

# INTRODUCTION

Indian Ocean Studies have traversed ‘splendid journey’ in the on-going decade since I conceived the theme “PIRACY AND PIRATAL AGGRESSIONS IN WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN, c.1750-c.1850” for doctoral programme. The reason for selecting this theme initially was: to explore the reasons why terrorists used Western Indian Ocean waters along the Arabian Sea in 2008 and occurrence of maritime piracy by Somalians during 2008-16 frequently; and thrust by the Indian government on revisiting maritime regulations, underpinning of naval forces and vigilance of western littoral of India through satellites in order to understand Western Indian Ocean (WIO) networks in the age of global expansion (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century) and its demeanour in present times.

I, therefore, delved into the reading of historical literature on Indian Ocean trade networks, naval-military aggression and acts of maritime piracy. As a part of this process, I utilized the opportunity of understanding Indian Ocean through SEPHIS workshop on “Studying the Indian Ocean: New Methodological Approaches and Writing Connected Histories” in December, 2009 at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi under guidance of Prof. Lakshmi Subramanian and also attempted presentations in national and international seminars organised by *Darshak Itihas Nidhi*<sup>1</sup> in Gujarat and other

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<sup>1</sup> DIN-Vadodara has organised seminars: Gujarat & Sea-Kachchh-Mandvi (2010); Port Towns of Gujarat-Daman (2012), Trans-regional Trade and Traders: Situating Gujarat in the Indian Ocean-Surat (2015) and The Sea and Knowledge Bharuch and Cambay (2016). I got opportunity to learn and interact with Indian Ocean scholars like M.N. Pearson, Om Prakash, Abdul Sheriff, Lotika Varadarajan, Lakshmi Subramanian, Edward Alpers,

national platforms till date. These papers based on published primary sources explored about community, commodity exchange, and maritime violence along the *Kathiawad*, *Kachchh* and the Malabar Coast. One must remember that the coastal strips and littorals of the Indian Ocean in ‘time and space’ evidenced the emergence of ports and port-towns in Afro-Asian Seas; these also demonstrated competition in trade which sometimes got reflected into violence, either on part of the state as compulsion to ‘control’ or by the people as ‘resistance’ against the state. Here, the state was the native rulers, merchant companies and vestiges of the imperial structures within study period across the Indian Ocean rim. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the arrival and contest for supremacy of Europeans further augmented these activities. ‘Piracy’ and ‘Piratal’<sup>2</sup> Aggressions’ are significantly referred in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Travellers’ Accounts, Correspondences of the Merchant Companies trading in the east with their authorities and Crown, Secret Diaries of the Political and Foreign Department, Reports, British Parliamentary Papers, Maritime Regulations and Oral Narratives of the native dwellers in case of *Kathiawad*, *Kachchh* and Malabar and other intangible tools like folk songs, *palias* and testimonies of the sailors of the Indian Ocean. The first glimpse of these accounts reveals that these are fragmentary and misleading, in case one attempts to define or categorize the acts which the

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Douglas Haynes, Radhika Seshan, Ranbir Chakravarti, Mariam Dossal and Edward Simpson to name few of them.

<sup>2</sup> Piratal and Piratical terms are used interchangeably in this monograph, and rationale is provided in forthcoming paragraph.

‘crossers of sea’ / ‘seafarers’ were undertaking during the study period i.e. c.1750- c.1850. However, a critical scrutiny of the same helps us streamline the acts under category of maritime violence — act of maritime piracy and piratal / piratical aggressions. Here, I would like to humbly submit that at the time of registration, I chose to use word ‘piratal’ for predations. In due course of research journey, my understanding on terms and definitions related to maritime violence evolved. In this monograph, I have used both the terms [piratal / piratical]. I apologize to the readers for the inconvenience as a result of this aberration.

My early impression on Indian Ocean was cultivated through the reading of W. H. Moreland’s book, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb: Study in Indian Economic History* (1923), during my masters’ programme. It made me understand the economic and maritime scenario during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century within the territories of Mughal India; European intrusion into ‘Asian waters’, and its impact on Asian trade. To this list, I would add Andre Wink’s article on historical geography of the Indian Ocean. Further reading of Holden Furber’s *John Company at Work: A Study of European Expansion in India in the late Eighteenth Century* (1948) and *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800* (1976) exhibited to me the process of ‘flow of commerce and profit from commerce’ as the ‘lubricants of empire’. Within the framework of old historiography I consider K. S. Mathew’s *Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth Century* (New Delhi,

1967); Alan Villiers -*The Story of Indian Ocean* (London, 1952); Auguste Tousiant's- *Historie de l' Ocean Indien* (French-1961, & translation in English by J. Guicharnaud-1966), Charles Boxer's *Dutch Seaborne Empire* (1965) and *Portuguese Seaborne Empire* (1969) as an imminent mast for a novice like me in the Indian Ocean Studies. Several other studies by Om Prakash have also helped me in understanding of merchant companies' era. To this list is *The Dutch Factories in India, 1624-1627: A Collection of Dutch East India Company Documents Pertaining to India*.

Similarly, drawing appraisal of new historiography was possible due to Ashin Das Gupta, M. N. Pearson, K. N. Chaudhuri, Satish Chandra, K. M. Pannikar, George F. Hourani, Neil Steensgaard, Surendra Gopal, James Francis Warren, Kenneth McPherson, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Lakshmi Subramanian, R. J. Barendse, Indrani Ray, Edward Simpson, Pius Malekandathil, Ruby Maloni, Prasannan Parthasarathi, Anne Bulley, Denis Lombard, Jean Aubin, Abdul Sheriff, Rila Mukherjee and Ranabir Chakravarti's scholarship which I acquired during Ph.D. coursework. These treatises helped me understand 'conceptual unity' of Indian Ocean in terms of 'commercial exchanges', 'trade mechanisms', 'cultural linkages', 'transmission of ideas' and 'structures of power—collection of revenue and dissemination of security and assurance of subjects'. These readings in fact ignited a set of enquiry pertaining to the nature of networks, relationship between European merchant companies, their colonial subjects,

and resistance against them on either hemisphere by natives of the Indian Ocean.

For instance, Philip D. Curtin raised relevant issues pertaining to the Indian Ocean. His *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (1984) made me ponder about the cultural dimension towards the Indian Ocean. In the contemporary Indian Ocean Studies, the cultural aspect has become vital, as it lays stress on the study of coastal communities who were the actual performers on the oceanic theatre. Therefore, the study of pirates' community is pertinent as it remained a less explored area by 2008 and now has traversed milestones where the historiography of piracy is in exponential direction. By browsing on the internet, I have comprehended that it is not only historians who are interested in pirates and their predations, scholars from Anthropology, Geography, Law, Strategic & Political Studies and Modern Archaeology are correspondingly interested in it. The reason for this multidisciplinary approach to the problem of pirates and piracy is because the identified pirates were primarily seafarers who had carried out multifarious activities and while being on vessel or on coast, managed the following: navigation & ship-building, adaptation to environment, politico-economic pressures, and lastly, the surviving spirit.

Yogesh Sharma in *Coastal Histories: Society and Ecology in pre-Modern India* (2010) too reflected on pirate's world and pointed out the vacuum in the documentation of piratical

aggression episodes. Piracy and piratical aggressions are not new as we find their reference in Ptolemy, Pliny, Marco Polo and *Periplus* account. It is an old phenomenon which continues even today. Noted historians on the theme of piracy are Patricia Risso, J. L. Anderson, M. N. Pearson, Louren Benton and Lakshmi Subramanian, to name a few, with reference to western Indian Ocean and subscribed to old historiography principles. I have tried to elaborate on this in chapter II where a clear picture on the meaning of the terms used in the colonial archives is sketched. These scholars in their discourse on piracy expressed their difficulties in defining ‘piracy’ and “piratal / piratical aggressions” on the basis of their observations of the archival documents they have used. According to these documents, pirates sometimes were from isolated group or community or from a specific location; or they were also from adventurers, fishermen, sailors, merchants and privateers group, who took to maritime violence or predation under extraneous forces at work during the age of revolution and global expansion (Simon Layton, 2011 and Lakshmi Subramanian, 2016).

The term pirate is derived from Latin word ‘*pirata*’ which means an attempt or experience on sea or oceanic waters through an act where pirates engaged in violence/aggression like robbery on ‘sea’ or ‘shore’; or Greek term ‘*peirates*’ which literally means the one who attacks on (ship). The word is also similar to peril and first came to use in English in the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and was used copiously from 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards with spellings like

‘*pirrot, pyrate, pyrat* &c. Piracy and Piratal / piratical aggressions were therefore about indiscriminate seizure of seaborne or coastal properties through threat or ‘use of force’. It involved holding of passengers and crews for ‘money or goods’. Thus ‘maritime piracy’ or sea piracy included ‘attack’ and ‘confiscation of vessels and merchandise’, ‘imprisonment’ or ‘torturing of merchants and rulers’ in sea-space in exchange for ‘ransom money’, ‘attack and raiding of coastal trading centers and villages’, creation of ‘fear and terror in principal channels of navigation’ and even attacking of the ‘navigational lines of their commercial competitors as a strategy to weaken the trading ability’ and the ‘wealth-mobilizing ability of their rivals’(case of Malabar pirates-*Angria; Kachchhi* and *Kathiawadi Kharwa, Badhel & Koli; Joasamee / Qawasimi* in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea). It must be noted that piratical attacks were common and frequent in zones of seas and shores where ‘maritime trade was carried out with intensity and high frequency’, and ‘remained relatively outside the control of a strong legitimate political authority’. The early terms on piracy and piratal / piratical aggressions seem to have represented a broad range of maritime violence in the multi-coastal environment of Greece and the wider Mediterranean waters (David Pickering, *Pirates*, London, 2006 & Nigel Cawthorne, *Pirates: An Illustrated History*, London, 2006). According to some scholars, the activity of sea-pirates is regarded as ‘anti-imperial’ on one hand and ‘legitimate struggle’ for a share in trade and revenue on the other. Their



exploits and courage stories have been narrated variously. Pirates are classified depending upon their role and region. These are *Buccaneer*, *Corsair*, and *Privateer* (refer table in chapter I & II) primarily related to western world; whereas in eastern world they are identified by vernacular names like: *Chanchiya* (Gujarati), *Samudriyacauda* (Sanskrit), *Samudridaku* (Hindi), *Wokou* (Chinese), *Wako* (Japanese) & *Waegu* (Korean) and local communities (*Moplah / Mappila / Mappilah* and *Kunjali / Kunhali* from Malabar/Kerala), (*Angrias*, *Sidis* and *Sawantwarees* from Konkan), (*Kharwas*, *Sanganian*, *Kolis* and *Waghers* from Gujarat), and (*Qawasimi* and *Wahabees* from the Persian Gulf & the Red Sea). Similar local names occur in case of Horn of Africa, Swahili Coast and Madagascar which were safe haven for pirates and piratical acts due to geomorphology (islands, straits, uneven coast, estuary, gulf & choke points). I have provided meaning of the local terms used for pirate community in the glossary for discrete understanding.

Thorough reading of the archival material suggests that maritime violence and piracy occurred due to political instability within the arms of the ocean or on the uneven coast or in the Gulfs. Geographically stating, harsh climate and arid zones are not suitable for agriculture; the regions located near the sea had evidenced flourishing ports. However, establishment of new ports marginalized existing ports and people were rendered unemployed and impoverished. While surveying the tables & graphs drawn on

piracy in the above-stated zones, I have observed that these pockets were stricken by famine, earthquake or cyclone. Therefore, it can be assumed that besides geography, environment also provided an impetus to the occurrence of incidences of piratical aggressions (case of *Kathiawad* and *Kachchh*). Further, increase in the volume of trade at the new ports compelled people to do the acts of piracy. Therefore, piracy is possible in double cape, narrow strait and choke points. These geographical locations could be identified in ‘Horn of Africa’, the ‘Gulf of Aden’, the ‘Red Sea’, ‘Gulf of Oman’, the ‘Persian Gulf’, ‘Sindh Coast’, the ‘Gulf of *Kachchh*’, the ‘*Kathiawad* Coast’, the ‘Gulf of *Khambat/Cambay*’ along the ‘Arabian Sea’ and Islands like Madagascar, Seychelles, Comoros, Reunion, Pemba etc. (refer maps in chapter I-IV) and down south in the Indian subcontinent. Islands proved to be the safe-havens for a long period as these remained lesser known destinations to state authorities and were used as hideouts by pirates and privateers. Cultural factors also encouraged sea raids. The act of piracy in some communities has been considered as acceptable and was carried as professional legacy (*Angrias & Kunjalis*). It has been noted that rival-merchants, state-chiefs and others supported pirates in their acts for their own reasons. Piracy was carried out on high seas, littorals, creeks, bays and islets by seizure of vessels of merchants, travellers and pilgrims; the targets were surrounded and looted forcibly or were forced to sail at difficult destinations. The pirates were skilled navigators and well conversant to the territory

of their operations and followed *modus operandi* which was a well-established trend in the region of their operation. In my readings, particularly on ancient period, I have come across war strategy's principles, so when Portuguese were experimenting in Indian waters, they met tough challenge from the native pirates of Kerala and Maharashtra.

Historical literature on piracy has been broadening by the tireless work of scholars from different disciplines. These reading are by Charles Ellms, *The Pirates Own Book: Authentic Narratives of Lives, Exploits and Executions of the Most Celebrated Sea Robbers* (1924); Pamela Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India: 1784-1806* (1970); Ranabir Chakravarti, *Warfare for Wealth: Early Indian Perspective* (1986); “Horse Trade and Piracy at Tana (Thana, Maharashtra, India): Gleanings from Marco Polo”, *JESHO*, Vol. 34, 1989 and “Overseas Trade in Horses in Early Medieval India: Shipping & Piracy” in *Praci-Prabha: Perspectives in Indology* (1989); Anirudh Deshpande, “Limitation of Military Technology: Naval Warfare on the West, 1650-1800” *EPW*, Vol. 27, No. 17, April 25, 1992; J. L. Anderson, “Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation,” *JWH*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1995); Patricia Risso, *Merchants, and Faith: Muslim Commerce and Culture in the Indian Ocean* (1995) and “Cross-Cultural Perceptions of Piracy: Maritime Violence in the Western Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf Region during a Long Eighteenth Century” in *JWH*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2001); David J.

Starkey, “Piracy in the Eastern Seas, 1750-1850: Some Economic Implications”, in *Pirates and Privateers: New Perspectives on the War on Trade in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, (David J. Starkey *et al.*), 1997; Angus Konstam, *The History of Pirates* (1999); *The World Atlas of Pirates* (2010); Barbara Fuchs, “Faithless Empires: Pirates, Renegades, and the English Nation”, *ELH*, Vol. 67, No. 1, 2000; Lakshmi Subramanian, “Piracy in the Indian Ocean: Exploring Perspectives” in Lotika Varadarajan, *Indo-Portuguese Encounters: Journeys in Science, Technology and Culture*, 2 Volume, (2000); Erik Gilbert, “Coastal East Africa and the Western Indian Ocean: Long Distance Trade, Empire, Migration and Regional Unity, 1750-1970,” *HT*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 2002; Josep N. F. M. Ā Campo, “Discourse without Discussion: Representation of Piracy in Colonial Indonesia 1816-1825”, *JSEAS*, Vol.34, 2003; Arne Bialuschewski, “Pirates, Slaves, and the Indigenous Population in Madagascar c. 1690-1715”, *IJAHS*, Vol. 38, No. 3, 2005; Stefan Eklöf, “The Return of Piracy: Decolonization and International Relations in a Maritime Border Region (the Sulu Sea), 1959-63”, *ISEAS*, 15 Issue, 2005; Ghulam A. Nadri, *Eighteenth-Century Gujarat: The Dynamic of Its Political Economy, 1750-1800* (2009); Lakshmi Subramanian, “The Politics of Restitution: Shipwrecks, Insurance and Piracy in the Western Indian Ocean” (2009) and *The Sovereign and the Pirate: Ordering Maritime Subjects in India’s Western Littoral* (2016); Samira Sheikh, *Forging A Region: Sultans, Traders, and*

*Pilgrims in Gujarat, 1200-1500* (New Delhi, 2010); Edward Simpson, *The Idea of Gujarat, Ethnography and Text* (eds.), (2011); Roxani Eleni Margariti, *Aden and the Indian Ocean Trade: 150 Years in the Life of Medieval Arabian Port*, (2007); James Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj: Merchants, Rulers, and the British in the Nineteenth-Century Gulf* (2007) and Edward Simpson and Kai Kresse (eds.), *Struggling with History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean* (2008). This survey of published literature on Piracy and Piratal Aggressions for the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> centuries suggests that this activity was either periodical or reflected frequently and depended on political, economic and social circumstances. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century with the weakening of Mughal rule, predation came under Kanhoji Angria along the Konkan and Malabar Coast. The Portuguese were guided by Christian law and chartered out Indian Ocean as nobody was claiming over of it. Those who defied their law were claimed to be “the pirates”. The European influence further increased and led to the militarization of the coastal region. The English East India Company was the only one of the several powers trying to dominate the Arabian Sea between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. In this period piracy frequently occurred in the region and exposed the limits of naval technology possessed by the marine. The Malabar, Cambay and the Persian Gulf were natural base for preying on unarmed and armed merchants.

My visits to National Archives, Delhi and Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai and Pune made me understand 19<sup>th</sup> century piracy through Correspondences; Despatches between officials of the East India Company in the *Kathiawad* region, Gulf of *Kachchh* and Gulf of Cambay. C. U. Aitchison's, *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, Vol. VI, (India, 1909); and J. H. Gense and D. R. Banaji (ed.) *The Gaikwads of Baroda: Anandrao Gaekwad 1805-1808* (English Documents) Vol. VII, (Bombay) are two significant documents that reveals various treaties signed with the local chiefs of Gujarat to give up piracy and to help the British government to curb piracy. From the available documents in my possessions and my understanding regarding historical literature on Western Indian Ocean and piracy suggests that the East India Company's interest in trade and commerce were a threat to the regional economies or created political and economic instability in the region. This would be taken as one reason for act of piratical aggressions in the Arabian Sea, as it disrupted the long distance oceanic trade. The presence of Europeans in the East made the Indian Ocean waters a conflict zone for European Companies-the *Estado da India*, the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, the English East India Company and the French East India Company. They colonised the littorals of Western Indian Ocean and imposed maritime regulation against the local potentates. The conflicts and resistance started in the form of piracy and aggressions by individual pirates or in group

supported by local potentates against the East India Company. The British described it as ‘Northward Piracy’. Similar instances are noted in Gulf of Red Sea, Persia and the eastern coast of Africa. One should also remember that the lucrative maritime trade inspired Europeans to indulge in act of piracy. This monograph attempts to analyse both the sides I have gained understanding on EIC from *The Worlds of the East India Company* by H. V. Bowen, et. al.; *The Archaeology of European Expansion in India* by Dilip Chakrabarti; *Great Britain in the Indian Ocean* by Gerald Graham; and *The English East India Company* by K. N. Chaudhuri.

### **Aims and Objectives:**

The aim and objectives of the present study is to understand the nature of piracy and piratal / piratical aggressions in the backdrop of European Companies rivalry in the Western Indian Ocean. Some of the pertinent issues discussed in my thesis are as follows:

- the rivalry among European Companies for establishment of supremacy in Asian trade and resultant increase of piracy in the Western Indian Ocean; which I have derived by understanding of geography of Indian Ocean and its connects with coastal inhabitants and occasional visitors from land; I have attempted the sketch of Indian Ocean in the way the student of Geography do to understand the sites of piratical acts.
- the documentation and interpretation of Piratical Aggressions and Piracy in Western Indian Ocean from the west coast side of



Gujarat (India) and also towards it;

- how piracy affected trade and commerce of the region?
- the process of effective control that developed in order to prevent piracy by the rulers during the study period;
- study of the social circumstances of pirates.

### **Research Scheme and Significance of Study Period:**

The Western Indian Ocean and its arms: Swahili Coast; the Red Sea; the Persian Gulf; the Gulf of *Kachchh*; the Gulf of Cambay, South Gujarat, Konkan and Malabar Coast will remain the primary regions of my study. I must state that I have found reading material on instances of sea piracy for the period c.1600-c.1750 copiously and relatively less for the time span c.1750-c.1850. More than forty incidences in first case and more than twenty incidences in second case are illustrated in tables of chapters II and III.

The study period c.1750 to c.1850 is understood as a period of ‘transition’ and ‘continuity and change’ in Indian History Writing. A new pattern of imperialism and economic development surfaced as a result of Industrial Revolution in Europe. The European trading companies expanded their political and economic activities in the Indian Ocean through improved arms, ammunitions and shipping technology which marginalized the traditional Asian shipping. Trade and commerce transit increased and created a sense of competition for trade supremacy between Europeans; and also between Europeans and Indian merchants. The Portuguese had



a better technology for shipping of goods / materials and it was feasible to extend their power in the Indian Ocean. They issued ‘*cartaz*’ system in the Indian Ocean that led to militarization of the coastal region, which increased the instances of piracy. Similar tactics and policies were attempted by the natives and the custom duties were imposed on the merchants, travellers and pilgrims. If they did not pay custom duties or failed to produce passes; their goods were confiscated. The Portuguese tried to suppress piracy by sending naval expeditions against pirates. References of the same can be found in the historical account of the years 1579 and 1581, when naval expeditions were sent to capture *Sangameshwar* pirates; and in 1586, when two laden ships with wares coming from Chaul to the Strait of Mecca were captured by two Turkish galleys. For safety and security, Portuguese employed convoys to the merchant ships. They tried to suppress piracy till c.1749 but their monopoly in the Indian Ocean was challenged by both- the Dutch and the English East India Companies. After the decline of Portuguese monopoly, during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Indian Ocean became a theatre of naval warfare among trading enterprises such as Dutch East India Company (VOC), English East India Company (EIC) and French East India Company. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) was not involved in much of trading competition with French and British, and thus got marginalized later. The British East India Company and French were left as the two contending parties for trade supremacy in the Indian Ocean.

This led to resistance from the rulers of India because they were interfering in the economic and political affairs of native states of India through their provincial rulers. On 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1635 the Mughal ship '*Taufiqui*' was captured by pirates from Surat. In September of 1695, '*Ganj-i-Sawai*', the Mughal Ship of Aurangzeb was looted by the English pirate Henry Every. The Mughal envoy held the English government responsible for the piracy, and the English in fear of revenge by the former started suppressing the pirates in the Indian Ocean. William Kidd, a privateer of English East India Company engaged in the acts of piracy. He was captured and executed by the British in London, in the year 1701. During the study period both British and French remained involved in the political affairs of the native rulers. When they got the opportunity, they tried to exploit political as well as economic circumstances of the rulers.

In this thesis, my focus is on the policies of the EIC & British government to control trade and their relations with native rulers, rather than the expansion of the case of the French East India Company. In second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, due to the deteriorating economic conditions and fear of losing suzerainty, the native rulers supported pirates and resisted the British dominance. Captain Seton reported that the Raja of Nawanagar had lent money to the pirates and reimbursed himself by collecting the '*Byet's* custom'. The *Banias* of *Kachchh* gave money to pirates to strengthen their defence. The former were afraid of the English

East India Company, fearing that they could capture the sacred temple of Byet. In 1812, James MacMurdo, a Political Agent of *Kachchh* went to punish the pirates of Makran, Sind and *Kachchh*. Later in 1816, he met the ruler of *Kachchh* and compelled him to stop giving shelter to the pirates who were infested in the territories of north-west Bombay. A letter was sent by H. Pottinger, Resident of *Kachchh* to the Chief Secretary, Government of Bombay on 24<sup>th</sup> May, 1836 informing about the acts of piracy committed in the Gulf of *Kachchh* by one of the officers Gaekwad at *Byet*. Foreign Department files at National Archives, New Delhi have some information on the piracy that occurred in the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the waters of Arabian Sea. ‘Secret and Political Department Diary’ and ‘Political Department Diary’ during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai, reveals pieces of information on piracy towards the Horn of Africa, Swahili Coast and along the Madagascar Island. This set of primary documents also provides us the names of pirate’s vessels and their submissions, which in fact, is very valuable to understand the internal dynamics which both the parties-colonizers and natives were attempting in ‘favour’ and ‘against’ each-other. I intend to visit archives at Zanzibar to look into the papers used by Abdul Sheriff and to British Library in London to see papers used by Lakshmi Subramanian in future.

Further in this area, sources like folklores, songs, stories of sailors, and families belonging to former pirates have been helpful

in understanding act of piratical aggressions. It is interesting to share that even today the versions of pirates' trail resides in the memory of *Vadher*, *Kharwa*, *Koli*, *Wagher* and other natives. I had one such experience when I was traversing towards Byet Dwarka enroute to Porbandar and Veraval from the pilgrim town Dwarka in *Kathiawad*.

I initiated the data collection for the research by reading few primary sources derived from the works of earlier reviewed works on Indian Ocean trade networks, navigation skills, coastal communities and maritime piracy. These sources were accessed from Maharashtra State Archive (Mumbai), Peshwa *Daftar*-Pune Archives (Pune), National Archives (New Delhi), Gujarat State Archives (Gandhinagar and Vadodara), internet archives and digital libraries of various universities in the UK and the USA and libraries of the Asiatic Society (Mumbai), portal of National Digital Library, Jawaharlal Nehru Library, Mumbai University, Fort William Library, Mumbai University; Deccan College Library (Pune); the Asiatic Society (Kolkata), CHS and Central Library, JNU-Delhi; ICHR Library Delhi and National Library (Kolkata); Central Library-Mandvi and Smt. Hansa Mehta Library, the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara. I experienced certain difficulties as the references to piracy and maritime violence were scattered in various categories; however, I have been successful in streamlining them in sections of unpublished and published primary sources. In order to understand historical

territory of Indian Ocean and United Nations determined territory of Indian Ocean, the published maps are profusely used. Similarly I have made use of illustration available in European travellers' accounts and web portals related to navigational technology, sea vessels & portraits of pirates. I have also attempted comparative maps on the study period for piracy and aggressions based on the primary sources with the help of Department of Geography. These references are acknowledged with the help of footnotes.

## **Chapterisation Scheme**

### **Introduction:**

Historian's craft lies in visualising and translating the image into text and comprehend the 'on-going process in which the discipline of History has to summon to its aid concepts of the Social Sciences'. This process has five stages [here the 5 Cs] – Conceiving, Collecting, Constructing, Comprehending & Concluding — and has been the testament. In this process lie several challenges which can be addressed by following the theory of causation. The major challenge is in understanding and interpreting the historical material at one's disposal.

History Writing of Ocean involves various measures as part of writing exercise: the first step is on understanding of "connections and processes within its boundaries"; the second, "history in the ocean and it goes beyond activities within the physical limits of the ocean" and the third step "relates to the ocean with larger world history". Maritime history addresses the question of the "attitudes

and orientation” of a given society and polity towards its relevant maritime space and takes a close look at those who live ‘near or along’ the sea (e.g., the sailor, the ship captain, the ship builder, the ship crew, the fisherman, the merchants and passengers on board or even the pirate). This chapter offers review of primary and secondary sources on Indian Ocean Studies and Maritime Piracy; illustrates on objective of research, defines research methodology and provides summary of the structure of the monograph.

**Chapter I: Western Indian Ocean and its Setting** is an attempt to situate the WIO in terms of geographical entity, trajectory of emergence of various polities within the limits of WIO; continuities and discontinuities of these polities and their subjects; social structures and cultural linkages during the study period with respect to the questions streamlined. As stated earlier, about the objective of this monograph (documentation of piratical aggressions) my endeavour had been to understand the Western Indian Ocean in relation to its structures of trade and trade networks, its’ connectedness with respect to globalisation; dynamics generated as a result of global compulsions between the polities of the Western Indian Ocean littoral societies; and WIO as a ‘theatre of conflict’ leading to maritime violence-robbery, killing seizure and so on. In order to map the above, I also delved into the understanding of navigational knowledge. Based on both primary and secondary sources, I also attempt to construct the navigational acumen means the process of shipbuilding, sail, adaptation to new

location and resistance on the basis of travellers' accounts, mainly from *Periplus*, Ptolemy, Pliny, Ibn Majid, Ibn Battuta, Duarte Barbosa, Mandelslo, Jean Baptiste Tavernier and Francois Pyrard for pre-c.1750, *Gazetteers*, Correspondences, Despatch Letters, Administrative Reports and Political and Foreign Department files and diaries for c. 1750 - c. 1850. Based on secondary sources translations of Portuguese, Dutch, and English, I reconstruct the merchant companies' operational mechanisms, their trade structures, types of vessels, tonnage, mutual relationships and points of conflicts within the limits of Indian Ocean. The chapter begins with defining ocean and sea, coast and gulf, islands and creeks-in order to understand the process of mercantile activity, maritime violence and generation of cosmopolitanism at various loci. The chapter has sub-sections on historiography of Indian Ocean's physiography, its spatial and temporal parameters, monsoon & navigation, trade networks, profiles of seafaring communities—substantiated with maps, illustrations and tables.

**Chapter II: Piracy and Piratal Aggressions in the pre-c. 1750 in Western Indian Ocean** documents the incidences of piratical aggressions since antiquity based on established texts like *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* and the travel diary of *Marco Polo*, accounts of Ibn Battuta, Ibn Majid and many more during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century and narrations found in the text of the Bombay Presidency Records. The chapter begins with sketching the various definitions of piracy and its connect with Global Maritime Trade,



Age of Discoveries, Renaissance, Industrial Revolution and Era of Imperialism. The second section of chapter streamlines almost 37 acts of piracy based on published primary sources where discussion on piratical act and its consequences is furthered at length in the narrative mode which coincides with the text of the Secret Diaries of Political and Foreign Department of the Bombay Presidency for the later period. The chapter also has maps drawn on the basis of the text and some illustrations which establishes pre-c.1750 period as a period of frequent phenomenon of the acts of piracy. Pirates are identified on the basis of the above mentioned sources and an examination of changing political and economic circumstances reveals the nature of Indian Ocean Networks. Native pirates and widely known European pirates' biography is also asserted from the treatises of R. N. Saletore and Charles E. Johnson which matches with the Foreign and Political Department Files. This chapter is also supported by maps, illustrations and tables.

**Chapter III: Documentation of Piratal Aggressions during c. 1750 – c. 1850 in Western Indian Ocean** records the trade routes, pirates' route, and explores the Afro-Asian Sea where maritime violence had taken place:-minor ports, choke points, estuary, creeks, islets, islands, byets, etc. as hideouts of the pirates, privateers, *buccaneers*, *corsairs*, with the help of map I and tables I, II and III. One of the sections of this chapter narrates the incidences of piratical acts and the consequences in terms of plunder, slaughter, benefits, attempts to curb the aggression,



punishment on plunderers, formulation of regulations, checks and execution mechanism with the help of folios made available to me from archives. These are:

Letter from Court of Directors, 1830; Letter to Court of Directors, 1837 & 1848; Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 1833, 1835, 1836, 1837, 1838 & 1845; Foreign Department, Secret Consultation, 1839, 1841 & 1842; Political Department Diary: 1809, 1810, 1811, 1812 & 1813; Secret and Political Department Diary: 1801, 1804 & 1806; *British Parliamentary Papers: East India Company Affairs, 1812-13*; *British Parliamentary Papers: Minute of Evidence Before the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, 1831-32*; *British Parliamentary Papers: Reports from Select Committees on the Affairs of the East India Company with Appendices, 1805-10*; *Selections from the Records of Bombay Government, 1855, 1856, 1894 & 1879*; C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads- Relating to Indian and Neighbouring Countries: The Treaties, &c. Relating to the States within the Bombay Presidency 1876*; *Relating to Turkish Arabia, the Persian Gulf, Arabia, and Africa*; *Relating to Turkish Arabia, Muscat, Aden and Adjacent Coasts, and Zanzibar*; *Relating to the Bombay Presidency, Part I-The Peshwa, Kathiawar Agency, Palanpur Agency, Mahi Kantha Agency, and the Rewa Kantha Agency*; *Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads Relating to Indian and Neighbouring Countries: The States within the Bombay Presidency-Kutch, Cambay, Surat Agency*; *Relating to Persia the Arab Principalities in the Persian Gulf and Oman*; *Relating to Aden and the South Western Coast of Arabia Principalities in the Persian Gulf, Muscat (Oman), Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province*.

Within this series we have biographies of pirates, information on them from travellers' accounts, *Bombay Presidency Gazetteers*, Dictionaries of Shipping and Geography. This chapter adopts the narrative approach which is analysed in chapter V to understand politics of piracy and establishment of paramount power of English and British in due course of time.

**Chapter IV: Social Composition of Pirates in Western Indian Ocean** attempts construction of social and occupational profiles of those branded as 'pirates' with reference to Malabar, Konkan, *Kathiawad* and *Kachchh* coast, Red Sea and Persian Gulf; It engulfs its discussion on their custom, personal characteristics, the treatment of their victims, manners, blood-thirstiness, slavery,

guilds, plunder and its allocation, ports of refuge, occupations and trade. *Palias*, i.e. hero-stones erected in the memory of the pirates are another interesting *dimension* of the social-construct.

**Chapter V: Politics of Piracy and British Paramountcy in Western Indian Ocean during c. 1750 – c. 1850** attempts to understand the process of English coming to India as traders and their gradual settlement as rulers, through a number of primary source materials in forms of treaties and agreements is made. The EIC's relation with native rulers in Indian Ocean and their resistance is documented. To understand how the piracy and aggressions were maneuvered by the English and British government to carve out colonial control and establish its hegemony.

**Conclusion:** This provides summary of observations of the fifth chapter and other chapters and sketches interpretation of the same in the light of recent discourse on 'piracy and politics'.

In the end I will submit that I have used both primary-unpublished and published sources supported by scholarly readings to develop my argument to the research theme "Piracy & Piratal Aggression in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO), c. 1750-c. 1850".

