

CHAPTER I

GUJARAT ON THE EVE OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

In the period between 1298 and 1500, the limits of Gujarat varied greatly at different times. There are numerous accounts regarding the fluctuation in the geographical boundaries of Gujarat, from the time it became an independent principality upto the time of Mahmud Begada's sway over Gujarat, when it was at its zenith. In fact this particular era was considered the 'golden era' of Gujarat. The Muslim conquest of Gujarat at the end of the thirteenth century coincided with the downfall of the Hindu rule and ousting of the last Hindu king Karna Vaghela.

The name Gujarat is derived from 'Gujarat' or Gurajatha',¹ that is, the land protected by the Gurjars. Some derive it from 'Gurjar-Rashtra',² that is, the country inhabited by the Gurjars. The name Gurjars was not known in early times because the Gurjars themselves came to India in the fifth or sixth century.

The territories of Gujarat comprised three distinct units. Anarta, as it existed as a unit, was the northern part and Saurashtra the peninsula.³ The boundaries of Anarta, was roughly the Rann of Kutch in the west, Mount Abu in the north and Malwa in the east. Part of the present Gujarat in the south was known as Lata.⁴ Saurashtra, the Sorath or present Gujarat was bounded by the Gulf of Barukacha in the south, Sauras in the west and

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Anarta in the north. During the course of time, with the influence of the Mauryas and Ksatrapas, Saurashtra and Anarta were merged into one single administrative unit while parts of south Gujarat remained unaffected.

The documented political history of Gujarat could be dated back to the Mauryan rule. In the first quarter of the fourth century, the Guptas had succeeded in establishing themselves as the paramount power in northern India, with their capital at the city of Pataliputra⁶. The powerful sway of the Guptas in the western side of India lasted for about three fourths of a century as attested by a large number of coins found in various parts of Gujarat, Kutch and Kathiawar. Certain researches have brought about the fact that the famous clans of mediæval India - the Parmars, Chauhans, Pratiharas - emerged out of the foreign Huna and Gurjar hordes that poured into India during the fifth and sixth centuries. Next, the Vallabhis took over from the Guptas for almost two hundred years they spread their rule.

The founder of the Vallabhi dynasty who succeeded the Guptas, was Senapathi Batarka of the Maitraka or Mihir clan. The lineage of the Vallabhis has been doubted and debated. The argument leads to the point whether the Senapathi Batarka was a general of the Guptas who took charge after the decline of the Imperial power of the Guptas or was he a product of the Gurjar⁷ tribe.

The fall of the Vallabhis brought into the limelight the Chavda clan. The most important contribution made by the Chavdas to the history of Gujarat was the founding of Anhilwad Patan in 746 A.D., which is the last and most celebrated capital of Gujarat. Samant Singh the last ruler of the Chavda dynasty, adopted his nephew Mulraj of the Solanki dynasty of Kalyan, as his heir. But the ungrateful Mulraj slew his uncle and his relatives from the maternal side, and established the Solanki dynasty (942-1242). It was during the reign of Bhim Deva I (1022-64) that Muhammad of Ghazni sacked the celebrated temple of Somnath. The next important ruler of Gujarat was Bhim Deva II (1178-1242). He defeated Muhammad Ghauri in 1178 but could not effectively resist Qutb -ud-din Aibak who invaded the kingdom twice, in 1195 and 1197 - 98. The last of the Solanki Kings died without a male heir and hence, the kingdom passed on to the hands of the Vaghela or Baghela Rajputs, who were related to the former through matrimony. The last of the Vaghelas, Karan Vaghela was one of the most important and last Hindu ruler of Gujarat .

Karan Vaghela had a Prime Minister called Madhav whose talents had raised Karan to the throne. Madhav had a wife Rupa sundari, who, as her name suggested was beautiful. Karan Vaghela during the absence of Madhav tried to abduct her and in the battle that ensued, he slew Keshav, Madhav's brother. Keshav's widow while performing the 'sati' cursed that the king would be driven from his town by a barbarian, and that his wife and daughter would be separated from him, and that he himself would

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be a wanderer . Madhav who came to know of this was enraged and bolted to Delhi and acquired Allaudin Khalji's aid to oust Karan from the throne.

Allaudin Khalji did not waste any time to lose this opportunity, so he immediately sent Almas Beg, his brother who was better known as Alp Khan, to subdue Gujarat . Thus the Imperial army left the capital on the 24th of february 1299, under the joint command of Alp Khan and Nusrat Khan. In the course of their progress they were compelled by the Rana of Chitor to keep within limits, but they did not spare Jaisalmer. Having set foot on the soil of Gujarat, Alp Khan and his colleagues subjected the country to whole sale plunder and terrorism. Karan having been taken by surprise sought safety in a precipitate flight with his daughter Deval Devi to the court of Ramadeva Yadav, who gave him the Baglan fort in Nasik district, as his residence. During the pursuit which followed, his treasures and his women including his chief queen Kamla Devi fell into the hands of the enemy. The queen was honorably escorted to the court of Delhi and Allaudin took her as his concubine. Besides the capital Anhilwad, many other towns of Gujarat were sacked and an enormous booty was collected by the invaders.

At Delhi, Kamla Devi reconciled as a concubine, but was yearning for her daughter Deval Devi, and so read her thoughts aloud to Allaudin who with great pleasure took up the task of bringing the daughter also to Delhi. So he sent a large army

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under the command of his favourite eunuch Malik Kafur . Similarly he sent Alp Khan to Baglan to secure the hands of Deval Devi from Karan. Ramadeva was also asking for Devaldevi's hand in marriage for his son Shankardev. But Karan was hesitating as he did not want to give his daughter to a Yadava, but with Alp Khan's proposal at bay, Karan changed his mind. He rejected Alp Khan's designs and defended his fort for two months. But due to famine he was forced to leave his fort and while doing so he sent a body of horsemen on a separate route to convey Devaldevi to the Yadava Prince. Alp Khan was disappointed with Karan's attitude and hence called a day's halt. About three hundred of his men without his knowledge visited Ellora cave, and on their return journey they saw a Hindu cavalry whom they attacked. After their victory they realised that among the women fugitives left behind, Devaldevi was also there.

So they took her to Alp Khan, who in turn took her to Allaudin. A few days after her arrival, her beauty inflamed the heart of Allaudin's son, Khizr Khan, to whom she was eventually married. Thus runs the episode, and the principality of Gujarat fell into the hands of the Muslims in 1298. Now that the foundation was firmly laid by the Muslims in Gujarat soon many areas were captured and plundered. The famous temple of Somnath was one such target and it was not very difficult for them to conquer many other parts of Gujarat. Their conquest was extended and southern Gujarat and Kathiawar were annexed to the newly conquered kingdom and they governed it from the provincial

capital of Anhilwad. Evidence shows that Malwa and Khandesh were also brought under their rule ¹³.

Thus the seeds for a Muslim rule in Gujarat were sown successfully. In the following years a series of rulers emerged on the political scene, some important and some not so important and Gujarat was a part of the Delhi Sultanate, until the disintegration of the empire of Muhammad Tughluq. Rebellions in most part of the empire kept the Sultan engaged, as a result many of the provinces started disintegrating and were declared independent. Firuz Tughluq, the successor of Muhammad Tughluq, was unable to quell and check the fissiparous forces at work. He abhorred war and considered it sinful and immoral to sacrifice ¹⁴ thousands of Muslim lives for his personal ambition.

Firuz Tughluq was succeeded by Tughluq Shah II in 1388 whose accession to the throne was challenged by his uncle Prince Muhammad. Their respective claims to the throne had not yet been decided upon when Abu Bakr, a descendant of Firuz Shah, occupied Delhi. A civil war broke out between Abu Bakr and Prince Muhammad who declared himself as the rightful ruler and assumed the title of Nasiruddin Muhammad Shah. During his reign the province of Gujarat along with other provinces of the empire assumed the status of independent kingdom. The powerful governors of Gujarat, Malwa, Jaunpur and Dipalpur became virtually independent and assumed royal titles. Timur's invasion in India finally broke the last bond which connected the distant provinces to the centre.

The first of the rulers who established himself as an independent power in Gujarat was Zafar Khan, son of Wajih-uh-¹⁵ Mulk, and he was the first who ascended the throne. His accession was not at all a pleasant proposal. His first task was a siege against Idar ruler Rao Ranmal.¹⁶ Zafar Khan attacked Idar thrice and in the final siege of 1400-1401, Rao Ranmal could not withstand the onslaught and fled to Bijanagar. Thereupon Zafar Khan entered the fort, razed the temples and placed a trustworthy officer in-charge of the fort. A thana was established at Idar¹⁷ and the principality was divided among the nobles.

In the following year with a lot of zeal, Zafar marched to Somnath, and a battle ensued. The ruler fled to Diu and Zafar followed him and laid siege on Diu. The gates were opened without offering any resistance. The temple was demolished and a mosque was built in its place. After Zafar Khan's reign in 1403, his son¹⁸ Tatar Khan ruled for a short period and died. So it was once again the second phase of Zafar Khan's rule. Cajoled and encouraged by his nobles he assumed the name of Muzaffar Shah I¹⁹ and struck coins in his name. Thus an independent Mohamadan kingdom was established under his name in Gujarat which lasted²⁰ until the arrival of Akbar in 1573.

The very first problem which Muzaffar Shah I faced after assuming the title of the king was the death of Dilawar Khan, the²¹ vice-regent of Malwa. It was stated that Alp Khan had poisoned his father Dilawar Khan which enraged Muzaffar Shah I, who

marched to Malwa and imprisoned Alp Khan and left a governor in-charge of Malwa. But after a lapse of time he pardoned Alp Khan and re-instated him as the ruler. But, in addition an army was also sent to Malwa, because by now Musa Khan, a Malwa chief assuming full power wanted to acquire control of the capital-Mandu.

The next campaign was against the Hindus of Kambh-kot, also known as Kanth-kot²². Khudawand Khan who was the commander of the army was successful in this endeavour. Finally before his death in 1410 Muzaffar Shah I sent a regiment under Ahmed Shah, his grandson, to subdue the Kolis of Asaval. On his way to Asaval, Ahmed Shah camped at Khan Sarovar and called the elderly and literate men to meet him. After confirming that it was not morally wrong to kill his grandfather, Muzaffar Shah I, he returned to the city and imprisoned his grandfather and poisoned him.²³ Thus ended the life and reign of Muzaffar Shah I and the emergence of Ahmed Shah I who ascended the Gujarat throne.

On assuming power Ahmed Shah I had to put down his rebellious cousin Moid-ud-din (or Modud), son of Firuz Khan, and the governor of Baroda.²⁴ Moid-ud-din first planned an alliance with the amirs to assume rule over Gujarat. But the amirs soon backed out and paid homage to the Sultan, who showered honours and gifts and also allotted jagirs to these amirs.²⁵ So Moid-ud-din went to Cambay and sought the help of Masti Khan, uncle of Ahmed Shah I, and Governor of Surat. But Ahmed Shah I, marched

against them and Moid-ud-din and Masti Khan fled to Bharuch. Failing to stand against the powerful Sultan, Moid-ud-din offered truce and was received graciously by the Sultan along with Masti Khan. The next campaign was against Asa Bhil, a
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chieftain.

Ahmed Shah I, was keen on finding a new capital-Ahmedabad. For this he sought the help of Sheikh Ahmed Khattu-Ganj Bakshi, Kazi Ahmed and Malek Ahmed.
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While engaged in the building of the city of Ahmedabad, his cousin Moid-ud-din, who was ungrateful, was planning a revolt against him, with the Ran Mala of Idar and Masti Khan as allies. But when the Sultan heard of it, he marched to Idar, where the allies were taking refuge. After a tough battle which ensued, the Raja of Idar gave in and agreed to pay a tribute to the Sultan, while Masti Khan and Moid-ud-din fled to Nagor.

Meanwhile, in 1413, some Muhammadan officers (tarfdaran) incited and encouraged Hoshang, king of Malwa, to invade Gujarat. For this they had the support of several zamindars like Kanha Satarsal of Jhalawar. But the Sultan on hearing this attacked the rebels and himself marched to Champaneer. Also a battalion was sent under Imad-ul-mulk to Malwa, who found it an easy task to subdue Malwa without any opposition or resistance. At the same time Latif Khan was sent to drive the rebels of Patan and Satarsal who was the chief of Jhalawar. This was in the same year (1414) when the Sultan attacked the fortress of Girnar.

Rao Mandalik the chief of the Girnar along with his army was defeated by the Sultan. On losing the battle the Rao fled to the fortress and the Sultan was satisfied with the lower fortress of Junargadh. Also he subdued some zamindars and demanded annual tribute from them as well as from Rao Mandalik. This was the time when the Gujarati Sultans were bent upon extending their power into the central parts of the Kathiawar beyond their existing possessions on the coast-belt in old Surat which contained many flourishing ports. Their target was the holy town of Sidhpur on the Saraswathi river in north Gujarat. The celebrated temple of Rudramalaya was turned into a mosque. The town of Sankheda and Bhadrapur were ravaged. Qazis and preachers were appointed in this town where mosques were built. A fort was also built in Mankini near Sankheda and an army was left behind.

The most prolonged battle of Ahmed Shah I was against the ruler of Idar. In 1426 the Rana was driven from his capital to the hills and Ahmed Shah I, laid waste the town the next day and the city of Ahmednagar (Himmatnagar) was founded on the banks of the Hathmathi. A strong wall was built around it to overawe his feudatory. The next great campaign was against the ruler of Pavagadh and in addition the town of Nandod was also destroyed. This was followed by a campaign in north Gujarat and Rajputana. The last and successful encounter was against the Bahmani ruler Ahmed Shah Bahmani when the fort of Bantol was captured, after which Ahmed Shah I died in 1441.

Muhammad Shah ascended the throne in 1442, and led a life of ease and pleasure. The period of his reign was not considered a glorious one either politically or geographically and lasted for ten years (1442-1451). He led an expedition against the ruler of Idar, Rav Bhan and drove him to the hills. In return the Rana asked for forgiveness and even gave his daughter in marriage to Muhammad Shah I. From Idar the army marched to Wagad, where they plundered, looted and finally returned to the capital. The year 1450 witnessed the attack on Champaneer by Sultan Muhammad Shah. It was then ruled by Raja Gangadas. After losing the battle, the Raja sent a secret emissary to the ruler of Malwa, Mahmud Khalji I, who was the virtual enemy of the Sultan of Gujarat. But when Mahmud Khalji I marched with a huge army, the Sultan fell ill and was taken to Ahmedabad where he died in 1451. His death saw the succession of Sultan Kutb-ud-din, his son to the throne of Gujarat.²⁸

At the very outset of his career Sultan Kutb-ud-din (or Kutb Shah) had to defend his kingdom against Mahmud Khalji I, who had come to the border of Gujarat to claim a portion of the kingdom.²⁹ Sultan Kutb Shah was advised by some of his courtiers³⁰ to retreat to Surat, and allow Mahmud Khalji I to occupy the eastern provinces. But Sultan Kutb Shah did otherwise, and marched against the ruler of Malwa and drove away his forces. The next campaign was against the Raja of Sirohi, Kutb Shah marched against the Raja of Chitor and captured the territory of Abu and handed it over to the former. Thus the geographical boundary of

Gujarat was slowly expanding under the Sultans of Gujarat. Dawood Shah who succeeded Kutb Shah was a very weak ruler. But with the arrival of Muhammad Shah I, more popularly known as Sultan Mahmud Begada,³¹ who ascended the throne of Gujarat in 1459 things seemed to brighten up.

His first campaign was when he was thirteen years of age. The territories of Junagadh and Champaneer and Idar had avoided the religious wars of Ahmed Shah I. So Begada marched towards Junagadh, the ancient capital of Kathiawar which had been a target for the Muslim rulers for a long time. Without any difficulty Begada captured the peninsula of Kathiawar, over which the rulers of Junagadh held sway. The next important expedition was in 1472 to the lands of Kutch and Sind. The two tribes of Surma Sodha who were expert archers, were easily defeated by Begada inspite of all the odds and Kutch was also an easy prey which was annexed to the ever widening Muslim territory in Gujarat.

The port of Jagath (Dwarka) was filled with Hindus who were misled by the Brahmins.³² These terrified Hindus fearing the Muhammadan fled to the island of Bete (Beyt), but were followed by a huge army led by Begada who captured them. A number of Rajputs were put to death and their ruler Raja Bheem was dragged around the city of Ahmedabad and put to death.³³ Thus the famous temple town also became a part of the vast Muslim territory, in Gujarat.

After conquering various areas like Bete, Jagath, Songier, Godhra, Tana and Ahmedabad, Begada's roving eye fell on the city of Champaneer.³⁴ It was a fortress under the Rajput ruler Beny Ray. The Raja began to despair the attack of Begada and sent two elephants to appease him. But the latter wanted the Raja and his ministers to embrace Islam. When a compromise could not be reached a battle was the only solution. So in the battle Raja was defeated and Champaneer was annexed to the Gujarat Sultanate. He made it his capital and renamed it as Muhamadabad.³⁵

The capture of Ranpur was another feather in his cap.³⁶ It was held by a Gohel chieftain, who was called Ranji. The Sultan and Ranji had married two sisters and because of some misunderstanding which had occurred between the two sisters a battle ensued and the fort of Ranpur was captured, by Begada. Next he laid siege on the two towns of Wagur and Idur from where he returned with treasure and large offerings to the town of Muhammadabad-Champaneer. Thus the kingdom of Gujarat had now reached a state where it had become very powerful and was one of the most important provinces of medieval India.

The prosperity of Gujarat had reached its zenith under the able guidance of Begada who was one of the most important and powerful rulers of the Gujarat Sultanate. Thus one could divide the geographical boundary of Gujarat on the eve of the sixteenth century as follows :-- It bordered on the side (north-west) in the direction of Persia by the region of the Rajputs, and on the side

of the second India (south by the great kingdom of Deccan, and inland (North) by the kingdom of Delhi and on the otherside by the ocean.³⁷ The kingdom is separated in the Deccan by Mahim and Chaul. The description by Forbes in his book is as follows- he writes that the kingdom of Gujarat extended from Burhanpur to Jagat and then from Jalor to Daman and from Idar to Khambayat (Cambay).³⁸ Rounding up the political geography of Gujarat at the dawn of the sixteenth century, Barros the Portuguese chronicler of the sixteenth century says that the kingdom of Cambay.³⁹ began at Dwarka and ran down to the south upto river Nagatona.⁴⁰

Socio-Economic Aspects

The prosperity of Gujarat in the sixteenth century could be attributed to the economic importance of Gujarat prior to the said century. The society was built on a hierarchical scale like any other medieval society. The ruler or the Sultan headed this group followed by the nobles and other administrators, chiefs, so-called vassals and finally the workers who consisted of the artisans, peasants and other members of the society who were employed in their different capacities. The social set up was directly or indirectly connected to land relations. There were the land owners who were very powerful and important. They owned vast areas of lands which were partly used for cultivation, and were partly barren, depending on the ownership of that particular area. The owners themselves did not generally, cultivate these

lands but engaged other people to do it. The only connection between these landowners and the land was their right of ownership over the lands. Under this category came the Sultans, nobles, Governors and administrators.

Next there were people who did not own lands but were connected to cultivation. These were the peasants. In return for their work they were paid a certain share of the produce they cultivated while the landlord retained some amount for themselves. The ratio of the share produced depended on the prevailing system followed by the rulers. The earliest form of land-lord's rent or Rajbagha was a fixed share of the produce of the soil.⁴¹ There was a different system of land assessment- in Kaira by yield, the unit being blacksoil and in Saurashtra the area was measured by hand paces.⁴² Gradually land-holders began to levy cash assessments or vero in addition to the share of the crop. These rates were probably the consequence of the tribute⁴³ exacted by the Sultans.

Land was divided into khalsa kands which were under the direct supervision of the Sultans and zamindari lands which were under the hereditary Hindu land-holders who were the Rajputs and Kolis.⁴⁴ The khalsa lands were divided into sarkars or districts. These sarkars were either assigned to nobles who had to supply the Sultan with certain contingent of troop during emergencies. For the khalsa lands belonging to the Sultan the revenue was collected by the officials appointed by the Sultan for this

puprose. The money collected as revenue was used for the maintenance of the army and for personal expenses.⁴⁵

From the other lands which did not belong to the khalsa group of lands the revenue was collected by the minor chiefs who were hereditary land holders. It was the duty of the zamindar to collect the revenue from the peasants and pay the jama or peshkash to the officer in charge of his district.⁴⁶ The Sultans used military force to extract the yearly peshkash from the zamindars who had not been completely subjugated and that army was called mulkgiri.⁴⁷ In 1420 Ahmed Shah I granted the wanta lands to the kolis and Rajput chiefs who were titled zamindars.⁴⁸

Added to this there were the fortified outposts which were called thanas and were managed by thanadars. These thanas were also subordinate to the district governors and possessed a garrison of soldiers.⁴⁹

In order to help check the amount collected an accountant was enlisted. For maintaining some sort of balance against mismanagement these officials were chosen from different classes. Ahmed Shah I (1421 - 1444) made it a rule to chose the Governor from the class of royal slaves while the accountant was a free man. Similarly, if the accountant was from the class of royal slaves, the district Governor was chosen from some other class.⁵⁰

Other types of taxes were the Jizyah⁵¹ and kharaj⁵² which were imposed on the native Hindus as revenue or tribute. Malik

Tuhfah renamed as Tak-ul-Mulk by Sultan Ahmed Shah in 1415, was assigned to fight the rebellions of the Hindus on the borders of Gujarat. He overcame them successfully and placed the burden of kharaj jiziah on them.

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A glance at the agrarian reforms of Sher Shah would throw light on the general trend and conditions of the agrarian aspects in Gujarat during the Sultanate period. Accordingly, when an area was brought under the direct civil administration of the ruler, the cultivable lands were measured and on this basis proprietary rights of the peasants were determined. Land - revenue officials like the assimils, yanungon, patwaris and the muqadars participated in the determination of the proprietary rights. Sikandar gaz was the standard unit of measurement and fixation, respectively. In a nut - shell the above reforms were meant (a) to increase agricultural produce, (b) to improve the conditions of the cultivators and (c) to enhance the revenue of the State.

The peasants during the time of Mahmud Begada were contented and did not have to worry about anything. The land-holders realised that their jagirs could not be taken away under any conditions, unless of course the jagirdar was a cruel and tyrannical person. By this one can affirm that the peasants were, in most cases looked after well.

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The price of corn too, during Begada's time never rose. In fact all the commodities were cheap and Gujarat did not witness this low cost ever again.. it is said. Fruit trees were in

bounty. Some of the fruit trees were mango, date palm, khirni (mimusops kank), coconut, jaman (calyptrathes carophyllifolia or engenia jambolana), bel (aegle marelous), fig, muaweh (bassia latifolia).
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The peasants were encouraged to plant trees as a result many trees were planted every year. Even if a beggar had planted a tree or fig on the road-side the Sultan enroute, would stop by and suitably reward the deserving person. Even water was provided to maintain the trees. The king ordered that wells should be dug to facilitate the people. In fact on his rounds if he discovered that any shops or house was in ruins he would ask the head men or accountants for an explanation. Sometimes he would provide the necessary items needed to restore the ruins.
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During one of his expeditions when Mahmud Khalji reached Gujarat some Hindu accountants waited upon him. Out of curiosity Khalji enquired with the Hindu accountants about the statement of revenue in Gujarat. He found that two - sixth's were appropriated to the jagirs of the soldiery and that one - sixth was assigned in charitable allowance, as aimah. This proportion of charitable allowances existed only upto the reign of Sultan Kutb-ud-din. the later Sultans increased the ration according to their convenience.
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Another section of the society was constituted by the traders and merchants. Due to commercial opportunities which were available in Gujarat, streams of merchants came here. In a

similar manner, Gujarati merchants too, ventured out of Gujarat for there sake of their profession. The merchant class was a conglomeration of various nationalities and religions. In other words apart from the Gujarati merchants, both, Hindus and muslims, there were the Abyssinians, Turks, Persians and Khorasanis.⁵⁹ From within India the Malabarib merchants were a permanent feature on the coast of Gujarat.⁶⁰

Hence Gujarat coast had contact with the European contries, West Asia, African coast and the South-East Asian countries. This was basically due to the maritime trade which was existing. A large number of commodities were exchanged and the ports on the Gujarat coast acted as cesspools for them. Merchants collected goods from South-East Asia and came via Malabar to Gujarat, similarly merchants from West Asia were found exchanging their wares in Gujarat. In this vast scenario of commercial activity the Gujarati merchants contributed their mite by being the couriers for the long distance trade.

These traders were popularly known as the vanias or banias.⁶¹ The term vania was used sometimes to include the members of the jati called vaisyas by varna, also Jains and even people belonging to other religions, but following the same profession. Thus in terms of society the 'entrepreneurial class' were low but in terms of economic status they were considered high.

Yet another section of the society consisted of the nobility. In their capacity as nobles they were variously known as sipar-salar, amir etc. Ranking second to the Sultan they performed both administrative and military duties. They were allotted lands which were to be governed and maintained by them. The Muslim Government was mainly military and not civil.

When Sultan Mahmud Begada reviewed his army in 1460-63 it was found that his army was very well mustered and prepared. There were a lot of amirs who numbered seventy three. They were⁶² known for their bravery and administrative capabilities. In fact the people of Gujarat were allocated to provide money for the army. This was popularly known as tankhwāhi-alufah and covered almost the entire cost of maintaining the army. It has been stated that for a period of four years there were no khalsa lands under the Sultan and the administrative machinery was run and expenditure met from the amount accumulated by the previous⁶³ Sultans treasury.

Added to this the wazirs and amirs also took upon themselves to appoint rulers or Sultans as in the case of Sultan Daud Shah who was named the successor of Sultan Kutb-ud-din in 1458, by his⁶⁴ nobles.

In yet another instance in 1459, Sultan Mahmud Begada conferred on fifty two officers the title of mansabdars and also⁶⁵ parganas were allotted to them. A rule introduced by the Sultan implied that after the death of a noble (amir) his jagir would be

confirmed on his son. In case there was no son, half the jagir would be given to the daughter. But if the deceased amir did not have any daughter then measures were taken to provide the bereaved family with appropriate compensation. ⁶⁶ Thus on the eve of the sixteenth century the nobility was an important spoke in the administrative as well as military wheel of the Court. As far as the society was concerned they belonged to the upper echelon of the society.

In fine it can be said that on the eve of the sixteenth century Gujarat was one of the most important regions in medieval India. Under the able hands of Sultan Mahmud Begada the geopolitics was more or less stabilised. With respect to socio-economic aspects no definite or prominent changes had occurred, yet there was something unique and novel in its bearing.

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14. J.Chaube, op.cit, p.3.
15. S.C.Misra, op.cit, p.137; Ali Muhammad Khan, Mirat-i-Ahmadi, trans by M.F.Lokhandwala, Baroda, 1965, p.34; Khwajah Nizamuddin, Tabaqat-i-Akbari, trans by De Branjendranath, vol.111, part 1 Calcutta, 1939, p.173

16. Idar forms the principal Rajput state in the Mahi Kantha agency. Idar town the former capital of the state is situated 64 miles north-east of Ahmedabad; Tabaqat-i-Akbari, op.cit, p.177
17. Bayley, op.cit, p.80; Ferishta, op.cit, p.3
18. Bayley, op.cit, p.80; Tabaqat, op.cit, p.183
19. Ibid; pp. 83,84; Tabaqat, op.cit, p.185
20. Ali Muhamad Khan, op.cit, p. 85
21. Tabaqat, op.cit, pp. 185 ff; E. Doshabhai, A history of Gujarat, New Delhi, p. 63
22. Tabaqat, op.cit, p.187; Kanth-kot is also known as Kanch kot or Kambhkot; Bayley, op.cit, p. 86
23. Ibid, p. 87; Ali Muhammad Khan, op.cit, p. 36
24. The original name of the ancient city of Baroda was Chandanvati, the city of sandal - wood, then it became Varavati meaning abode of warriors and then as Vat - patra which meant leaf of the vad (banian tree), ref. E.Doshabhai, p.65; Tabaqat, op.cit, p. 189 ff
25. Ibid, p. 190; Bayley, op.cit, p. 89
26. Ibid
27. Ibid, p. 90, It is interetsing here to mention the comments made by Emperor Aurangzeb regarding Ahmedabad. He said that, I have already called this city Gardabad (the abode of dust), now I know not what to call it - whether Samumistan (the country of the Simum or hot wind), Bimaristan (the country of ill - health), Zakkumdar (thornbrake) or Jahanumabad (abode of hell) for all these names are appropriate, ref. Bayley, op.cit, p. 91 f.n. Tabqat, op.cit, p. 191
28. Kutb-ud-din or Kutb shah was also known as jalal Khan and as king he assumed the full title of Sultan Kutb-ud-din Ahmad Shah, ref. Bayley, op.cit, p. 135
29. Ali Muhammad Khan, op.cit p. 42; Tabaqat, op.cit p. 227.
30. Ferishta, op.cit, p. 22; Tabaqat, op.cit, p. 227

31. Mahmud Begada or Bigarha got his name in the following maner. One version says that soon after his accession to the throne he conquered two (bi means two in Gujarat) forts (garh means fort in Gujarati) Junagarh and Champaneer and hence he got the name Bigarha. Another story is either sides of his mouth, this resembled the two horns of the bullock (bullock is called bigarh in gujarati) and hence he got his name ref. Bayley, op.cit, p. 161 f.n; Ferishta, op.cit, p. 47; Joao de Barros, op.cit, p. 560
32. Ferishta, op.cit, p. 36; Tabaqat, op.cit, p. 260
33. Ibid, Ferishta, op.cit, p. 36
34. Ibid, p. 39; Tabaqat, op.cit, p. 260
35. Bayley, op.cit p. 211
36. Forbes, op.cit, p. 344
37. Tome Pires, Suma Oriental, vol. 1, Nendeln/Liechtenstein, 1967, p. 33
38. Abul Fazal Allami, Ain-i-akbari, vol. 11, trans by H.S.Jarrett, Delhi, 1978, p.246; Forbes op.cit, p.255
39. Cambay actually meant the region of Gujarat by the Portugese chroniclers and historians of the sixteenth century.
40. Barros, op.cit, p. 537
41. A.K.Majmudar, Cultural history of Gujarat, Bombay, 1965, p.121
42. Ibid
43. Ibid
44. Bayley, op.cit, p. 24; Ali Muhammad Khan, op.cit, p.21
45. A.R.Khan, Chieftains in the Mughal Empire during the reign of Akbar, New Delhi, 1973, p.91
46. Tapan Ray Chaudhuri and Irfan Habib (eds), Cambridge economic history of India: vol.1. 1200-1750, Deli, 1984, p.381
47. Bayley, op.cit, appendix 3
48. Ibid, pp. 99
49. Ibid, pp. 28, 105
50. Ibid, p. 113

51. Jiziah was tax imposed on the Hindus by the Sultans
52. Kharaj was revenue collected as tribute
53. Bayley, op.cit, pp. 98,99 f.n.
54. Ibid, pp. 167 ff
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid, pp. 170 -71
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Tomé Pires, op.cit, p. 46; John van Huyghen Linschoten, The voyage of John van Linschoten to the East Indias, vol. 1, ed A.C.Burnell, London, 1885, p.58
60. K.S.Mathew, Portuguese trade with India in the sixteenth century, New Delhi, 1983, pp. 146 - 147
61. Barbosa, op.cit, pp. 110 - 111; Barros, op.cit, p. 540
62. Bayley, op.cit, p. 177
63. Ibid
64. Ibid; Ferishta, op.cit, p. 26
65. Bayley, op.cit, p. 167
66. Ibid