam the same year.¹² In the beginning, the two factories at Masulipatam and Nizampatam were independent of each other but in 1608 Nizampattam was placed under the authority of Masulipatam.¹³

During the first half of the 17th century when the Dutch and English established their trading factories in Golconda, they received concession in custom duties from the kings of Golconda. In 1606 with the help of Mir Jumla, Dutch secured a *farman* from the king of Golconda.¹⁴ Which guaranteed a fixed duty of 4 percent on their exports and imports.¹⁵

Further, they were exempted from the payment of the stamp duty (*chhap- dalali*) on cloth, which came to about 12 percent¹⁶ and had to be paid by all other traders' including the king's subjects.¹⁷

The Dutch faced constant problems with the local officials in 1607 at Masulipatam, the local governor (*the havaladar and shahbandar*) Sidappa, forced the Company to lend them 3,000 *pagodas* without interest, as the price of ratification of the royal *farman*.¹⁸

Dutch soon learned that in the delta of Krishna where their first Indian factories were located, was not the best place to provide all the

12. *D.F.I.*, 1617-1623, p. 6; W.H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

13. Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

14. *Ibid*, p. 16.

15. *D.F.I.*, 1617-1623, p. 6.; Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

16. *Ibid*, p. 6; *Ibid.*, p. 16.

17. Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

18. *Ibid*, p. 17.

requirements of their trade.¹⁹ In this way, the Dutch were looking for new trade prospects in south Coromandel to consolidate their position in Golconda.²⁰ Though, they moved further south, where the early VOC's factories were located in the delta between the Krishna and the Godavari rivers. This was the area from which much of the cotton cloth which was preferred in the Indies was produced. These considerations caused the Dutch factors to seek commercial concessions first at Tegenapatam(1608-9)in the territory of the *nayak* of Gingi and later in Pulicat (1610),which eventually became the main centre of Dutch trade in Coromandel until the headquarter was shifted to Negapatam in 1690.²¹

Pulicat was favourably situated for their trade in cloth. Moreover, it was in the middle of coast from where the Dutch influence could spread north and south. Besides the price of cloth being low ,there was a good market for lead, tin, copper, sulphur, pepper, lac (of many colours),porcelain cups, tortoise shell, mercury and leaf brass. While the Dutch trade rose and expanded on east coast Portuguese fortunes waned .They made several attempts to restore their influence and to impede Dutch activity, but to no avail.²²

By the middle of the 17th century the three European Chartered Companies i.e. the Dutch, the English and the Danish, had acquired and

19. W.H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

20. Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

21. K.N. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 388; Satish Chandra, *Medieval India*, vol. II, p. 397. Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-22; Moreland's *Relations*, pp. xxii-xiii.

22. Owen C. Kail., *Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India*, p. 177.

consolidated their settlements along the Coromandel Coast. In these settlements, they had instituted a commercial and administrative infrastructure. To achieve their aims they had begun to fashion appropriate investment policies as well as to pursue back-up political and diplomatic policies.²³

The Dutch, the most deeply entrenched among them, had opened factories at almost all the ports on the south-eastern coast by their agreements and treaties with the local rulers. Therefore, in the Coromandel they employed smiths, dyers, weavers and printers and also handel an amazing variety of cotton goods, purchased indigo and saltpeter and in lesser quantities exported diamonds and rubies from Golconda and pearls from the Tinnevely coast.²⁴

During the first half of the 17th century, powers of the Coromandel hinterland were generally attracted to the idea of European companies settling in their ports. They were given concessions in custom duties to carry on permanent trade there. Thus, in a period of imperial decline, the ruler of Vijayanagar not only permitted them(Dutch) at Petapoli in the year 1611 but to build a fort at Paleacat in 1612, and also concessions were granted on tariffs and judicial and police powers within their jurisdiction.²⁵

Like the Dutch, the English also subsequently established their factories on the Coromandel coast such as at Masulipatam and Petapoli in the year 1611. But their trade did not develop to the same extent as that of the

23 S. Arasaratnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65.

24 Owen C. Kail , *Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India*, p. 178.

25. S. Arasaratnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.

Dutch, probably because they did not have an equally extensive market in the Farther East.²⁶

On the Coromandel Coast, the only occupancy left to the Portuguese was the San Thome. However this last place was seized by the king of Golconda in 1662. Again it was captured by de la Haye, French Admiral in 1672.²⁷ When dispute arose between French and Golconda authorities, the Dutch tried to prevent Golconda official from making peace with the French in an attempt to recover San Thome.²⁸ Therefore, by a combined force of Golconda and the Dutch Company²⁹ and after a long blockade and siege the French surrendered in 1674.³⁰ The assistance given by the Dutch in the reconquest of San Thome won them important trading concessions in the Golconda domains.³¹

During the whole of the seventeenth century both the Dutch and English companies always received responsive deliberation from the kings of Golconda. From whom they not only received concessions in custom duties but they were also permitted to establish their own cotton weaving, painting and iron industries. They were also allowed to farm the towns of the kingdom. It is interesting to note that the Dutch had acquired the town of Palakollu on rent, paying 2,000 old pagodas annually and established there extensive

26. W.H. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

27. Owen C. Kail., "Dutch Commercial & Territorial Influence in India", p. 180.

28. *India in The 17th Century: Social Economic and Political (Memoirs of Franco is Martin) (167-1694) Vol. I, Part I, (1670-1674)*, Translated & Annotated by Lotika Varadarajan, New Delhi, 1981, p. 159.

29. K.N. Chaudhuri, p. 393.

30. Martin, Vol. I, Part I, p. 434.

31. S. Arasaratnam, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

weaving, painting, iron and indigo industries.³² They had a large building of stone there, where 8 to 10 officials were housed and about 70 Indian laborers worked.³³

In 1674, the Dutch were freed of all customs duties in the ports north of Masulipatam by a *farman* from the king.³⁴ Besides this in 1675, at Narsapur, the Dutch were also granted a piece of land by the Golconda king, Qutb Shah, where they built a house, a carpentry workshop and an iron-smithery.³⁵ Again, the Dutch were given integral freedom from excise duties in the kingdom of Golconda by the *farman* of 1676.³⁶

It is interesting to note that the relations between the Sultan and the Dutch merchants in his kingdom were extremely cordial. He visited Masulipatam in 1678 and attended the service in the Dutch Church. Thereafter, he invited the Dutch ladies to meet his wives, and as a sign of friendship, abandoned the payment of port dues and other tolls for one year.³⁷

There is a view that directly relates the decline of Masulipatnam to the successful Dutch trade in Golconda. This is perhaps an exaggeration of the importance of the Golconda factory and of the import trade relative to Coromandel's overall trade.³⁸

32 *EFI*, 1666-1667, p.330; Thomas Bowery, *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal*, 1669 to 1679, p. 105 n.2 & 106; *Streynsham Master*, Vol. II, pp. 116, 164.

33 S. Arasaratnam, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

34 *Ibid*, p.72.

35 *Ibid*, p. 69; *Streynsham Master*, Vol. II, p. 160.

36 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Vol. III, (1676-1691), pp. 12-15.

37 Owen C. Kail, *The Dutch in India*, P.88.

38 S. Arasaratnam, *op. cit.*, p. 70. Till the 1670 "the Dutch with relatively large capital resources, and their control of the trade of east and South-east Asia, dominated the Coromandel

During 1677-79, Bijapur was frequently attacked by the Mughal army and in September, 1677 an excursion was sent to Golconda as well. Consequently, Company's trade at Masulipatam and Golconda suffered heavily due to the prevailing condition in Golconda and adjoining areas, which was one of the uttermost vulnerability. And late in 1678, the revolt of some exasperated nobles further affected the safety of the Golconda trade-routes.³⁹

By the late 'seventies' the ambitions of two Brahmin brothers, Madanna and Akkana, who rose to the supreme position in the kingdom of Golconda, constituted a more direct threat to the interest of the Company.⁴⁰ For instance, in 1680's the Dutch had protected a major venture in the commerce of north Coromandel. Chirum Chodanda, a merchant and major buyer of Dutch imports at Golconda, had run up a huge debt amounting to over 150,000 *pagodas sar-i-khail* (Golconda chief-minister), Akanna who himself had claims on Chodanda, protected this merchant from the Dutch and would not allow them to prosecute their debts from him. There were numerous other Dutch grievances arising out of disputes over customs exemptions granted by the *farman* of 1676.⁴¹

markets.³⁸ Thereafter the growing financial strength of the English company and the heavy overhead expenses of the Dutch swung the balance against the latter. The Dutch were no longer able to dictate prices and qualities of cloth. Worse still they had allowed the potentially much bigger European market to pass into English control because of their preoccupation with South-east Asia"; R.N.Banerji, *Economic Progress of East India Company on the Coromandel Coast (1702-1746)*, Nagpur, 1st edition 1974, p. 186.

39 Tapan RayChaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

40 *Ibid.*

41 S. Arasratnam, *op. cit.*, p. 70. George D. Winus & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.

Eventually, Jacob Laurens Pit, the Dutch governor went on a mission to Golconda to negotiate with the king over this debt. But finally, the Golconda king refused to accept the claims of the Dutch. It was decided to abandon the factories at Dacheron and Palicol and seize Masulipatam in case the negotiations failed to produce the desired results. Late in 1685 Madanna and Akkana were murdered at Golconda through the machinations of some Muslim nobles and thus no payments were received for the copper seized by Akkana.⁴²

In 1680's the commercial activities of the Dutch seem to have been affected by the political and economic situation of Golconda. The Mughal invasion of Bijapur and Golconda in 1685-1686 and the eventual conquest of Bijapur in 1686 severely affected all trade between Golconda and the regions to its west and north. Due to the Mughal military operations Masulipatam was no more a secure port, thus the Dutch decided to move from Masulipatam to Pulicat.⁴³

The Dutch decided to use force to maintain their rights. In September, 1686, they took over the port of Musulipatnam and held it against a siege of the army of Golconda for two months.⁴⁴ Consequently, the demands of the Dutch were accepted by the Golconda king and in November 1686, king issued a *farman* to the Dutch. Accordingly, 120,000 *pagodas* in lieu of Kodanda's debt in five annual installments were to be paid to the Dutch out of

42 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

43 *Ibid*, pp. 69-70.

44 S. Arasranam, *op. cit.*, p.70

the revenues of Pulicat and Masulipatam. It was also confirmed by the *farman* of 1686 that from the revenues of Masulipatnam, 18,000 *pagodas* per year was to come out of this sum for which the *havaladar* was to be responsible and conclusively it came to an agreement promising the release of the ships they had seized and were also permitted to re-open their trade in the kingdom.⁴⁵

A dispute arose in Masulipatnam over an outstanding debt in 1687 and before the agreement could be settled, Aurangzeb's army appeared before Golconda. The country was overrun, the sultan deposed and the state integrated into the Mughal Empire. The Dutch took advantage of the situation, and on the pretext that they had been insulted, took possession of the city.⁴⁶

As a result of the disturbed conditions prevailing on the Coromandel Coast after Aurangzeb's conquest of Golconda, the authorities at Batavia decided to implement Van Rhee's recommendation.⁴⁷ Manucci stated that "on January 17, 1688 (letter to Surat), the English say they heard that the Mogul had ordered the Dutch to send up an ambassador, and was demanding sums of money for the confirmation of their former privileges. Again on September 13, 1688, Van Rhee, the Dutch commissary General at Pulicat was preparing a great '*Pishkas*' for the Mogul, said to be worth 40,000 *pagodas* elephants, horses, palkis, plate, jewels etc. 'Heer John Vakeerus' (Bacherus), the second in Council was to deliver it."⁴⁸

45 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. III, (1676-1991), pp. 416-418.

46 Owen C. Kail, *The Dutch In India*, pp. 89-90.

47 *Ibid.*

48 *Storia Do Mogor*, Vol. II, p. 360.

D. Chardin on February 22 wrote that the Dutch had not obtained their *farman* on August 28, 1688, the fort St. George authorities again speak of Hendrik Van Rheede, Dutch commissary- General, proposing to send Johannes Bacherus to the Mogul from Pulicat with a very large present. It was said that the Dutch were trying to get the English excluded from the Mogul's dominions by offering a payment of 8 lakhs of rupees a year.⁴⁹

As mentioned earlier that during the whole of 17th century, the Dutch Company always received responsive concessions from the king of Golconda. But unfortunately for the Dutch, it was overwhelmed by the Mughals and they had to arbitrate with the Mughal Government. Therefore, on 28th August, 1689 Johannes Bacherus was sent as an ambassador to the Emperor Aurangzeb who secured a *farman* from the Emperor confirming their commercial privileges enjoyed in the days of the Qutb Shahi kings. Thus, the *farman* completely laid out the extent of the concession and the restrictions of Dutch liability to taxation.⁵⁰

Consequently Aurangzeb's conquest of Bijapur and Golconda (1686-1687) marked the decline of the Coromandel *Gouvernement*. The factory at Nagelwanse was destroyed.⁵¹

Although the pattern behind the Dutch actions in Coromandel is clear to protect commercial interests and move away from areas disrupted by combat it would seem in this case that superintendent Hendrik Van Reede tot

49 *Ibid.*

50 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. III, (1676-1691), pp. 509-510.

51 Tapan Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

Drakensteyn's decision in 1690 to move the seat of the Coromandel *government* farther south from Pulicat in the north to Negapatnam.⁵² It may be of interest to record that Aurangzeb's *farman* of 1690 to John Bacherus of Surat, also confirmed the Dutch in their possession of Pulicat⁵³

Negapatam was surely not a more suitable place than Pulicat either as a commercial or as an administrative centre. The factory, even previously a burden on the Company, became very much more so, now that the heavy expenses of the castle and the garrison were added to the usual losses on trade.⁵⁴

But the real question was whether the VOC had gained any commercial or strategic advantage from the transaction. The invasion of Jinji by the Mughal armies to wrest it from Maratha control had caused widespread and long-lasting disruption of the economic conditions in the surroundings. None of this seems to have been beneficial to the relative position of the Dutch in the region. It would seem that Negapatnam proved to be a poor choice after all.⁵⁵

As we know that the Mughals were very keen to extract the custom duties from the European companies. It seems that old administration was surely not more cautious of its advantage than the new government for instance, in 1691, the *subadar* of Hyderabad apprehended that the Dutch were

52 George D. Winus, & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

53 O.C. Kail, *The Dutch in India*, pp. 89-90.

54 Tapan Raychaudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

55 George D. Winus & Marcus Vink, *op. cit.*, p.51.

carrying goods of private merchants along with theirs and thus were escaping examination at inland toll gates and pay the traditional inland tariff. Therefore he decided to put an end to the misdeed of the rights over the exemption of customs by the Dutch and during the same year (1691) an Imperial *Parwana* was issued by the governor of the country at the request of these officials, to tax all goods of Dutch at 3 ½ percent, as appeared at Surat.⁵⁶

In return Dutch governor was sorely tempted to retaliate by closing his storehouse to arriving textiles so that Indian painters and weavers could not barter to the Company. By bribing these officials they regulated the matter of contention more prudent or sensitive. Then the officials acquired an order for permitting the old concessions for an assessment free trade to the Dutch. In this way there was advantageous notification for the European companies.⁵⁷

In the course of commercial dealings between the European powers and regional officials. There was both a factor of strength and weakness for the European trading companies. The strength arose from the fact that the Europeans with their superior resources could deal from a strong position with hinterland officials who were always attracted by the steady revenues and customs resulting from European operations and as privileges and rights granted by once powerful central authorities would not necessarily be upheld except with the goodwill of local officials- something that could only be

56 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. IV,(1691-1725), pp. 8-9.

57 *Ibid*, pp. 115-16.

bought at a price, it was a factor of weakness. Regional officials became centres of power and influence with whom European powers could deal. This was with the expansion of Mughal power southwards and a weakening of control from the centre on revenues and resources of these new conquests.⁵⁸

In this connection, Muhammad Jafar, *Diwan*⁵⁹ of Hyderabad sent detailed information regarding the taxes and realisation. In this desired and written information, it was written from the office records of Abul Hasan and other information contained in it. They are available in document dated 15 *Rabi-us Sani* 39 R. Y. (23 Nov 1695).⁶⁰ I have offered translation of this rare and extremely significant document in *Appendix*.⁶¹

When disputes arose, it was seen to be as much because of the excessive claims to concessions and privileges of the Europeans as due to the rapacity of the local officials themselves. There was the realization of importance of attracting European trade by continuing some of these concessions. The officials also wanted to realize some benefits from this trade to support the establishments they were maintaining. Another cause for concern was the increasing trend to farm out permanently to the companies the revenues of ports and neighboring villages on a consolidated annual payment, where there were weaving, washing, dyeing, villages of artisans and labourers, it extensively expedited European investment.⁶²

58 S. Arasaratnam, *op. cit.*, pp.74-75.

59 J. F. Richards, *Mughal Administration In Golconda*. Oxford. 1975. P.185 & n. 3.

60 I am greatly thankful to Prof. Irfan Habib for providing me this document, *Inayat Jang collection*, National Archives of India, New Delhi, henceforth *I.J.coll*; I/39/ 6-9 & 10.

61 See details in *Appendix*.

62 S.Arassaratnam., *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.

Manucci stated that, it is not difficult to have a valid *farman*, but if the officials are not your friends, it serves you very little. This is why those who want to carry out their business must always make some presents to these men a custom followed throughout India⁶³

During the second half of the 17th century, the Mughal Emperor hastily recommended the concessions given to the European companies and the local Governors added their own impulse for their trade. For instance on 20 Feb. 1698, *Caul*, through the *Hauweldaar* (*havaladar*) of Palliacatta (Pulicat), Mahomed Ali Beek (Muhammad Ali Beg), The Dutch were well favoured, they were free from the port of Paleacat from custom duties payable to the *Faujdar* of the town.⁶⁴

On 5th September, 1698, the Dutch were granted a permanent farm of the port of Alempere (Alambaram) with its dependent villages for 50 *pardaos* a year, by the *nawab* of lower Karnatak.⁶⁵ Thus, Alambaram port was left under the directorate of the Dutch for facilitating trade of that port and they were also exempted from all import and export duties on their goods. In a similar manner, the Dutch were granted the lease of Kunimedu by the Mughal officials for an annual sum of 520 *pardao* together with rights over all its tariffs and taxes for ten years and after which in the tenth year it reached 845 *pardao*.⁶⁶

63 *Storia Do Mogor*, vol. II, p. 363.

64 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. IV, (1691-1725), p. 129.

65 *Ibid*, pp. 140-42.

66 *Ibid*, pp. 203-05.

In 1699, Norris was sent as ambassador to the court of the Mughal emperor to negotiate for the trade concessions as similar to the old company. In September 1699, Norris arrived at Masulipatnam and gives inestimable condition of administration of Masulipatanam and its port-city and politics during his stay in Masulipatnam⁶⁷

Amongst the local European factories, Norris considered that the Dutch factory was the only one kept in good repair.⁶⁸ Norris was greatly impressed by the prudent management by the Dutch of their affairs not only at Musulipatam, but also in other parts of India.⁶⁹ Most other offices relating to the Dutch East India Company were awarded by the Governor General of Batavia, who, with his select Council, had the chief management of their affairs. The Dutch in India never displaced an officer unless he was proved guilty of some serious offence.⁷⁰

The Mughal officials, including the *Kotwal* or *provost* marshal of Masulipatam, did not come in person, but sent their complimentary greetings with suitable gifts. It appeared that an official from the Dutch factory at Golkonda had been sent to discover the nature of his errand, and Norris believed that he was being spied upon from other quarters as well. The Dutch were naturally apprehensive about interference on the part of the New English Company with their trade both at Surat and on the Coromandel Coast; they

67 Harihar Das., *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb (1699-1702)*, Condensed and rearranged by S.C. Sarkar, Calcutta, 1st edition, October, 1959, pp. 113-195.

68 Ibid, p.126.

69 Ibid .

70 Ibid.

were closely watching the development of the English mission and hoping that it might miscarry.⁷¹

Norris was inspired by country, residence, market garden, cemetery that the Dutch had put up in their land.⁷² In October 1699, *Faujdar* of a neighboring town, Petapoli paid an official visit to the Masulipatnam. He was attended by some horsemen, five palanquins and about twenty or thirty peons and he was accompanied by both the *Havaladar* and the *Kotwal* of the town and first paid a visit to the Dutch chief, Bruyning Wildelandt at their residence and then *Faujdar* went to see ambassador Norris but he was affronted by this and repudiated to meet with *Faujdar*. On that account, the Dutch still enjoyed considerable prestige in the town.⁷³

By 1700, in any case, the bulk of Dutch textile investments had passed from Coromandel to Bengal, which was given like the English policy, first priority in the distribution of supplies of money.⁷⁴ The Directors complained about the poor quality of the Coromandel cottons, and also found an increasing difficulty in providing suitable imports. Thus, sugar from Batavia, the sales of which in other parts of Asia were generally expanding in the 18th century, in Coromandel was marked by a steady decline.⁷⁵

71 *Ibid*, pp. 133-34.

72 *Ibid*, pp. 129-30.

73 *Ibid*, p. 143.

74 R.N.Banerji, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-87.

75 *Ibid*, p. 187: "Equally, Coromandel culminated to take the immensity of the Dutch copper, as it had done in the 17th century, and the Dutch had hardship in finding gold with which to make good the deficiency in their purchasing power for the Japanese government's debasement of the gold *Koubangs* in 1696 and 1720 mean that their sale in Coromandel yielded nit a profit, as

As we have already mentioned that the port of Alambaram with its dependent villages for fifty *pardao* a year and village of Kunimedu was given in lease to the Dutch together with rights over all its tariffs and taxes for ten years as 520 *pardao* for annual sum but due to circumstances of commercial difficulties Dutch dispassionately discarded the lease of both Kunimedu and Alambaram. For the period of five years, the port of Sadraspatnam and the villages of Umarimayur, Kalpakkum, Eddayur and Alathur were handed over to the Dutch in 1701 by the *faujdar* of Chingleput for a total annual sum of 3000 *pardao*.⁷⁶ And these grants were very fruitful. Thus for facilitating the trade of these parts, in 1705, Daud Khan, Mughal general of South Karnatak granted the lease of Sadraspatnam to the Dutch and lease of Sadraspatnam was made abiding for a yearly defrayal of 3500 *pardao*.⁷⁷

The residents of Hyderabad city might have taken comfort from the fact that they shared the Maratha affliction with the remainder of the population of Hyderabad. The rich coastal ports were a natural target. A major incursion coincided with the attacks on Hyderabad.⁷⁸ The Maratha invasions continued eastwards and in February 1704 “an army of twelve thousand horse and ten thousand foot (infantry) which attacked a factory (*Habitation*) called Policonde [*Palakollu*, five leagues from *Machipatanam* (Masulipatam)] and exacted *chauth* (one –fourth of the revenues) from all neighborhood villages.

in the Seventeenth century, but an increasing loss. Due to the Dutch dominance over the port in the overseas trade of Coromandel it had lost its implication.”

76 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. IV, (1691-1725), pp. 201-03.

77 *Ibid*, pp. 251-53.

78 J.F. Richards, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

The deputies of the king, the governors and generals of the regions, could not prevent these extortions... finally the English and the Dutch mounted guard with great exactitude, but the Mahrattahs (Marathas), having taken all they could get, retired.”⁷⁹

The Dutch took the opportunity to fortify their residence in the city. There are only traces of these events in the English records. For instance, on March 13, 1704, we read: “Metchlipatam (Masulipatam) is fortified per the Dutch and us as well as the short time wee have will permit, but ‘tis feared the *Ffusder* [*Faujdar*] of this place will make no opposition when the robbers come; the Dutch has already received 20 soldiers and officers from Negapatam, the Morrattas (Marathas) being expected here in a few days.”⁸⁰

The Dutch account of these events can be seen in a letter of October 19, 1704, from Negapatam to Williem van Outshoorn, Governor General, and the Council at Batavia. The assailant seems to have been the ‘robber’ Riza Khan. The twenty soldiers were dispatched from Negapatam on March 20 in the *Drakensteyn*, and placed under the command of Ensign Jeronimus Leek. A Portuguese sloop, manned by topases and Bengalis, had been hired on the spot in preparation for fight, and sixty local boatmen were also entertained. The *Faujdar* and his brother, the *Darogah*, were suspected of collusion with the invader, and this was borne out by their subsequent flight when they found the Europeans were on the alert and too strong for them. Riza Khan, who had

79 *Storia Do Mogor*, vol. III, pp. 475-76.

80 *Ibid*, p. 476 n.258.

been encamped two and half Dutch miles west of Euroepalem, finally made off by way of Nagelwanse and Palewanse into another district.⁸¹

Another hurdle to the trade of the European companies in Masulipatnam arose from the conflict blossoming between them and the Mughal Empire over piracy in the western Indian Ocean. Piracy continued and the Mughals sought indemnification and the warranty from the Dutch, who had decided to blockade the port to secure their interest. This eventuated in a conflict between the Dutch and the Mughal government and emperor issued a *Has-ul-hukm* (order by *Wazir* in the emperor's name), dated 8 *Shawwal*, year 48, 1115 H. (February 13, 1704), prohibiting European trade in Mughal dominions until the problem was resolved.⁸²

On the Coromandel it was not a total prohibition, having a greater impact on the northern part than the south. The Dutch used their merchant intermediaries to bribe the Mughal officials, particularly successfully in southern Karnatak, to allow their trade to pass. A gift of Rs.5750 to the *diwan* Mir Q'uama ensured Dutch trade uninterruptedly in Masulipatnam, Drakshavaram and Palakollu.⁸³ Similarly a present given to the *Sar-i-Lashkar*, Medi khan, freed the trade in Bimilipatnam and Srikakulam.⁸⁴

In may 1707, after the approval of codification of forbiddance, Rustam Dil Khan, who was the governor of Hyderabad at that time, perceived

81 *Ibid.*

82 *Ibid*, pp. 464-66.

83 S. Arasaratnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77.

84 *Ibid.*

that if the Dutch deserted these lands it would induce their devastation and reason they would be deprived of lead, tin and other decisive goods brought by them and required by Mughals and this should be brought to the consideration.⁸⁵

By the end of 1707, Dutch merchants in Hyderabad concluded that the continued unsuppressed revolt of the hereditary Telugu police officials (*muniwars*) and tax intermediaries (*landpagters* i.e. *deshmukhs*) meant that throughout the province the trade privileges granted by the Mughals could no longer be protected. Furthermore, although the Dutch did not articulate this, the obvious course of action for merchants in such a situation would be to come to terms with whoever could provide such protection.⁸⁶

The traditional tax-tribute structure of the Hyderabad countryside, which had continued to function through the earlier part of the Mughal administration, had virtually collapsed by the end of Yusuf Khan's governorship.⁸⁷ By 1711, in the province- *zamindars*, *rajas*, *deshmukhs* and village headmen-only paid their revenue obligations under pressure. In other words, Mughal government in Hyderabad was suffering a crisis of confidence.⁸⁸

At a time when the isolated Mughal *Faujdars* and fort commanders in the countryside so badly needed assistance, Yusuf Khan's army at the

85 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. IV, (1691-1725), pp. 262-63.

86 J.F. Richards, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-44.

87 *Ibid*, p. 254.

88 *Ibid*.

capital was incapacitated by a mutiny. Instead of marching against the Marathas, Mirza Ali, the governor's secretary, were forced to placate the dangerously aggrieved soldiers, unpaid for over a year. Thereafter, the claims of the soldiers forced Mirza Ali and Muhammad Ali into expeditions against various *zamindars* in which the object was not really tax-collection but *ad hoc* pillaging of the countryside.⁸⁹

The most noteworthy example of this phenomenon was the fate of Muhammad Ayar Mirza Beg, *Faujdar* of the southern coastal districts (and son-in-law of Mirza Ali, the provincial *Diwan*)⁹⁰ Ayar Beg could not raise enough taxes to pay his soldiers. Ayar Bek's soldiers then mutinied, seized their commander and indiscriminately attacked Ranga Razu's territories. They "robbed all his governments burning towns killing many people, much people leapt into [the] river. Men, women and children there perish."⁹¹

Ayar Beg's desperate army with its commander as prisoner, continued to scourge the countryside in the ensuing months (1711). The leading inhabitants had already asked the Dutch to help them defend the city against these raids. Various merchant groups in the town, Muslim, Hindu, and Europeans, organized and financed a joint defense effort-spurred by a warning letter from Ayar Beg. When Ayar Beg's mutinying soldiers arrived, they were ready for them. The helpless commander, whose wife, steward, and personal

89 *Ibid*, p. 256.

90 *Ibid*, p. 256 & n.6: According to the Dutch merchants he administered Machilipatnam, Nizampatnam, Kondapalli, Kondavidu, and Khammamett districts (K.A.(29.9. 1711), Fol. 29).

91 *Ibid*, p. 257.

priest, and the remainder of his household lived in the town, tried to raise a 500,000-rupee loan. The response was negative when Ayar Beg returned with empty hands, the soldiers then forced to lead an attack on the town. In the cause of the assault a Dutch cannon shot killed Ayar Beg and two of his followers.⁹²

After the death of Aurangzeb (in 1707), another ambassador was sent to the Mughal Court for renewal of the charters of trade privileges with the new Mughal Emperor. Therefore, on 11th August 1712, Joan Josua Ketelaar received a *farman* by Emperor Jahander Shah, *farman* given to Ketelaar recapitulated similar conditions of *farman* of 1689 which was issued by Emperor Aurangzeb.⁹³

The dispute over the Paleacat villages broke out again in 1710 and later in 1716 when there was an open dispute between Dutch and Mughal officials.⁹⁴ In Bimilipatnam the Hindu zamindars refused to recognize concessions given in the *farman* and there was a conflict resulting in stoppage of trade in 1700-1. In the Godavari region the Dutch were caught in a conflict between Hindu rajas and Mughal overlords. Hindu local authorities refused to recognize concessions given by the Mughals.⁹⁵

In 1723 Humphery Holcombe, the British merchant sent to reopen the east India company trading station, reported about his difficulties in

92 *Ibid*, pp. 257-58.

93 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. IV(1691-1725), pp. 413-19.

94 S. Arasaratnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.

95 *Ibid*.

making repairs to the factory because of demands on the labour force in the port. The Dutch were rebuilding their godowns. It was difficult to mobilize skilled labour ; wages of labour had increased abruptly presumably under disturbed circumstances.⁹⁶

The new administration resulted in changes in the coastal districts. At the end of 1724 the town of Masulipatnam was blockaded due to the changes in the government. It was frequented by the rebellions. As a result the Havaldar of the Masulipatnam prohibited all trade with the Dutch because he was displeased with the Dutch and said that they were impartial in this battle. But with the proposal of a grant or gift, this restriction on trade was lifted.⁹⁷

Ihtida Khan who was the personal representative of new Nizam received impressive welcome and ample gifts from the servants of the Dutch Company. As a result, in February 1725, the *Parwana* of Nizam gave a complete freedom on toll taxes, to the Dutch.⁹⁸

Another *Parwanas* was issued to the *faujdars* of hinterland districts instructing them that goods of Dutch should not be molested and should be freely permitted without any custom charges.⁹⁹

There were bitter complaints from both Vizagapatam and Fort St. David in 1725 that the large Dutch contracts had made the local weavers extremely careless about the size and quality of the piece goods they supplied

96 J.F. Richards, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

97 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. IV (1691-1725), pp. 567-68.

98 *Ibid.*

99 *Ibid*, vol. V (1726-1752), p. 35.

to the English, knowing that in the Dutch they had an alternative buyer. Thus, the Injeram factory complained in 1726 that because the Dutch took very ordinary cloth, it was difficult for them to procure cloth as goods as the musters sent by the Madras Council.¹⁰⁰ Injeram also complained in 1728 that the Dutch had pushed their prices up, so that the English could get very little cloth made¹⁰¹ and in 1730 that the Dutch at Bimlipatam had offered such encouragement to the weavers that the English investment was greatly hindered.¹⁰²

But again a major conflict broke out in Palakollu and Drakshavaram in 1725-30 and the Dutch factory was attacked and plundered by Ramarasu in 1728.¹⁰³ The damage suffered was estimated at 13,500 *Pagodas*. As a result of the frustration caused by these attacks, the Dutch officers of Coromandel put forward a plan to attack and seize Masulipatnam or Devi Island and hold it against hinterland governments. They proposed that this could be done by two armed Yachts, two, or three sloops and 100 soldiers. The proposal was discussed in the Council in Batavia and rejected as not feasible.¹⁰⁴

On 5th May 1734, Haji Hussain, the *Faujdar* of Elluru, Rajamundry and neighbouring areas granted a *Caul* to the Dutch and permitting them to build walled residence in Kakinada and requested them to reestablish their

100 R.N. Banerji, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

101 *Ibid.*

102 *Ibid.*, pp. 187-88. There was then a brief but welcome intermission, when the Dutch abandoned their northern factories after a conflict with the local rulers and the English were able to buy freely, but after the Dutch return in 1734, complaints were renewed of rising prices and falling quality.

103 S. Arananratnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.

104 *Ibid.*

trade in Palikollu and Drakshavaram which was the interior weaving centres. Finally, they chose Jagannaikpuram (Jagannathpuram) near Kakinda for lading and unlading of their goods.¹⁰⁵

During the Maratha invasion of the Carnatic in 1740-41 the Dutch were driven out of Porto Novo, and took refuge in Cuddalore. But in 1743, when Nizam-ul-Mulk was at Trichinopoly they sent their agents to him to seek their right to fortify Porto Novo. This, to the relief of the English at Fort St. David, was denied to them; yet in 1745 they renewed their request, backed by a promise of money, with the Nawab of Arcot. As a result of this embassy, they left Cuddalore, resettled at Porto Novo and prepared to build a wall round it.¹⁰⁶

The French and the Dutch attempted to make their respective silver rupees of Pondichery and Madras current in the region but the regional governors prevented it and forced them to exchange these at unfavorable rates. In 1745 Dutch, who tried to imitate the Madras *pagodas* of three images to get them in circulation in the Northern provinces through their factories there. This attempt, however, failed as the local shroffs there discovered the imposition at first sight and refused to accept them on their face value. As a result these were all refunded to Negapatam and melted into Dutch *pagodas*.¹⁰⁷

105 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. V (1726-1752), pp. 203-209.

106 R.N. Banerji, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

107 *Ibid*, pp. 160-61.

Because of the high price of copper, *Faujdar*, on 5th November 1752 granted a right to the Stephanus Rinck, Dutch chief of Jagannaikpuram (Jagannathpuram) to set up a mint and allowing them for the transport of copper and silver for the purposes of coinage and also liberated from all *diwani* taxes.¹⁰⁸

The Directors complained of the poor quality of the Coromandel cottons, and also found increasing difficulty in providing suitable imports.¹⁰⁹

108 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. V (1726-1752), pp. 589-592.

109 R.N.Banerji, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

Chapter - 5

*The Dutch: Surat & Inland Factories
1659 onwards: The Blockade of Surat,
End of Aurangzeb's Reign*

Chapter: 5

THE DUTCH: SURAT & INLAND FACTORIES 1659 ONWARDS: THE BLOCKADE OF SURAT, END OF AURANGZEB'S REIGN

The Commercial organization of the north European trading companies in India rested on a common structural form throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Its main feature was a head settlement or factory situated at or near some major Indian port with subordinate stations in the interior where many of the export goods were produced. The head settlements were normally independent of one another's authority, though close operational ties were maintained between them. The principal factories of the VOC were at Surat, Cochin, Pulicat, Negapatam, Masulipatam, and Hugli.¹ The Dutch East India Company was the major European trader with India during the major part of the seventeenth century. Surat was the major port of the Mughal India.

If the possession of fortified trading settlements, well secured by the power of the 'great guns' was one of the accepted methods of European trade in Asia, another equally strong tradition was the use of the naval blockade. In the important trading areas, such as Surat or Hugli, where the Europeans loved and traded under the jurisdiction of Mughal officers, the threat of a maritime blockade preventing the indigenous ships from having the ports was the European answer to their vulnerability on Land.²

1 K.N. Chaudhauri, pp. 391-392.

2 *Ibid*, p.394.

When a dispute broke out between the trading companies and the Mughal authorities, the first step taken by the officials was that they often cut off the supplies of food and other commodities which European merchants had brought for their own private use. Secondly, the disputes mostly occurred over the payments of customs dues or some other forms of financial impositions, which the European trading companies considered discretionary and unjustified. The Mughal officers, on their part, frequently complained that the servants of the companies were evading the just payment of duties on their own private trade or allowing the Indian merchants to transport goods in ships showing European flags.³

Aurangzeb, who ascended the throne in 1658 under the title of Alamgir (Conqueror of the world), was born in 1619, and died in 1707.⁴

In the beginning of Aurangzeb's reign, trouble was caused at Surat with the Dutch after prince Murad's capture of the city of Surat. Murad Bakhsh had sought the help of the Dutch.⁵ The rumour had spread that the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan had died and his youngest son, Murad Baksh who was the governor, ruled over the lower country for his father, seized the Castle of Surat, to hold it in case of fight for the crown started among his brothers. He had promised the Dutch East India Company officials freedom at

3 *Ibid.*

4 F. Bernier, p. 5n.

5 W.ph. Coolhaas, ed. *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs- General en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oost-Indische compagnie (henceforth G.M.)*, 's- Gravenhage, 1968, Vol. III, 1655-1674, p. 227.

Surat port in return for their support in capturing the fort.⁶ Since Dutch had realized that the possibility of Murad Baksh maintaining himself was remote the offer was not heeded.⁷

In December 1658, the governance of Surat was placed in the hands of Mirza Mina, who was inclined towards the Dutch. He had asked the Dutch East India Company to give him anchors.⁸ From 1 June 1657 to 31 May 1658, the Dutch had earned fl. 197306. 4. 1. and had invested fl. 90260. 11. 14. But this latest figure is low because few Dutch ships arrived at Surat.⁹

A similar narrative is provided by the English sources. A trouble was caused at Surat with the Dutch and the English after prince Murad's capture of the city of Surat in 1659, during the early years of Aurangzeb's reign. A number of guns were needed for the reduction of Surat castle and was delivered by one Rovington, member of Surat council to Shahbaz Khan, the general of prince Murad, in 1657,¹⁰ Shahbaz Khan made overtures to the Dutch and the English president at Surat for assistance in capturing Surat. Promising them the remission of half the customs duties and other privileges but neither chief had much faith in prince Murad's prospects of success. Shahbaz, however, was able to purchase from Rovington, the head of the English factor, in his private capacity, some guns which were not the property

6 Rijcklof Van Goens, *Commissaris en Veld , overste der Oost-Indische compagnie en Zijn Arabeids veld 1653/54 en 1657/58*. Groningen, 1916, p. 193.

7 Rijcklof Van Goens., p. 193

8 G.M. Vo. III, 1655-1674, p. 228

9 *Ibid*, P. 228.

10 *EFI. 1655-1660*, PP.124, 214, 218.

of the English company. He also managed to dig out of the sands at Suwali some small guns which had been buried there by the English.¹¹

Since the English received no payment for this owing to the failure of prince Murad, they blockaded Surat port until July 1661, thus disturbing the Surat trade, including that of the Dutch but the English finally lifted it on July 27, 1661 after the conclusion of an agreement with the Mughal Government.¹²

Dirk van Adrichem, was the chief, or director, of the Dutch factory at Surat from 1662 to 1665. He succeeded in obtaining a 'Concession' ('*Firmaan, of gunst- brief*'), dated Delhi, 20th October 1662 from Aurangzeb which conferred valuable privileges upon the Dutch in Bengal and Orissa.¹³

According to Bernier who was present at Delhi at the time, the chief aim of the Dutch embassy which secured the *Farman* was to ingratiate themselves with the Mughal emperor, and to impart to him some knowledge of their nation, so that a beneficial influence might thus be produced upon the minds of the governors of the Sea-ports, and other places, where the Dutch had established factories. They hoped that those governors would be restrained from obstructing their commerce, by the consideration that they belonged to a powerful state, that they could obtain immediate access to the king. They endeavored also to impress the government with an opinion that their traffic with *Hindoustan* was most advantages to that kingdom.¹⁴

11 *Ibid*, 1655-1660, pp. 122-124

12 *Ibid*, 1661-1664, pp. 13-15

13 A. J. Bernet Kempers, *Journal van Dircq van Adrichem's Hofries naar den Groot-Mogol Aurangzeb*, 1662, 's-Gravenhage, 1941, pp. 217-218; The date of obtaining the *farman* was 20 October 1662 and not 29 October 1662 as is given by A. Constable and V.A. Smith in the footnote 3 on p. 127, see F. Bernier, *op. cit.*

14 F. Bernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-129.

There is reference that when the van Adrichem embassy was sent to the court of Aurangzeb in 1662 to seek the renewal of the Company's privileges by the new emperor, one of the concessions obtained was that the buyers of the Company's copper would not be obstructed from carrying it out of the city, provided the Company continued to import large quantities of the metal. This clause of the *Farman* was, however, not actually honored in that the buyers of the Company's copper continued to be required to take the metal to the imperial mint.¹⁵

The strict quality control exercised on the Imperial issues ensured acceptance of the Mughal coinage of a given metal and of a given vintage at par throughout the Empire. However, in the eighteenth century, as the decline of the empire set in, the acceptability of *sikka* rupees at par throughout the empire, irrespective of where they had been minted, might have been eroded somewhat.¹⁶

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the Company also obtained silver rupees in Surat. The Mokha was often referred to as the 'treasure chest', of the Mughal Empire. But the Dutch Company's attempts to establish trade relations with Mokha were not particularly successful.¹⁷ According to Aziza Hasan the increase in Mughal silver-currency in the last phase, then, was probably caused by a real drain of silver from Europe, for financing the Indian trade by the Dutch, English and French Companies and

15 Om Prakash. *Precious Metals and Commerce*, (in Chapter XII), p. 479.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 479.

17 *Ibid.*, (in chapter IX), pp. 88.

by private European merchants. The fact of this huge drain is, of course, attested to also by the formidable opposition to the export of bullion which developed in the countries of Western Europe during the latter half of the 17th century.¹⁸

Inayat Khan, who succeeded Mustafa Khan, on assuming charge dismissed the entire old staff of the custom and filled the other offices by his own men.¹⁹ The Dutch chief at Surat reported that (20th Sept. 1663) the merchants had suffered many affronts (abuses) from the new governor's son, who had been made the head of the custom-house and assumed to himself so much authority that one would have thought that he was in his father's place. These complaints were jointly made by the Dutch and the English to the governor (*Mutasaddi*), who promised better treatment in future.²⁰

In 1664 Shivaji's attack on Surat disturbed the commercial activities of the Indians and Europeans alike. As the original letter from the President and Council (28 January, 1664) reported that "on 6th of January 1664, it was brought us a hot alarme that Sevogee (Shivaji), the grand rebell of Decan, was within 10 or 15 miles of the towne. This sudden surprise stricke such a terrour to all, both men, women & children, that the governour and the rest of the Kings ministers and eminent merchants betooke themselves to castle; which the townes folke perceiveing left theire houses and what ever

18 Aziza hasan, 'The silver currency output of the Mughal empire and prices in India During the 16th and 17th centuries' *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, (henceforth *IESHR*) vol. VI, 1969, p. 98.

19 E.F.I. 1661-64, pp. 203-205.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 206.

belonging to them, and fled with their wives and children, some upon the river in vessayls and boates, some to the out villages, that in few howers the whole towne was dispoepled, excepting that part of the towne about us, in hopes of our protection”.²¹ Inayat Khan, who was the governor (*Mutasaddi*) of Surat, at that time, failed to resist Shivaji and then fled to the Surat fort (castle),²² the garrison of which remained entirely on the defensive. Only the English and the Dutch merchants displayed a bold front and defied the intruders.²³ Like the Governor and local merchants they (the Dutch and the English) also could have run away safely to their ships at Swally leaving their money and goods to plunder. But these foreign merchants, resolved to defend their own factories at all costs.²⁴

In the following period (6th January, 1664,) when Shivaji arrived at Surat. He immediately sent two messengers with a letter requiring the governor and the three most eminent merchants and richest men in the city, viz, Haji Zahid Beg, Virji Vora, and Haji Qasim, to come to him in person immediately and make terms otherwise he threatened the town. No reply was given and Shivaji started the loot of Surat entering the defenseless and almost deserted city.²⁵

The loot of Surat continued. Shivaji plundered the city and set on fire.

When Shivaji raided the house of Haji Zahid Beg, the English offered help to

21 *Ibid*, pp. 298-99.

22 Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, 2 vols., & Supplement, Baroda 1927-28, 1939, (henceforth *Mirat*, I, p. 256; *E.F.I.* 1661-64, pp. 305, 296; Bruce, vol. II, p. 144.

23 *E.F.I.* 1661-64, p. 296.

24 *Ibid*, p. 308.

25 *Ibid*, p. 299.

him against Shivaji. But Shivaji was angry with the English and he sent them a message calling upon them to pay him three lac of rupees or else let his men freely loot the Haji's house. But the President Oxenden adopted a firm attitude and rejected both the demands of Shivaji and informed, "We are ready for you and resolved not to go away". To this challenge Shivaji gave no reply.²⁶

It is interesting to note that in January 1664, at the time of Shivaji's attack on Surat, the Dutch house is described as standing among tiled and thatched houses, that which were set on fire though the Dutch house escaped destruction.²⁷

According to the Bernier, "The dwelling of the English and Dutch likewise escaped his visits, not in consequence of any reverential feeling on his part, but because those people had displayed a great deal of resolution, and defended themselves well. The English especially, assisted by the crews of their vessels, performed wonders, and saved not only their own houses but those of their neighbours".²⁸

Later on in the same letter (1664) the President and Council reported a fresh alarm, which fortunately proved groundless:

"Wee have had second alarmes of Sevages retourne to Surat; which did soe scare all the inhabitants that they all fled, some in boats and some into

26 *Ibid*, pp. 303-05.

27 *Ibid*, pp. 300-301.

28 F. Bernier, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

inland villages, to preserve themselves and their families from his cruelty, that the flight was worse then at his first plundering and burning the towne, and hee become so terrible that report of his approach is sufficient at any time to dispeople the small remainder of the citty....”²⁹ On hearing the arrival of a Mughal army, Shivaji departed from Surat in the 12th January, 1664, and carried away enormous haul (booty) in gold, silver, pearls, precious stones and diamonds amounting to more than ‘a crue [krore] of rupees.’³⁰ There was insecurity at Surat and so Aurangzeb sent a large army against Shivaji on the arrival of the Mughal army. Sir George Oxinden was thanked by the Mughal commander, for his fidelity to the Moghal, and an extension of the privileges of trade to the English was provided with an exemption from the payment of customs for one year.³¹

The Dutch letter from Surat already mentioned gives (as summarized in the *Dagh-Register*) the further intelligence that Mahabat Khan, with four or five thousand horses, reached the city a fortnight after the departure of Sivaji; that the Emperor, on learning the news, chastised the Governor, the Captain of the castle, and the ‘*Commissaris*’ [Kotwal?], and ordered that a wall should be built round the city to guard against a repetition of the raid; and that, in compensation for their losses, all merchants, including the English and the Dutch, were granted a remission of customs duties for one year.³²

29 *E.F.I.*1661-64, pp. 302-03.

30 *Ibid*, 1661-64, pp. 301, 303.

31 Bruce, Vol. II, p.145.

32 A letter from Batavia to Holland, repeating this intelligence, is to found in the *Hague Transcripts* (series i. vol. xxvii. no. 711); quoted in *E.F.I.*1661-64, pp.310-311.

In a letter of 4 April, 1664, from Surat to the Company English factors found that the Europeans stood firm because of their determination and superiority in fire-power. Aurangzeb granted a remission of customs duties for one entire year to all merchants.³³

Again, English factors at Surat in a letter to the Company, dated 19 May, 1664 said that Aurangzeb was pleased with the English and granted them a remission in reward for the fearless armament of their factories against Marathas (Shivaji), "The King hath graunted to all custome free for one whole yeare for all that shall bee either exported or imported in this port; and since wee have received a letter from Gafferekaune [Jafar Khan], the King's *Dewan*, which is called a *husbull huckum* or the Kings speciall command, that acquaints us the King received our letter and petition of the accompt of the fight, and read it with soe great content, and soe much satisfaction that hee had those in his country that faced his enemy, that thereupon hee gave to all the favour expresst of a yeaes custome gratis, and for our further encouragement, from the expiration of the yeare the halfe of our customes for ever."³⁴ As the assertion made that half the customs were to be remitted to the Company for the future seems to have been based on some misunderstanding, the fact being that they were granted a reduction of one-half per cent; viz.

33 *E.F.I.* 1661-64, pp. 311. According to Irfan Habib, "In 1666, on orders from the Imperial Court the English and Dutch were asked to recruit "five gun- founders and two engineers or pioneers" for imperial service, it being stipulated that they were to be " very experienced practical men", while the pay was to be "inviting". However, there is no evidence that any gun-foundry worked on Europeans lines was ever actually established in the Mughal Empire," Irfan Habib, 'The Technology and economy of Mughal India', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. XVII, Jan-March, 1980, P.20.

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 312-13.

from 2½ to 2.³⁵ This appears from the text of the document itself, as represented in translation provided by the English factors, and then continues:

“The king, out of his own favor to the merchants, Mahometans, Hindoes, Armenians, Hollanders, English, Portugez, French, and Mallabars, for jewels, gold, silver, horses, and all other goods that come from the other ports to Surrat, and for all other foods that are carryed out from the happy Hindustan to other places, the whole customes thereof which are taken in the custome house for the Kings accompt he hath given free for one yeare. And, moreover, haveing regard to the welfare and good condition of the Dutch and English, in the customes which are paid by other merchants and them hath freely rewarded you; for of the 2 ½ per cent. Which you pay to the Kings custome house he hath given you ½ per cent. free, and hath wrote a *Phyrmand* to the officers of the *bundar* (port) that they alwaies take 2 per cent. Custome upon all your goods.”³⁶

But a little later the English factors reported that the concession was made to the Dutch as well as to the English; and this is confirmed by the *Dagh-Register* (1664) which agrees that the reduction was by one-half per cent.³⁷ It appears also that this applied only to imports, the duty paid on exports by the English continued to be three per cent. until 1667.³⁸ Again in 1667, custom duty was lowered from 3 ½ % to 2 % on the goods of the Dutch

35 *Ibid*, p. 314.

36 *Original Correspondence*, No. 3025; quoted in *E.F.I.*1661-64, pp. 314-15.

37 *Dagh-Register gehouden in't casteel van Batavia, (1624 to 1682 with gaps)*. Batavia 1889-1928 (henceforth *Dagh Register*), J.A.van der Chijs, ed. *Dagh Register*, 1664, pp. 423-24.

38 *E.F.I.*1661-64, p. 315.

and the English had asked for a similar favour. Though, on the invasion of Shivaji the Dutch had not assisted to repel his depredations.³⁹

In November, 1679, Streynsham Master noted in his diary the receipt of letters from Delhi, advising that:

“The King, being informed how our customes were paid at Surratt, demanded the ½ per cent. againe, both of the English and the Dutch, that was taken off for service done at Sevagees first plundering that towne, and turned out all the writers for leting it pass free soe long.”⁴⁰

Like the English the Dutch also operated through a number of native brokers in Surat for a large volume of business. The foremost broker for the Dutch was Mohandas Parekh. But they also dealt with two other leading merchants Virji Vora and Haji Zahid Beg.⁴¹

As we know that the Mohan Das Parekh was most notable merchant of Surat usually described as the broker of the Dutch. Dutch often sold selected goods from the cargoes brought by them from Indonesia to Parekh. This included spices and tin. On one occasion, in January 1654, he tried to pass off Dutch goods as those of Muslim merchants in order to circumvent the English blockade.⁴² As Bernier stated that during the “pillage of *Sourate* (Surat), *Seva-*

39 *Ibid*, 1665-67, pp.273-74; *Ibid*, 1668-69, pp.35, 166, 228; Copy of the Phirmaund from Aurungzebe, dated 25th June 1667-(MSS. in the Indian Register Office, Vol. XXV. N. 2321); quoted in Bruce, Vol. II, pp. 216-17.

40 *Ibid*, 1661-64, P. 315.

41 B. G. Gokhale, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

42 *Ibid*, p. 125.

Gi (Shivaji) spared also the house of a deceased *Delale or Gentile broker*; of the Dutch, because assured that he had been very charitable while alive.”⁴³

On 17th February 1665 (1666) English factors reported the position of affairs at Surat that “Haji Zahid Beg, the chief Muslim merchant of Surat, triumphed in purchasing several sort of a rich Dutch cargo from Batavia, baulking their former merchant Virji Vora, who was usually their customer; and this was occasioned by the said Haji Zahid Beg acquainting the General of Batavia of the abuse put on him the last year, who, notwithstanding he proffered more then Virji Vora, was not suffered to have the bargain, the Dutch commander and Virji Vora better understanding one another.”⁴⁴ Again it is also reported that in 1666, the Dutch sold their goods to the said Haji Zahid instead of Virji Vora because Zahid Beg had complained to the Batavia authorities that the local Dutch officials were very much friendly with Virji Vora and approved his offers yet although they were lower than that of Zahid Beg’s.⁴⁵

Dutch factors reported that the Dutch factory at Surat was beholden or under an obligation for the bulk of Rs. 300,000 /- on interest in 1665.⁴⁶ While

43 F.Bernier, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-89. It is also clear from the Tavernier’s account who gives most interesting account regarding the Dalal or broker (Mohan Das Parekh) that “In the month of January of the year 1661 the Shroff or money-changer of the Dutch Company, named MONDAS PAREK, died at SURAT. He was a rich man and very charitable, having bestowed much alms during his life on the Christians as well as on the idolaters; the Rev. Capuchin Fathers of Surat living for a part of the year on the rice, butter, and vegetables which he sent them; Tavernier, *op. cit.*, vol. II., p. 204.

44 *E.F.I.* 1665-67, pp. 147-48.

45 *Ibid*, p. 148.

46 *Dagh-Register*, 1665, p. 141.

the English factory at Surat was indebted to Virji Vora in 1669 and other Surat merchants to the agreement of Rs. 6 00,000.⁴⁷

Virji Vora and Haji Zahid Beg, a foremost Muslim merchant of Surat in 1668, had engrossed thousands of *maunds* of quicksilver and vermillion, sufficient to supply the whole country for many years.⁴⁸

Dutch broker Mohandas Parekh was reputed to be a millionaire and it is reasonable to presume that the other brokers who worked for the Dutch also made great profits for themselves through the Dutch trade. The profits made by the Dutch factory at Surat ranged between 40 % to 400% and the impact of their buying activities was felt not only in Surat but also in the other towns of Gujarat and northern India, on the Coromandel Coast and on the west coast especially Vengurla , Ray bag and Rajapur. Their trade in copper and tin was principally money-making both in terms of quantities and profits.⁴⁹ The Dutch also had sporadic commercial relations with Dabhol and from time to time the Dutch and the English found themselves in conflict.⁵⁰ Vengurla lay north of Goa and was an important trading station for the Dutch where they maintained a factory during the Second half of the Seventeenth Century.⁵¹

Six years later in 1670, Shivaji's attack on Surat again disturbed the situation of the town of the Surat as Aungier described that "the town of Surat is at present in a most distracted condition, occasioned by the

47 E.F.I. 1668-1669, p. 193.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

49 B.G. Gokhale, *op. cit.*, p.167.

50 *Ibid*, p. 83.

51 *Ibid*, p. 84.

inhabitants fears of Shivaji.....”⁵² Meanwhile the alarm at Surat had considerably diminished, owing to the arrival of Bahadur Khan, the Viceroy of Gujarat, with 3,000 horses to protect the town from attack.⁵³

The arrival of Bahadur Khan was not without its embarrassments. As Aungier expressed it in his letter to the Company, it ‘eased us of the present fear, but cost us, the French and the Dutch and all the merchants dear for our protection in presents to him, which is a civil kind of plunder demanded by these great *Umbrawes* (*Nobles i.e. Umara*, plural of *Amir*) as a tribute due to them.’⁵⁴ The Dutch presents were worth Rs.3,000 or 4,000, and those of the French as much as Rs.15,000; the Council accordingly thought to add presents to the value of Rs.1,500 to the ‘few Europe toys and rarities’ with which they had hoped to content him. A considerable part of the letter to the Company had to be devoted to explaining the necessity for this means of obtaining favours.⁵⁵

There was considerable risk in obtaining goods from up-country, “the thieves and inland Rajahs taking the opportunity of plundering *cafilas* [caravans] and robbing merchants under the name of Shivaji.”⁵⁶

On 3rd October 1670 Shivaji once again raided Surat. After feeble battle the bodyguard fled to the fort and Shivaji ransacked the whole city

52 *The English Factories in India* (New Series) 1670-1687, ed. Sir Charles Fawcett, 4 vols., Oxford, 1936-1953, E.F.I.1670-77, pp. 188-89.

53 *Ibid*, p. 189.

54 *Ibid*, p. 190.

55 *Ibid*.

56 *Ibid*, p. 192.

except the English, the Dutch and the French factories, *sarais* of Turkish and the Tartar merchants. The English factory was protected by Streynsham Master and “the Marathas found such a hot service from our house, having lost several men that they left us.”⁵⁷

Finally the Marathas looted the houses of the rich merchants and set fire to them. It was reported that on 5th October 1670 Shivaji before decamping from the town he sent a letter to the officers and chief merchants that if they were not paid twelve lakhs of rupees yearly he would come back next year and burn down the rest of the town.⁵⁸

Consequently, in 1669-70, difficulty of procuring Indian produce, from the apprehension of another attack by Shivaji as John Bruce stated that “The circumstances which have been alluded to respecting the restraints improvidently laid on the *shroffs* and *Banians*, connected with the alarm, which soon afterwards took place at Surat, of an attack by Sevagee, were explained to proceed from a supposed union between this chief and sultan Mauzim, the Emperor’s son, who commanded the Mogul army, intended to act against him; - on this occasion the Dutch and French, as well as the English factories, were put in a state of defence.”⁵⁹ As English factors reported that in 1670, “The fears of an attack by Sea led to proposals to the

57 *Ibid*, p. 195.

58 *Ibid*, p. 197.

59 Letter from the Presidency of Surat to the Court, dated 30th March 1670; quoted in Bruce, Vol .II, pp.265.

French and the Dutch to join in concerted action to keep Shivaji's fleet out of the port."⁶⁰

Fears of another incursion by Shivaji seem to have continued throughout the year. Thus in April 1671, Aungier reported that "the town was alarmed with fresh news of his army,...Besides frequent scares of this kind, the 'inland disturbances' caused by the hostilities between Shivaji and the Mughal forces caused considerable obstruction to trade during the year."⁶¹ These disturbances were undoubtedly serious. Aurangzeb had sent Mahabat Khan with an army of 40,000 men against Shivaji; and though hostilities mainly took place in the Deccan, the general insecurity affected trade in and near Surat. Thus in September there was a difficulty in getting goods from Dabhoi to Broach (a distance of about thirty miles), as 'the ways are so dangerous...that no *shroff* will insure the goods.'⁶²

On the 5th of July 1671, some intoxicated Dutch seamen had a dispute with the attendants of Agha Jafar, a leading merchant of Surat, in the course of which they drew their swords on him and wounded one of his servants. They were also wounded and took refuge in the English factory, where they were kept till a Dutch guard came and carried them away.⁶³ The next day the Governor issued a proclamation that no Moors should serve the English,

60 *E.F.I.*1670-77, pp.199-200: "The proposed 'league' of the three Christian nations led to inquiries by Aurangzeb, whose ears the news reached (Master's let. 3 Jan. 1671, 105 Sur. 100)."

61 *Ibid*, pp. 207-08.

62 *Ibid*, p. 208.

63 *Ibid*, p. 210; The Dutch factor, however, said the brawl arose from a refusal to allow four Moors on the Dutch flutes on the departure of Georgius Hartsinde (Dutch Records, B, Vol. xxx, no.778, printed in Khan's *Sources*, & C., 283).

French, or Dutch, upon pain of death and confiscation of their property. It also prohibited Europeans from carrying arms of any sort, and authorized their being killed in the streets with impunity, if they disobeyed. The factories, being thus deprived of their means of defence against thieves and assailants, had to close their doors, while Mohammedan gatherings demonstrating against all Christians rendered it unsafe to go out of them.⁶⁴

In February 1672-73, on the advent of Dutch naval force under Rickloff van Goens, the Dutch Governor General of India, that the greatest apprehension was originated, the inhabitants having fled to the Portuguese settlements for safety. The Dutch naval force drifted between Bombay and Surat and in this crisis, the governor had applied for the help of 500 Rajputs, but before they could arrive, the enemy disappeared, probably on discovering the number of troops, and that an attack would be eagerly confronted.⁶⁵

Mughal rule at Surat had many Hindu merchants, headed by the Company's broker Bhimji Parak, to think of settling in Bombay. A petition they had made to the Company for an assurance that, if they went there, they would enjoy freedom of religion and other privileges, had unfortunately been lost owing to the Dutch capturing the *Falcon* on its way home, and the Company asked for a fresh petition in English. This was complied with, but it is significant that only Bhimji signed the petition: the former petition (it was reported) was signed by several of the chief Banians, when they were

64 *Ibid.*

65 Letters from presidents Aungier and the Council of Bombay to the Court 6th and 11th January, and 18th and 28th march 1672-73; quoted in Bruce, vol. II, p. 319.

disgusted and had retired to Broach, but now they dared not ‘collect hands’, and had referred the negotiation to Bhimji.⁶⁶

The war with the Dutch naturally hampered trade and communications with Persia and the Far East, but several merchants such as Khwaja Minaz, Mirza Muazzam, Abdul Gafur, and Haji Kadir still sent vessels to Persian ports, Siam, Queda, and Achin.⁶⁷

In 1674, the English factors reported that the Dutch trade was greatly injured by the hostile attitude of Ghiyasuddin, the governor (*Mutasaddi*) of Surat, “The Dutch were in a worse plight, sums of money were unjustly forced from them and their privileges were invaded, which cost them more, but, as the war was over, they took a bold stand and threatened reprisals when their ships arrived. They sent a complaint to Aurangzeb through their chief at Agra, and the ‘second’ with some of the other factors left in a hoy to take a house at Cambay, threatening to leave this port and to have satisfaction as soon as their ships came. The Governor slights all this, sets guards at the waterside and town gates to secure the Commandor in town and not permit any Dutch-man to go forth...”⁶⁸

In 1674, the Dutch factors complained that the vexations of the Muslims had increased so much that it had become difficult to bear it. It was resolved that a complain should be lodged with the Mughal emperor since the

66 *E.F.I.*1670-77, p. 233.

67 *Ibid.*

68 *Ibid*, pp. 244-45. Subsequently, it was reported that Ghiyasuddin Khan was dismissed at the complaints of merchants headed by Mirza Muazzam who was the rich merchant of Surat; *Ibid*, pp. 283-284.

Emperor had moved out of Delhi to suppress the Pathans, the Dutch officials thought it prudent to wait. The Dutch company complained that certain Muslim merchant called Mohammad Saleh had claimed falsely that the Dutch owed him Rs. 6000/= for some goods taken at Malacca and rent to be realized at Surat and the ships was coming from Siam. It was not only claimed but was actually taken. Above that the governor of Surat Ghiyas Khan (Geadsischan) had extorted Rs. 2000. The Dutch company had clarified that the commodities worth Rs. 6000/= were taken by the English and not the Dutch.⁶⁹ Besides this the governor Ghiyas Khan had taken away Japanese copper of the Dutch company and the toll master had forcibly raised one and half rupee per man, and consequently the Dutch Company lost effectively Rs. 21000, the copper was sold for 19 rupees per man which otherwise should had cost 20.50 rupees per man.⁷⁰ Such practices had harmed the trade.⁷¹

The Dutch company demanded back the 69330 Ibs. tin taken away by the English in 1675 and urged the Ghiyas Khan, the governor of Surat to help recover the 150,000 extorted in Bengal which was till then unresolved.⁷²

Another source of annoyance was Aurangzeb's institution of a poll-tax (*jaziya*) on 'unbelievers' in the Mughal dominions with effect from 2 April 1679. As Rolt, English factor, said that it was demanded even from the English, Dutch, and French, who had all refused to pay it and were resolved

69 *G.M. vol. IV, 1675-1685*, p. 16.

70 *Ibid.*

71 *Ibid*, pp. 16, 32.

72 *Ibid*, p. 74.

to persist in this, though the Governor had reported their resistance to the Emperor.⁷³

Aurangzeb's imposition of poll-tax (*jaziya*) continued to be a source of trouble. The English, French, and Dutch at Surat had strongly objected to its levy, but in April (1680) orders were received from the Emperor that, instead of the poll-tax, the European nations should pay 3 ½ per cent. customs on goods at Surat, as they used to. This was a serious increase from the rate of 2 per cent., which had been in force since 1667, and Rolt estimated that it would cost the Company about Rs.20, 000 a year. The enhanced rate was strictly enforced, and though efforts were made to get the order cancelled (including a combined offer by the three nations of a bribe of Rs.30,000 to the Governor and other high officers at Surat, if they effected this) no answer had been received from the Court by the close of the year.⁷⁴

The backbone of India's seaborne trade was provided by ship-owners and operators whose primary activity was long-distance and coastal trade. Abdul Ghafur was the most important merchant of the seas during the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century.⁷⁵

English records mentioned that in 1669 the Armenian merchant of Surat Khwaja Minas had sent the Dutch goods through his ship along with the

73 *E.F.I.* 1678-84, pp. 241-42.

74 *Ibid*, pp. 255-56. According to John Bruce, in 1680-81, custom duties at Surat was enhanced by the order of emperor Aurangzeb, on all his subjects and among others and on the European companies, from 2 % to 3 ½ %. This order obliged the presidency to offer in conjunction with the French and Dutch, a present to the Governor, of thirty thousand rupees, provided, by his interest, the former rate of two percent. Customs should be allowed to continue; Letters from the Court to the President and Council at Surat, 18th October 1680, quoted in Bruce, vol II, p. 456.

75 Satish Chandra, *Medieval India*, vol. II, p. 402.

merchandise of some other merchants to Manila.⁷⁶ Three years later he sent another ship to Manila.⁷⁷ While in 1682 the ships of two great Surat merchants viz Abdul Ghafur and Abdul Nabi carried the goods of Dutch from Batavia to Manila⁷⁸ and Abdul Ghafur's ship also carried the banner of VOC to appease the Dutch. But finally these banners were removed as these ships approached closer to Manila.⁷⁹

During the second half of the seventeenth century the Dutch and English had taken over a large share of the Indian trade to West and South – East Asia as also the carrying trade of the region. The usual disruption in the movement of goods due to the Maratha incursion brought the trade at Surat to a standstill from time to time as increasingly the Mughal administration's political and military inability left large areas of western India in a state of persisting trouble or confrontation.⁸⁰

From 1690 continuous piracy in Indian waters on the coastal areas and on the Red Sea threatened Indian shipping merchants of Surat made the Mughals manage a protocol of holding the European Companies amenable for these offences. In 1695, the *Ganj-i-Sawai*, the largest ship of Aurangzeb was plundered by the Europeans.⁸¹ A large ship of 1,000 *Khandies* paid a fee of Rs. 20,000 for a round trip while a smaller boat had to pay Rs. 15,000. Half the amount was found by the Surat *Mutasaddi* from the customs duties, while

76 *E.F.I. 1668-1669*, p. 195.

77 *Ibid*, 1670-1677, p. 226.

78 *Algemeen Rijksarchief (A.R.A.) VOC Archief* 1382, f. 605.

79 *Generale Missiven*, 1686-1697, vol. V. p. 176.

80 B.G. Gokhale, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

81 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Vol. IV, (1691-1725), pp. 124-127.

the rest was jointly contributed by the merchants whose ships were to make the trip. The Company was permitted to bring its own goods on the escort ships it made available. This arrangement worked well until 1698, when Hasan-Hamadani, a Surat merchant lost a richly laden vessel.⁸²

Dutch factors reported that in February 1699, Amanat Khan, governor of Surat forced the Dutch, English and French to sign an agreement. They offered to guarantee the security of the Mughal ships. But this offer was rejected and it was classified that with the English and French, the Dutch should be responsible for the suppression of piracies, taking the Red Sea under their special care.⁸³ Piracy continued and the Mughals sought indemnity.

On 23rd September 1701, news reached Surat that Abdul Ghafur's ship, the *Husaini*, had been plundered by the pirates off Daman and the Dutch vessels escorting the Red Sea fleet.⁸⁴ The Dutch refused to pay compensation, claiming that this was one of the ships that had broken convoy. Ghafur organized his fellow merchants, who decided that until the Dutch paid the compensation, no one would fit out a ship.⁸⁵ One week later Diyanat Khan called Rasikadas and Bhagwandas, two brokers of the Dutch Company, to the full *darbar* and told them that Ghafur had claimed compensation under the

82 Om Prakash. "Seventeenth-Century India as Seen by the Dutch", Irfan Habib, ed. *India – Studies in the History of an Idea*, Delhi, 2005, p. 152.

83 *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Vol. IV, 1691-1725, PP. 150-152.

84 Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat C.1700-1750*, 1994, 1st published Wiesbaden, 1979, Reprint New Delhi, p. 101.

85 Om Prakash, "Seventeenth Century India as Seen by the Dutch", p. 152: Surat merchants also demanded suspension of the Company's trade until a settlement was reached.

muchalka. The Dutch factors said it had no authority to pay any compensation and must obtain orders from Batavia.⁸⁶

Diyanat Khan wrote a letter to the Court for permission to block European commerce. Thus on 7th December 1701, Diyanat Khan informed the Dutch that imperial orders had been received and they must pay the compensation demanded.⁸⁷ Therefore, their trade was banned throughout the Mughal Empire. The demand for compensation was met, but it was only in November 1702 that the ban on trade was withdrawn.⁸⁸

The Dutch Company's Governor Zwaarde Croon and Council at Surat had asked their counterparts in Ceylon to supply six healthiest and huge elephants for Diyanat Khan, Mughal Governor of Surat, the two of these should be tusked. It was realized that there was no chance of obtaining such huge elephants in Ceylon and secondly even if found it was not possible to send them by available Dutch ships to Surat. Their transport required express ships.⁸⁹

In 1701, it was complained by the Dutch factors that it was difficult to please the Surat's governor Diyanat Khan and his son and were presented with 50,000 rupees, 3/5 by the Company and 2/5 by the Company's brokers at Surat namely Ritsigdas (Rasikadas) and Bagwaandas (Bhagwan Das).

86 Ashin Das gupta, op. cit., p. 101.

87 *Ibid*, p. 114.

88 Om prakash, "Seventeenth Century India as Seen by the Dutch", pp. 152-153.

89 *G.M.*, vol. VI, 1698-1713, pp. 168-169.

He had asked Sundar Das to pay Rs. 10,000 in gift for which he was called to Surat Zwaarde-Croon sought permission from Diyanat Khan to free the Dutch like English from paying toll at Broach and construct a house at Surat. The Dutch postponed it because Diyanat Khan and his son wanted them to protect the Mocha's waterway up to Malabar's coast in the south.⁹⁰

In 1703, the old governor of Surat Diyanat Khan and his son had been on their way in the rainy season to the Court and because of that they had taken four pieces of guns (metal-stuks) instead of sixteen. The custom master Mir-al-Naki (Mirelnenky) had sent-these on request and he had paid only fl. 2616 which incurred a loss of fl. 371, and his successor Itibar Khan was in the debt of fl. 2046 for two such pieces. The Dutch factor suggested that they should reduce the trade with nobles as much as possible.⁹¹

The Muslims, presumably merchants, had pressed the Dutch over the issue of robbing of two ships belonging to well known insurer (assurant) Muslim merchants Abdul Ghafur and one of the fellow merchant Mia Mohammad (Mia Mhamet). All three ships were not under Dutch Company's convoy from Mocha to Surat. The Dutch company was asked to pay a exorbitant sum of Rs. 456655 or fl. 684997 in cash. Not only spices worth Rs. 94457 or fl.146686 were taken away from Dutch store to make payment for the two Muslim merchants but they were threatened that all Dutch persons would be imprisoned doing trade inside the country and Agra.⁹²

90 *Ibid*; pp. 172-173.

91 *Ibid*, p. 259.

92 *Ibid*, p. 212.

Manucci stated that, when the news of the piracy reached Surat, Itibar Khan proceeded to enforce the provisions of a *muchalka* (a bond or agreement) extorted from the Europeans in February 1699, by the then governor, Amanat Khan on Sept, 20, 1703. The Dutch ship *Zuiddorp* arrived, and on October 24, she was followed by the *Beverwyk* and five others. The port was blockaded, and a correspondence ensued. Finally on November 24, 1703, Itibar Khan made a report of his action to the Court, his action was disapproved and he was superseded by Najabat Khan. An imperial order was received on March 8, 1704, setting aside the agreement of February 1699, and withdrawing all demands. A document was taken from the Surat merchants on March 19, 1704, to the effect that they had no further claims.⁹³

Following the reports of maladministration and negligence on the part of *Mutasaddi* of Surat, and of increasing European attacks on merchant ships of Surat bound for Arabia, prince Muhammad Azam, the governor of Ahmadabad (1701-1705), was required to look into the matter, since Surat was included in the *suba* of Ahmadabad. He was to consult the merchants and others at that port (Surat) to report the real cause and to make proper arrangements.⁹⁴

In Akhbarat,⁹⁵ of prince Azam's headquarters at Ahmadabad, there are only two references about the Dutch. In 46 R.Y. of Aurangzeb (1703), we

93 *Storia Do Mogor*, vol. III, p. 490. *Corpus Diplomaticum*, vol. IV, 1691-1725, pp. 221-222.

94 *Mirat*, I, p. 353.

95 *Akhbarat* of Prince Azam's headquarters in Gujarat 46 and 47 R.Y. of Aurangzeb bound in one volume in case 47 at the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society (Morely 133), London, also available at the Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, Microfilm No. 34, The sheets marked AI- A 231, p. A54.

find record of an order issued calling for the confiscation of Dutch shops on account of the disturbances they were creating. At that time Khawaja Abdul Hamid was the *Diwan* of *Suba* Ahmadabad and Dutch blockade occurred during this time.

Another important reference in *Akhbarat* (47 R.Y. of Aurangzeb, 1704), was about the conflict between the English and the Dutch at the port of Surat, due to which the bankers (*Sahukar*) and the general public (*riaya*) complained against Itibar Khan, the governor who did not control the situation. They demanded that instead of him another *Mutasaddi* (governor) be appointed.⁹⁶

Manucci stated that, On July 24, 1705, further action was resolved upon the Dutch. On July 16, 1706, they ordered six ships to Surat as a check to impede its trade. On July 23, 1706, they nominated *Grootenhuis* as Director there and head of the expedition, with orders to settle the dispute. On March 27, 1707, they noted his success, and on July 25, 1707, they sanctioned the settlement he proposed. The Surat authorities or merchants were to pay a compensation of 8, 11, 000 rupees, and the captured craft were then to be restored to them.⁹⁷

Thus, Surat remained blockaded, as the Dutch fleet would reappear in the trading season and strangle its trade.⁹⁸

96 *Akhbarat*, p. A185.

97 *Storia Do Mogor*, vol. IV, p.141n: Grootenhuis was the Dutch Director.

98 Ashin Das Gupta, *op. cit.*, p .133.

Ashin Das Gupta stated that, the decline which overtook Surat stemmed from misfortunes. The political collapse within the Mughal Empire created the basic conditions of the decline. The breakdown of security in the heartland of the empire isolated Surat from that part of its hinterland which lay beyond the *Subah* of Gujarat. The province held its own for a time, but gradually it too was overwhelmed by the expanding Maratha power, which had offered the most serious challenge to the empire.⁹⁹

The aged emperor Aurangzeb was rapidly sinking into senility and the generation-long campaign in the Deccan was closing in futile exhaustion. As Nicholas Waite and his anxious colleagues noted on 24 April 1701: 'The town being bare of silver is occasioned by the peoples fears of the aged and infirme Emperor's death, they abscond and bury what they have for avoiding those ravages they then dread and it damps all trade in such manner that the merchants who usually engrossed staple commodities purchase now in parcels.'¹⁰⁰

Dutch lodge at Surat received letters regularly from their agent in the Imperial Camp, a *bania* named Sunder Das, as also reports from Dr. Patvliet, a Dutchman in the service of Prince Azam, son of Aurangzeb. These letters contain detailed descriptions of the disorder in the Imperial army and the breakdown of the Public law even in the vicinity of the Emperor's camp.¹⁰¹

99 *Ibid*, p. 139.

100 *Ibid*.

101 K.A. 1552, ff. 874, 948, K.A. 1558, f.75 (quoted in Ashin Das Gupta, *op. cit.*, P. 140).

The objectives and methods of European companies were common. They believed in dominating trade and using naval impulse to administer it.¹⁰² The relationship between the Dutch and other European companies and the Mughal Indian authorities was based on mutual benefit. One important result of the trade conflict was the rise in the prices of the various Indian commodities. The conflict of the European companies, particularly of the Dutch and the English had momentous effects. They were fore-most buyers at Surat and their large purchases increased the value of all Indian goods which were exported to Europe.¹⁰³ Thus the competition of these European Companies was for the advantage of the Indian merchants who got a carnival price for the merchandise sold to them.

102 Satish Chandra, *Medieval India*, vol. II, p. 396.

103 Om Prakash, "Seventeenth-Century India as Seen by the Dutch", pp. 153-54.

Chapter - 6

The Dutch at Surat, 1707-29

Chapter: 6

THE DUTCH AT SURAT, 1707-1729

Coastal Gujarat has always been dotted with a line of ports. The primitive was Broach, supplanted by Cambay and reinstated by Surat. From where the Mughal Empire nurtured the annual pilgrimage to Mecca of which Surat was the port of embarkation¹.

Gujarat was the most important centre of trade network for the export of various kinds of textiles, which were produced in the neighborhood of its capital city of Ahmadabad, 140 miles to the north, north-west of Surat and near Broach, Baroda and Cambay, other towns in between these two. Two varieties of indigo, Sarkhej and Jambusar were also produced in and exported from, Gujarat, besides a host of other minor items. Thus particular varieties of cloth, which were manufactured in the neighborhood of Lucknow and the best kind of indigo produced in the Bayana tract were among the most important items exported².

According to Ashin Das Gupta, the breakdown of the amalgamation and the arising mastery by the European can be seen as the most important features of the eighteenth century in the history of Indian Ocean. For an ample time now, in the historiography of Indonesia, India and the Arab countries, the eighteenth century has been seen as a period of decline. The English saw

1 Ashin Das Gupta. *Indian Merchants*, p. 1, 3.

2 Ashin Das Gupta, "Trade And Politics in 18th Century India", in D.S. Richards, ed., *Islam and The Trade of Asia*, Oxford, 1970, p. 187.

the decline as justification for empire, the Dutch saw in the period an eclipse of the noble Company, the Arabs only treated it as background to their modern period³.

At the turn of the eighteenth century the trade of Gujarat in the Indian Ocean was still very blooming although it had passed its climax. Professor Newitt noticed that the ships had been badly mauled by European pirates in the last two decades of the previous century.⁴ The decline of the Mughal Empire and the raids by Shivaji, had affected Surat adversely. But the Gujaratis had continued to build more ships and in these years, for the first time, they were sending their vessels, admittedly only a few, to Canton and Manila⁵.

The volume of Gujarat's exports had not been in step with the demand in the Indian Ocean markets and there were several poor seasons for the merchants during these years. But the fleet numbered well over a 100 sea-going vessels of which the Mughal normally had two at sea while MullaAbdul Ghafur the great ship owning merchant controlled as many as seventeen⁶.

Satish Chandra stated that Abdul Ghafur was the largest merchant of the seas during the latter part of the seventeenth and the early decades of the eighteenth century which was a boom period in trade. He owned 20 ships with

3 Ashin Das Gupta., "India and the Indian Ocean in the Eighteenth Century", in Ashin Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson, eds., *Indian and the Indian Ocean 1500-1800*, Delhi, 1987, pp. 132-33.

4 *Ibid*, p.134 especially footnote 8, see also M.D.D. Newitt, "East Africa and Indian Ocean Trade: 1500-1800", Ashin Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson, eds., *India and the Indian Ocean 1500-1800*, pp.201-223.

5 *Ibid*.

6 *Ibid*, pp.134-35.

a total dead-weight of carrying capacity of well over 5000 tons. Therefore, he could easily accost collation with any of the European companies at Surat. He traded from Manila to Mocha and implemented authoritarian control over all his *nakhudas* (managers of ships). These *nakhudas* would not depart in the slightest from the trading and sailing directions they received at setting out from Surat⁷. There was also another important merchant group called the *Chellabies*. These merchants were always mentioned as Turks. They were the most important ship-owners after the family of AbdulGhafur⁸.

According to Ashin Das Gupta, at the turn of the eighteenth century a considerable amount in foreign money and bullion was still being imported every year at Surat. It is notoriously difficult to put any exact figure against such statements but it would be safe to assume an import of six million rupees worth from the Red Sea alone. Imports from other sources were not so important and the Mughal rightly regarded Mocha as their treasure chest. European trade at the time formed at most about one-eighth of the total trade at Surat and the Dutch who were one of the principal European bullion importers also relied on spices for which Surat paid a heavy price⁹.

It is also stated that this commercial net, importing money and sharing the business as between shippers, traders and brokers, connected with the areas of production in Gujarat and northwest India through a chain which included sub-brokers in the far away localities and headmen of weavers. The

7 Satish Chandra, *Medieval India*, vol. II, p. 402.

8 Ashin Das Gupta, "Trade and Politics in 18th Century India", p.187.

9 Ashin Das Gupta, "India and The Indian Ocean in the Eighteenth Century," p. 136

Mughal system was an eccentric mix of autocracy, equally customary rights and equally customary freedom. The merchant was on occasions cheated by the officials but he frequently cheated at the customs. The weaver was undoubtedly squeezed by the merchant but some care had to be exercised that he stayed with the merchant from one year to the next¹⁰.

During the first half of the 18th century trade at Surat would appear to have been in an adequately advantageous position. The expansion of Gujarati shipping (in the last decades of the 17th century) had provided Surat with its most solid signs of well-being at the time. On 19th April 1701, the Council of the New English Company noted:

“The inhabitants of this city having built such a number of shipping that unless the Europeans interfere [sic] may in a little time make themselves by their frugality [sic] the sale traders in India, they having of late sent two to three ships a year into the South Seas, the most profitable trade from this place w [hi]ch can’t well be preserved, the Dutch employing double the stock as formerly to this place in 8 ships this season from Batavia and Japan, 5 of which laden back with proper cargo for India [Indonesia] and Europe.”¹¹

For trade at Surat, i.e. for trade in Gujarat and most of northern India can be seen as inconsistently good for trade at the turn of the 18th century. As noted., “In the four months, February to May, in 1707, after the Dutch had lifted their two-year old blockade of the port, as many as fifty-seven Indian

10 *Ibid.*

11 Ashin Das Gupta., *Indian Merchants*, p.135. Ashin Das Gupta, “ Trade and Politics in 18th century India”, pp. 187-88.

ships obtained their passport for the season, their declared total tonnage being 31, 296 *khandies*, that this is about 10,400 tons. Of these, fourteen with a total declared tonnage of 10, 875 *khandies*, that is about 3500 tons, belonged to Abdal-Ghafur and twenty-two of the fifty-seven were destined to the Red Sea.”¹² It is impossible to form an idea as to the total value of cargo these ships carried, but in the season 1698-9 the revenue from sea-customs is known to have yielded Rs. 816, 000/-, which calculated at 5%, the maximum rate for customs, would give Rs. 16, 320,000/-, for the total turnover¹³.

Further instantly after the death of the Emperor Aurangzeb long-faced hardship commenced. In a letter from Surat, dated 4 February 1708, J. Grootenhuijs, the Dutch Directeur, noted that “trade that had been hampered (*gestreemt*) after the death of Aurangzeb, was now [as the war of succession developed] at a standstill throughout the country, because the routes round about Agra are too unsafe., in the lower lands [mainly to be understand as Gujarat] and about Ahmadabad things are somewhat more peaceful”¹⁴. The *shroffs* who remitted money to Agra had already suspended business and all merchants trading to that area were in trouble¹⁵.

From 1708 however there was a new situation as trade steadily declined due to the falling demand for Indian textiles. In 1708 there was little money and Jedda for buying Indian cloths that mostly came from Jedda. Saleh

12 Ashin Das Gupta, “Trade and Politics in 18th century India”, p.188.

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*

15 *Ibid.*

Horebi, governor of Mocha, was used to sending a ship to Jedda with a leading of textiles. Ketelaar who was the in charge of voyage at that time pointed out that no improvement was to be expected if money was not obtainable at Jedda. He noted with some alarm that at the end of the trading season about fifteen ship-loads of silks and cottons still remained unsold, and would spoil the market next year¹⁶.

At Jedda the civil conflict was accountable for the poor market of 1708 but there was no advancement in the situation so far as the trade in Indian textiles was implicated¹⁷.

Aurangzeb was succeeded by Bahadur Shah, who granted a permanent place to Johan Grotenhuis, the director, for the godowns and warehouse of their factory in the city (Surat) and for the residence of the director. Further Johan Josuah Ketelaar, who received a privilege in 1709 by Jahandar Shah which included the house of Itibar Khan for the use of quarters for the factory staff, who hitherto had lived in a portion of the warehouse. It was however contracted or agreed that no part of any of their building could be fortified, no guns could be mounted, and no alterations or strengthening of the walls could be made, except for necessary repairs¹⁸.

Nevertheless, again in 1710, it was noted that trade at Surat, Cambay, Broach and Ahmadabad was normal¹⁹.

16 Ashin Das Gupta., *Indian Merchants*, pp. 157-58.

17 *Ibid*, p. 158.

18 Owen C. Kail., *The Dutch in India*, p. 78.

19 Ashin Das Gupta, "Trade and Politics in 18th century India", p. 188.

In 1710 Company decided to send Cornelis Bezuyen as envoy from that place to obtain concessions from Bahadur Shah., but on the 18th October, 1710 died at Surat and he was replaced as embassy by Johan Josua Ketelaar, the Company's director of trade at Surat. He arrived at Sarai Khan Khanan a few miles from Lahore. On the 10th December 1711, he received some presents from a Portuguese lady, Donna Juliana Dias da Costa holding a position of trust in the harem, and also received good welcome by the Emperor's French Physician, M. Martin, with thirty Christians of various nationalities. On the 13th a noble, Khadim Beg Khan, at the head of 500 Cavalry and 500 infantry, arrived as escort²⁰.

The three agents, or *Wakils*, were appointed by the Dutch Company to take care of their interests at the Mughal Court. One rode an elephant bearing a green and white silk banner; the other two were in *palkis*. They were surrounded by many cavalrymen and artillerymen. When they saw the agent (ambassador) they illuminated and came on foot to accost him. Several gold coins and Rupees were presented to him, which was touched and remitted by him²¹.

In 1712, they were received by the introducer Khadim Beg Khan at the gate. It was ordered that all Europeans should be allowed. Therefore, the rest of the Europeans were kept outside the wooden rail. The envoy presented his offering of gold coins and a gold box containing a letter from the Governor-

20 William Irvine., *The Later Mughals*, vol. I & II (Bound in one), vol. I (1707-1720), rept. Delhi, 2006, p.147.

21 *Ibid*, pp. 148-49.

General of the Dutch East Indies. The assistants also presented their *nazars*. Islam Khan received that of the envoy, those of the assistants were taken by Khadim Beg Khan and passed on to Islam Khan. They were shown to the Emperor, who accepted them²².

It is noted that on the 18th January 1712, envoy visited second time to Zulfiqar Khan. The envoy and his assistants having been asked to sit down, Mr. Ketelaar paid his host a few compliments “in the Hindu Language”, and hoped that he would favour the Company’s interests at Court, as they always recollected the friendship shown to them by his father, Asad Khan, but he objected to the erection of a new factory outside Surat. The envoy was very anxious to hear the grounds of his objection²³.

On the 21st January J.J. Ketelaar reappeared at *darbar*. He was so well received that he thought his affairs wore a most promising aspects and that they would be able “to leave that unhealthy climate” and return to Surat. And on 27th January, inspite of Azim-us-Shan’s opposition the first request of the Company had been granted and the order signed and sealed by the *diwan* Wazarat Khan and the other officials. The other demands were agreed to and His Majesty had ordered their reduction to writing without delay²⁴

But the hopes of a prompt and favorable return were depleted in a moment. On 28th January 1712, Bahadur Shah died. Therefore, on the advice of Donna Juliana they walled up the gate of one garden to which they

22 *Ibid*, pp.150-51.

23 *Ibid*, p.152.

24 *Ibid*, p.153.

transferred all the Company's goods, going in and out by the gate of the adjacent garden. Two hundred natives were enlisted as a guard²⁵.

To add to their trouble, Jahandar Shah requested them for military aid. After much deliberation, this was refused, the chief plea being the ill-health of J.J. Ketelaar. Jahandar Shah acknowledged the pardon, and instructed the Dutch to avoid similar demands from the other competitors for the throne. They leased three *Katras* or walled enclosures, in Lahore and succeeded in removing their accoutrements or bags thither without loss, although the Country was now crowding with devastators²⁶.

Again, envoy paid another visit to Zulfiqar Khan, now *Wazir*, from whom he received promises of earnest support. In a few days they were assured by Zulfiqar Khan that all the documents were ready, and signatures only were wanting²⁷.

But, as the matter of fact Dutchmen soon found, "these were only words", and inspite of the daily presents sent to the subordinates of the minister delay after delay took place. At length five *farmans* were made ready in legal form and their early transmission was promised. On the 31st August the final presents were ordered, a *farman* addressed to Abraham Van Riebeeck Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, put up like all the others in a bag of gold cloth, accompanied by a dagger studded with rubies, a dress of

25 *Ibid*, pp. 153-54.

26 *Ibid*, p. 154.

27 *Ibid*, pp. 154-55.

honour, a piece of velvet, a stomacher of diamonds and other stones, set in gold, and fifty *tolas* of *attar* of roses²⁸.

Finally, the Zulfiqar Khan was thanked by the envoy for his favours. On 29th Sept., a *hasb-ul-hukm* directing the new governor of Surat, Mahmud Beg Khan, to restore to the Company the residence of Itibar Khan and a new sealed *Farman* for Ahmadabad. On the 13th October they received the last of documents and made ready for a start. Besides the heavy cost of the presents, the envoy's expenses amounted to 30, 000 guiders. The return presents were estimated to be worth 5500 rix-dollars. Before the close of 1712 Farrukh Siyar had defeated Jahandar Shah, and after revolution Jahandar Shah's *Farmans* were so much waste paper and his reign was blotted out from the records of the Empire²⁹.

Early in 1715 the Surat Council informed Batavia that the scarcity of money at Surat was main reason that no freight at all was available for the Dutch vessel which had been made ready for the Persian Gulf³⁰.

Towards the close of 1716, Simon Diodati, a young Dutch factor, who journeyed from Agra to Surat, has left us a detailed and interesting account of his experiences about the decline of security along the roads between Agra and Surat. After closing down the Dutch factory at Agra, Diodati was asked by the Council at Surat to withdraw from that Imperial City. There was no question any more of a nonchalant setting out with only the escort one

28 *Ibid*, p. 155.

29 *Ibid*, pp. 156-57.

30 Ashin Das Gupta., *Indian Merchants*, p. 156.

arranged oneself. Therefore, Diodati along with his men joined the party of Qasem Khan, son of Haider Quli, the then Governor of Surat³¹.

It is useful to note that the conception of “normal” would always make provision for local difficulties which never disappeared. But the government continued to act against all threats to order, and in 1716 when J.J. Ketelaar, the outgoing Dutch Directeur, summed up the situation for his successor, he drew attention to the collapse at the Imperial Court and the slump in trade this had caused, but in his description of Gujarat he had nothing much out of the ordinary to chronicle. In fact he wrote optimistically about the prospects of trade for the Dutch and advised his successor to live in peace with the local government³².

At the beginning of 1716, J.J. Ketelaar, Dutch envoy, admitted that the upcountry trade was no longer feasible but he observed that the prices of textiles at Ahmadabad were rising and the price of Sarkhej indigo had risen so much that it was no longer profitable for the Dutch to buy it. He blamed the rise in textiles upon poor cotton harvests but was not alarmed about it and Ketelaar also noted that the cloths which were made at Ahmadabad and Broach were best and cheapest at those places, never elsewhere³³. Complaints about rising prices of textiles continued for several years,³⁴ and the indigo from Sarkhej remained too high for the Dutch Company.

31 *Ibid*, p.142. Ashin Das Gupta, “Trade and Politics in 18th century India”, pp. 188-89.

32 Ashin Das Gupta, “Trade and Politics in 18th century India”, p.191.

33 Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants*, p. 145.

34 *Surat to Batavia*, 27 January 1717, K.A. 1789, p. 7. Similar complaints again in 1721/22 in K.A. 1875, pp. 28-30; quoted in Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants*, p. 145.

In October 1717 the factory at Ahmadabad informed the Surat Council that ‘contractors were not at all willing to lower their prices due to the tumultuous buying by the Mocha merchants’ (*delevranciers om het woelem van het Mochase handelars in geen en deele tot aflag wilde komen*)³⁵.

In the second half of the 18th century, the civil conflict in Yemen obstructed the flow of trade for the Gujaratis as the diminution of Ahmadabad which was to occur soon after³⁶. In introducing the new Imam’s rule at Mocha, Amir Rezzak, the man known to the European as the admiral of Yemen, played an important role in this episode. From Sana he came with a declaration of Qasim Mutwakil Bilah and swung the Mocha fortress over to him. Further he announced that he had orders to collect 52,000 Spanish dollars from the *bania*, Turkish and Arab merchants of Mocha as also from the merchants of Ahmadabad then at Mocha. Those who could not pay at once were taken into imprisonment and remained imprisoned till they paid. Foreigners were also appraised for that grant. As a result, the Dutch lodge was attacked in 1717³⁷.

The Dutch diary noted that after an investigation into the circumstances, the Dutch Council had come to the conclusion that Rezzak had been personally responsible for the attack on the lodge. It was their opinion that Rezzak was a friend of the English and there was an understanding

35 Surat to Batavia, 20 February 1718, K.A. 1805, p. 8; quoted in Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants*, p.145.

36 Ashin Das Gupta., *Indian Merchants*, p. 161.

37 *Ibid*, p. 162.

between him and Charles Boone, the governor of Bombay. In 1716 Rezzak had been specially invited from Surat to Bombay by Boone, where the two had hatched an anti-Dutch plot. Rezzak's aim was, among other things, to monopolise the buying of Dutch imports at Mocha, and merchants opposed to this project kept the Dutch fed with information about the 'admiral'. Turbati was, at the time, heading the opposition to Rezzak in the city. The changed role of the soldier was commented on from time to time. For instance on 11 February 1718 the diary noted: 'The soldiers are again throwing their weight about lustily. They have robbed some camels even within a short distance of the town walls on the public highway.'³⁸

At Mocha, with these first attacks on the commercial assets, which was directed by Amir Rezzak, the trading configuration within Yemen came to be seriously disturbed³⁹.

During the first half of the 18th century, Raksikadas and Bhagwandas took up the Dutch brokerage at a time when European merchants were under pressure as a result of piracies in the Indian Ocean, and soon enough they found an enemy in the redoubtable Abdul Ghafur. At the time when Dutch were blockading Surat and Ghafur was doing his remotest to check them, Nagardas, who had himself been a workman of the Dutch, joined Ghafur and conducted the considerations of the merchants associated with Ghafur. He

38 *Ibid.*

39 Ashin Das Gupta., *Indian Merchants*, p. 163.

won Raksikadas over to his side, while Bhagwandas joined Birsidas against his brother⁴⁰.

Early in January 1717, Raksikadas wrote to the Governor General at Batavia to ask for the position of the sole broker of the Company at Surat,

“I, Raksikadas’, he wrote, ‘broker, and a descendant of old Kissendas-you know my misfortunes, caused by my brother and my nephew from ill-will and through instigation of those who are envious of me. By raising a frivolous falsehood against me and by using my clerk Banava Ray Paragna in their counsel, they had, so to speak, ground me to the dust. This caused me inexpressible grief...I came to the conclusion that my partner [Birsidas] was less to blame in the matter than the clerk, who was the principal cause of my misfortunes... In the last two years I ventured to buy a considerable quantity of cloves from the company but such was my ill-luck that due to the disturbances in the country I was unable to find merchants to take them off my hands. So I was forced to sell the cloves as best I could and although I still have a large quantity left in my hands, I discover from my accounts that I have lost twenty thousand rupees in the transaction...”⁴¹

There is also information about Raksikadas’s friends who were interested in saving him from rumoured bankruptcy. In 1718-1719 they proposed to the Dutch Council that they would continue to buy Dutch imports through Raksikadas, but the broker must not be given the goods in the first

40 *Ibid*, p. 171.

41 *Ibid*, pp. 172-73.

instance. Apparently, they were afraid that other claimant creditors might then grab whatever was available. The friends of Raksikadas wished him to be guided with the Dutch transactions, acquire the brokerage and enjoy the acclaim that such transactions carried in the city (Surat), without ever having the goods in his control, and thus open to legal apprehension. The Council agreed but thought it would do little good to the broker in his desperate straits⁴².

On the 7th March 1719, Raksikadas wrote once more to the Governor-General at Batavia.⁴³ The members of the Dutch Council did not share Raksikadas's enthusiasm for his son and, doubtless, considered it odd⁴⁴. Eventually, Raksikadas died in 1726 leaving debts of well over twenty thousand rupees⁴⁵.

Ruidas, Dayarams's father, was a *munshi* at the Dutch warehouse at Surat. Two of his sons i.e. Dayaram and Ruderam, took to trade in a modest way in the later twenties as brokers to the Dutch Company⁴⁶.

Diodati, Dutch factor, who gave a detailed account of his experiences on his way down this most important trade route i.e. from Agra to Surat, when he travelled in the company of Kasem Khan, the son of Haider Quli Khan, the then governor of Surat, they were frequently attacked by troops of "armed

42 *Surat to Batavia, 20 February 1718, K.A.1805*, p. 54. For the friendly plan to shore up Raksikadas, *K.A. 1820*, p. 29; quoted in Asin Das Gupta., *Indian Merchants*, p. 173-74.

43 Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants*, p. 174.

44 *Ibid*, p. 174 & n. 2.

45 *Ibid*.

46 *Ibid*; Ashin Das Gupta., "The Merchants of Surat, C. 1700-1750", in Edmund Leach And S.N. Mukherjee, eds., *Elites in South Asia*, Cambridge, 1970, p. 206.

peasants” (*gewapende boeren*) who were being led by their *zamindars*. He (Diodati) estimated that the largest group to assault them comprehended about 5,000 men of whom about 2,000 carried small arms. As many as three attacks came in the course of one day on 2nd January 1717⁴⁷. Thus, the break-down of security, the dying of commerce was confirmed by the 1720’s, from the letters and news-letters received at the Dutch lodge at Surat, this was the result of that attack⁴⁸,

In 1720, the Dutch Council at Surat informed Amsterdam that the *Dariabadi Chadar* [bedspreads from the neighbourhood of Lucknow] and the indigo Biana [best quality grown in the vicinity of Agra] were not to be procured till security of transport had been reestablished. Those consignments which were now luckily coming through cost about 50% of their purchase price more in transport, and to it was added a loss of 10-15% on remittance from Surat to Agra⁴⁹. At the same time it was found extremely difficult to sell any Indonesian spices at Surat⁵⁰.

From 1721-1726, a conspicuous series of letters from a Gujarati *bania* called Purushottamdas written from Ahmadabad, however, have been perpetuated in the papers of the Dutch East India Company⁵¹. In 1721 Purushottamdas wrote about a 25% rise in the prices of goods at Ahmadabad and noted that he was working without eating or sleeping, day and night, to

47 Ashin Das Gupta, “Trade And Politics In 18th Century India”, pp. 188-89.

48 Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants*, p. 144.

49 Ashin Das Gupta, “Trade and Politics in 18th century India”, p.189. See also Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants*, p. 145n.1.

50 Ashin Das Gupta, “Trade and Politics in 18th century India”, p. 189.

51 *Ibid*, p. 190.

get the *qafila* for the Dutch ready in time while the merchants for the Red Sea were strenuously busy⁵². But this sense of an extremely busy trading metropolis disappears from his letters in four years time. In 1725, he spoke of a terror-stricken mercantile community, repeatedly forced to pay contributions to the governor Hamid Khan, paying 100% more in export duties, shut off from their sources of supply, meditating flight from the accursed city⁵³. Hamid Khan was succeeded by Sarbuland Khan, but the position only became worse.

In 1727 the director of the Dutch Company at Surat, Abraham Weijns, was recalled to Batavia to answer charges against his administration and he was replaced by Herman Bruinink. But Weijns was very unwilling to go and, according to Bruinink, began to conspire with the *nawab* (i.e. the *Mutasaddi*) against him. It was to prove this fact that Bruinink drew up a declaration which he had attested by the seals of ‘the great merchants of the city, Muslim as well as Hindu’, and their names were as follows: Mulla Muhammad, son of Muhammad Ali, Haji Ahmad Chellaby., Ibrahim Chellaby, Hussain Chellaby, Shaikh Muhammad Kodsi, Hassan Badawi, Abdul Rahaman Sulaimanji, Omar Chellaby, Shaikh Ali Kaderi, Haji Hussain Abid, Muhammad Salebi Saketti, Haji Muhammad Baghdadi, Ilias Osman Baghdadi (?), Mustafa, Abdul Kader Kamal, Mustafa Sale, Muhammad Aref, Kika Dada, Vanara-sidas Vallabhdas, Tapidas Revadas, and Vallabhdas Daldas⁵⁴.

52 *Ibid.*

53 *Ibid.*

54 Ashin Das Gupta, “The Merchants of Surat C. 1700-50”, p. 204.

Purushottamdas, a Gujarati *bania*, who wrote a series of letters in the years 1721-1726, reflecting upon situation obtaining during his time. But again after his death, it was carried on by his son Daaldas which chart the course of the crisis in the capital of Gujarat from 1728-1732. Therefore, Purushottam's son Daaldas annotated Sarbuland's offences in his letters written in 1728⁵⁵

In 1729 the Sunni *Bohras* of Ahmadabad defied the government and locked themselves in a *Masjid* (Mosque). A large number of merchants took to flight and government troops began to plunder their empty houses⁵⁶.

As we know that, Herman Bruinink, Dutch directeur, listed the names of the great merchants of the city, Muslims as well as Hindu. The hostility between the *Mullas* and the *Chellabies* would from time to time erupt into public disorder and were noted. Thus the *Dagh-Register* or the diary of the daily events maintained at the Dutch lodge described how, in January 1729, Muhammad Ali persuaded the custom-master to tax *Chehllaby's* goods at a higher rate and in the difficulties which resulted had he arrested by the governor⁵⁷.

On 2 July 1730 Sohrab Khan pressingly invited *Chellaby* to come and dine with him but *Chellaby* discovered it was a plot of Muhammad Ali,

55 Ashin Das Gupta, "Trade And Politics in 18th Century India", p. 190.

56 Three letters from Daaldas were received by the Dutch Council at Surat and entered in their papers between July to December, 1729: *K.A. 2060*, pp. 134-6, 151-3, 162. Besides these Daaldas wrote several letters to his brother Bhukendas at Surat which were also noted in Dutch *Dagh-Register*: *K.A. 2094*, pp. 758-9, 767-8; quoted in Ashin Das Gupta, "Trade And Politics in 18th Century India", pp. 190 & 210n.31.

57 Ashin Das Gupta, "The Merchants of Surat, C. 1700-50", p. 210n.1.

probably to have him poisoned, and declined⁵⁸. In October of that year he fled to Hormuz to avoid further persecution⁵⁹.

According to Ashin Das Gupta, there were different levels of political authority and as the troubles produced by the Red Sea piracy demonstrate a merchant like Ghafur could use the superior levels of Mughal authority against the governors of Surat with considerable success. It is a sobering thought that at least on one occasion at the turn of the (18th) Century, the Mughal officials of Surat had become so enraged against Ghafur that the governor himself was urging the Dutch Company in secret to blockade the river-bar and seize Ghafur's shipping. To this we may add that the evidence relating to the 1720s and the 1730s show that the English or the Dutch Company was equally a conglomerate of different, often conflicting interests, the English more demonstrably so than the Dutch⁶⁰.

58 *Ibid.*

59 *Ibid..*

60 Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants*, p. 15.

Appendix

*Reply of Muhammad Jafar in Connection
with Taxes and their Realization, dated 15
Rabi us Sani 39 R.Y. (23rd November, 1695)*

Appendix

Reply of Muhammad Jafar in connection with the taxes and realizations.

Dated 15 Rabi-us Sani 39 R. Y. (23rd Nov. 1695).

Muhammad jafar [*Diwan* of Hyderabad] sent detail information regarding the taxes and realizations. In this desired and written information, it was written that from the office records of Abul Hasan and other information contented in it. It was come to be known that Europeans had their factories at Hyderabad, and at the port of Machhilipattan. During the rule of Abul Hasan, after the payment of *Peshkash*, They acquired two villages and factory for sahili? in the said port (i.e. Machhilipattaan). After it, these Europeans conspired with the local officials and taken 2 villages of *pargana* Ellore whose *Jama* amounted to Rs.20, 000 excluding (or except) villages of the said port. Up till now, it is under their control and from the time of conquest of their country (to the Mughals), even one *dam* as a *Peshkash* to the Mughal state is not imposed or paid. The said *Diwan* has sent information regarding *Jama* or realised from the rural areas and about the *Peshkash* accepted by the Europeans during the rule of Abul Hasan. Which was from the beginning under their control and 2 villages of *pargana* Ellore in accordance with the *sanad* (may be issued by previous rulers) from whom they had taken it under their charge, this report was sent to the Emperor and executed according to the royal orders. From this document, it appears that subjugating of 2 villages i.e. *pargana* Ellore illegally taken by Europeans, was granted royal sanction.

محمد جعفر در بخت از رسته محصل را بر رسته

از تر استیاج ۱۵ ربیع الثانی ۱۰۳۹* آنکه سیادت و ثبات پناه
وزارت و محالی دستگاه حوالات استیاه بر محمد جعفر در حفظ و است رب العز
بوده یعنی الی بالکند مکتوب غروب رسید و رسته بودند که از رسته دفتر الی الحسن و
اظهار رجبی معلوم شد که جماعه فرنگیان که در بلده دارا جهاد حید را با دو بند و چلی شین
دیده دارند در محل الی الحسن یک شکی قبلی نخوده دودیه جهت ساحلی [؟]
کارخانه در بند تر جزیره کفیه بودند بعد از آن فرنگیان از جزیره با مقصد مال الی الحسن
سازش نخوده دودیه از هر که ایلیکس جمع بهر هزار رومیه سوی زبان ~~دست~~
بند تر قلم گرفته چنانچه تا حال مشرف اند و از اینده ای تسخیر این ملک بکدام بطریقی
یک شکی لبر کار و ادعا پیدا شده اند معلوم آنکه سیادت و وزارت پناه از رسته

صوای ۱۰۰۰ ✕ 23 Nov. 1695 *

جمع و وصول دپت از جزیره حقیقت تعداد یک شکی فرنگیان که در زمان
الی الحسن قبلی نخوده بودند و از اینده ای نصف [تصرف؟] آنها و دودیه هر که
ایلیکس کند و از آنکه اینده مشرف اند و رسته ارسال دارند که لبر کار و ادعا
و بر وفق حکم محکم بعمل آید

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