

Chapter III

Documentation of Piratal / Piratical Aggressions during c. 1750 - c. 1850 in Western Indian Ocean



<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofEngland/The-East-India-Company/>

- The Nemesis, an East India Company Warship, Destroying Chinese Vessels during the First Opium War
 - Pirates on Board and
 - Their arms

Piracy and Piratal / Piratical aggressions between c.1750 - c.1850 in Western Indian Ocean has a different trajectory in comparison to preceding period (i. e. pre-c. 1750) because of the nature of the sources used in constructing the profile of piracy and piratal / piratical aggressions in context to WIO. The sources used there are mainly travelogues and biographies which more or less are depending upon experience of the others and they echo repeatedly in variety of other sources in the successive periods. For instance, monograph by R. N. Saletore on *Indian Pirates* and Charles Johnson, *A General History of Pyrate* profusely rely on observations of the travellers and their narration is contextual. However, they have parallels and similes because they derive their information from historical sources and contemporary records. In both the monographs, appearing in the 20th and 18th century, some of the faces and the incidences evolve as hallmarks and engage substantial space in their discourse. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to delve into archival materials to understand piracy through documentation of incidences from the Correspondences, Diaries of Officials or Reports asked by the sovereign in order to estimate the situation in their respective territory.¹

To begin with and agreeing with Howard Spodek² and Lakshmi Subramanian³ it is safe to state that it was Mughals, who consolidated India's "international connections"- 'inland to

¹My emphasis is on centralised government, regional rulers and local potentates and colonial government's representatives.

²Howard Spodek & Michele Langford Louro, "India in the World; The World in India 1450–1770", *Education About Asia*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Spring, 2007, pp. 23-28.

³Lakshmi Subramanian, *Medieval Seafarers of India*, 2005, pp. 40-67.

Central Asia’ and to ‘the Islamic world’. Similarly, sub-continental peninsula’s ‘sea connections’ are pertinent because for ‘thousands of years’ India’s ports served as major nodes in the Indian Ocean trade and beyond (extension to Mediterranean, Atlantic and Pacific circles). The advent of Europeans, who as major participants in that trade changed fortune of India and even England which has been the supreme coloniser of the world since the 16th century. It must be noted that centuries before the European arrival, India was already trading ‘westward’ to Arabia and Africa, and ‘eastward’ to the Malacca Straits, Indonesia, and China (emphasis earlier with reference to mercantile trade, pirates and piratal/piratical aggressions is in chapter I). Its ports served as “pivots,” entrepot for seafarers navigating these long Indian Ocean routes.⁴ The seasonal patterns of the monsoon winds facilitated sailing in specific months, further encouraged sailors to use Indian ports as their ‘stopover points’. Many of these seafarers were Arabs, Turks, Armenians, and Persians who dominated the north-west Indian Ocean trade since the seventh century. The Chinese as players in Indian Ocean waters are traceable since the Sung Dynasty c.960–c.1279, but their successors i.e., the Ming rulers who initially supported such long-distance expeditions up till the mid-fifteenth century, leaving ‘Indians and Arabs’ as the chief merchants of the

⁴Barbara Watson, “*Imagination, Memory and History: Narrating India-Malay Intersections in the Early Modern Period*”, pp. 1-7 & Rila Mukherjee, “Routes into the Present”, pp. 36-63 in Radhika Seshan (ed.), *Narratives, Routes and Intersections in Pre-Modern Asia*, 2017.

Indian Ocean. The merchants from Gujarat outshined this list.⁵ Thus, the traders were on their own and the seas remained open to all as there were no maritime regulations, restrictions or predispositions except robbery enroute by sea plunderers who were designated as pirate in colloquial language. For example: *Chanchiya* (Gujarati), *Samudriyacauda* (Sanskrit), *Samudridaku* (Hindi), *Wokou* (Chinese), *Wako* (Japanese) & *Waegu* (Korean) and local communities (*Moplah* and *Kujali/Khunjali* from Malabar/Kerala), (*Angrias*, *Sidis* and *Sawantwarees* from Konkan), (*Kharvas*, *Sanganian*, *Kolis* and *Waghers* from Gujarat), and (*Qawasimi* and *Wahabees* from the Persian Gulf & the Red Sea). When the Europeans arrived, with sizable backing from their governments, they attempted to change the rules of the sea. In this line Portuguese stand first who were keen to trade in spice independently against their previous arrangement i. e. through traders from Venice and Genoa who procured the spices of South and Southeast Asia through ‘brokers’ in the Middle East. Indeed one-fourth of all Asian spice exports already went to Europe, three-fourths to China. With the rise of Ottoman forces in the 14th century, however, these routes were difficult to access, and, in any case, Western Europeans on the Atlantic Coast felt that the Italian traders took too much profit. After discovering the route Portuguese aspiration expanded and they wanted not merely to sail

⁵Ghulam Nadri, “The Trading World of Indian Ocean, 1600-1750” “Sailing in the Hazardous Waters: Maritime Merchants of Gujarat in the Second Half of the 18th Century”, in Om Prakash (ed), *The Trading World of the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800*, 2012, pp. 215-84.

the seas, but to tax and control them.⁶ To this end they established numerous forts along the coast from East Africa to China, including, from west to east: Mozambique-1507, Hormuz-1515, Goa-1510, Malacca-1511, Macao-1557, and Nagasaki-1571 throughout the 16th century and restricted others movement by bringing in clause of *cartaz*, so that trading in the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean sees everyone anchoring on their ports and trading marts. They were successful because the land-based empires surrounding the core areas of the Indian Ocean—including the Mughals, who did not interfere with them.⁷ Second, the Portuguese successfully mounted cannons on their ships, enabling them to destroy any ships that challenged them.⁸ Like several others Portugal, too, was new in the use of “gunpowder”. The Portuguese simply could not enforce their claims to a monopoly over the entire spice trade in the Indian Ocean; over the import of Arabian horses into western India; and “as Lords of the Sea” to be able to control, direct, and tax all trade in the Indian Ocean. In general, the Portuguese were viewed as pirates: armed with cannon. In fact, the Portuguese relied on alliances with Indians in a considerable manner that it provides immense strength in terms of “capital and commercial expertise to create Empire”.⁹ Whether it was Portuguese, or subsequently Dutch and the English; all

⁶Soren Mentz and B. Bhattacharya in Om Prakash (ed.), *The Trading World of the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800*, 2012, pp. 215-84. pp. 485-518 & 545-78.

⁷M. N. Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, 1987, pp. 117–8.

⁸Afzal Ahmad, *Indo-Portuguese Diplomacy During the 16th and 17th centuries (1500-1663)*, 2008, pp. 62-65.

⁹M. N. Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, 1987, pp. 117–18.

collected ‘gold and silver’ in abundance from the ‘New World’ for their expenditures on commodities transactions in Asia. Portuguese influence in India diminished as that of the Netherlands, England and France increased.¹⁰ Since 17th century, Portuguese because of defeat at various points and failure in the economic competition with Europeans and armed opposition by regional potentates of India concentrated on Brazil. By 1739, the Portuguese were having possession of Goa, Daman and Diu along the north-western coast.¹¹ Unlike the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English and the French organized their overseas operations in the form of “chartered companies.” These enterprises were among the world’s first Joint Stock Companies, portents of the modern business corporation.¹² In 1700, the English East India Company (EIC) had around 350 persons in its headquarters, more than many modern multinationals of present times: “Shares were publicly traded, and the shareowners were subject only to limited liability”.¹³ While the Joint Stock Companies were founded for trade in many parts of the world, and for the colonization of the New World as well, “the main trophies were to the East”. The English East India Company, chartered in 1600 by Queen Elizabeth I, was marginally older, but the Dutch *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC), founded in 1602, set the model for expansion of political control and

¹⁰ *ibid.*, Amar Farooqui, *The Establishment of British Rule 1757-1813*, 2014, pp. 1-3.

¹¹ Lakshmi Subramanian (ed.), *Ports Towns Cities: A Historical Tour of the Indian Littoral*, 2008, pp. 1-19.

¹² Amar Farooqui, *The Establishment of British Rule 1757-1813*, 2014, pp. 2-3.

¹³ B. Montgomery Martin, *History of Possessions of the Honorable East India Company*, Vol. I. 1837, pp. 1-22.

economic feasibility. The VOC was not only to trade, it also had orders from the Dutch government to “attack the Spanish and the Portuguese”.¹⁴ Company convoys travelled armed and were awarded permissions by their respective governments to enter into warfare, negotiations with governments in colonies: port-towns governor or representatives in the province of the rulers or with rulers which called for ascent from the monarch. The European companies and their nations contested in the Asian trade. The Dutch won the Spice Islands, which emerged as modern Indonesia.¹⁵ The English East India Company, defeated militarily by the Dutch further east, concentrated on India as a succour award which helped it emerging as most potent player in times to come in last quarter of the 18th century.¹⁶ The French East India Company, founded only in 1664, soon became their principal European rival there.¹⁷ As the Europeans demarcated their separate Asian spheres of influence, India’s historic connection with Southeast Asia weakened. In 1612, the English Company (EIC) defeated the Portuguese near Surat. Then in 1615 the Mughal emperor Jahangir granted the British the right to build their own factory at Surat and to travel and trade freely throughout the empire. The Company built additional forts and factories in Madras-1639, Bombay-1668 and Calcutta 1690. The Company also established trading posts in

¹⁴Charles Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire 1600-1800*, 1965, pp. 66-83.

¹⁵M. R. Fernando in *ibid.* and in Om Prakash (ed.), *The Trading World of the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800*, 2012, pp. 387-432.

¹⁶Amar Farooqui, *The Establishment of British Rule 1757-1813*, 2014, p. 2.

¹⁷Lakshmi Subramanian, (ed.), *The French East India Company and the Trade of the Indian Ocean: A Collection of Essays by Indani Ray*, 1999, pp. 177- 202 and 215-33.

East Asia, including Guangzhou (Canton): China in 1711 as a base for trade in tea. Until the early 1700s, Indian merchants continued to trade, even expanding their commerce in the new markets opened by the Europeans. Often British and Indian merchants found their interests and participation intertwined¹⁸: (repetition)

Indian merchants were employed as brokers, interpreters, agents, attorneys, writers, money-changers, cashiers, intermediate brokers, and subcontracting merchants. . . . On the whole the association between the Indian merchants and the Company was as amicable as any could be between two parties, each trying to maximize their [sic] profits.

In the shipping industry,¹⁹ the distinction between European and Asian was indistinct as Indian crews manned some British ships and some Britishers served on Indian ships i. e., a relation of interchangeability. Sometimes ships were jointly owned. Indians often provided the finances.²⁰ In Bombay, in particular, the ship-building industry, including the construction of ships for British traders, was largely in the hands of *Parsis*.

Parsis, in particular, often entered into partnerships with British businessmen and in the early 18th century British shipping displaced Indian shipping²¹:

There can be no doubt that by the turn of the nineteenth century not only was the European ship dominant in the ocean but that the Indian ship had sailed into oblivion ... In the western Indian Ocean the magnificent Gujarati fleet ...

¹⁸ Ghulam A. Nadri, "The Trading World of Indian Ocean Merchants in Pre-Colonial Gujarat, 1660-1750", in Om Prakash (ed.), *The Trading World of the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*, 2012, pp. 225-29.

¹⁹ Andrew Lambert, "Strategy, Policy and Shipbuilding: The Bombay Dockyard, the Indian Navy and Imperial Security in Eastern Seas, 1784-1869", pp. 137-52 in H.V Bowen, et. al., *The Worlds of the East India Company*, 2002.

²⁰ Ghulam A. Nadri, "Sailing in the Hazardous Waters: Maritime Merchants of Gujarat in the Second Half of the 18th Century", in Om Prakash (ed.), *The Trading World of the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*, 2012, pp. 255-57.

²¹ Radha Kumud Mookerji, *A History of Indian Shipping*, 1912, pp. 243-53.

gradually dwindled into insignificance, while in the eastern ocean the Calcutta fleet of the private British merchant won the supremacy of the ocean.

It was mainly native navigators who continued with native/indigenously-built crafts and now the concentration was from *Kachchh* and *Kathiawad* towards Oman and Swahili coast respectively because of special clauses signed between the native rulers and Mughal which by now remained untouched.

British ships were now larger and more seaworthy crafts, backed by more capital.²² Also, as Mughal rule began to dissolve, the economy of the hinterland, which previously had supplied Indian shippers, was no longer so secure. Surat, for example, saw its shipping cut to about one-fourth between the late 1600s and the mid-1750s.²³ Most of the city's traders left for other ports, many of them for Bombay, the new British capital along the western board in southern division of Bombay Presidency. Over the centuries, the merchandise that was traded transformed affecting Indians and Europeans as spices were no more the priority which got replaced by cotton textile.²⁴

A brief description of this trade is offered here:

By 1684, the English were carrying 1.5 million pieces of cotton textiles annually—eighty three percent of the total value of their trade—and the Dutch carried an additional 300,000 pieces. This trade became so vast that by about 1700, nearly ten percent of all the textile workers in Bengal, for example, were producing goods for export. **The extensive varieties of Indian cotton cloth, especially, turned the clothing tastes of Britain and northern Europe from**

²²Anne Bulley, *The Bombay Country Ships 1790-1833*, 2000, p. 11 and C. R. Low, *History of the Indian Navy (1613-1863)*, Vol. II, 1877, pp. 474-532.

²³V. A. Janaki, *Some Aspect of the Historical Geography of Surat*, 1974, pp.43-51 and *The Commerce of Cambay from the Earliest Period to the Nineteenth Century*, 1980, pp.43-82.

²⁴See Mariam Dossal, *Theatre of Conflict, City of Hope: Mumbai 1600 to Present Times*, 2011.

wool to cotton. By the mid-1700s, the British were importing raw cotton from India and manufacturing it into cotton textiles in new processes that signalled the birth of the Industrial Revolution, and would substantially displace Indian hand-manufactures with British machine products. Chinese tea became another transformative substance. Many English ships departing India carried some of the cotton fabrics further east to exchange them for the spices of the Spice Islands and tea from China. Laden with their cargoes of spices and tea from East Asia, they returned to India, boarded additional textiles, and returned to England. **The introduction of Chinese tea transformed drinking patterns first in England and then in India.** In the nineteenth century, the British realized that India also grew tea leaves in limited quantities, around Assam, and began to develop an Indian plantation tea industry. Chinese silks similarly inspired the development of a thriving silk industry in Bengal. **Because the Indians and the Chinese did not value Europe's products, the English were forced to pay for Asia's exports with silver bullion, and some gold, which they earned from their businesses with the Spanish and Portuguese in the New World. England's mercantilists were disturbed by the outflow and sought some alternative.**

Through a series of battles and negotiations between 1757 and 1765, the English East India Company became the *de facto* rulers of considerable portion of Indian subcontinent in Bengal. They continued to expand their powers and their landholdings, and by the early 19th century they controlled most of India, directly or indirectly including India's western seaboard.²⁵

India's own taxes, now levied by the English East India Company, paid for British purchases of India's goods. The British also had Indians growing opium, which they exported to China to pay for the tea. Chinese objections precipitated the Opium War of 1839, which they lost, and China's semi-colonization began as a result of treaty of Nanking (1848). Back in England, members of Parliament were shocked by the profits amassed by the officials of the Company, and by some private traders as well, and by the transformation of the trading Company into the rulers of eastern

²⁵ Amar Farooqui, *The Establishment of British Rule 1757-1813*, 2014, p. 2.

India.²⁶ In due course Britain decided to transform the Company into a disciplined arm of government through a series of regulating acts culminating in 1858 with the British government disbanding the Company completely and assuming direct rule over India in the name of the Crown.²⁷

English rule also drew India into the global wars between France and Britain, fought intermittently from the War of Austrian Succession in 1740–48 until the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815.²⁸ The French East India Company had, by 1700, established dozens of factories along India's east and west coasts, competing with the British for trade and political alliances.²⁹ Series of development led to strengthening of tentacles of English in Indian sub-continent which served a base for their paramountcy.

Thus, the Indian Ocean trade was more or less monopoly by the East India Company between c. 1750 and c. 1850. The company was trying to gain more hold on political and economy across the Western Indian Ocean. Some of the local potentates supported it and also aligned with the Company but there were others who resisted or found their ways of survival as were against interference in politics and economy. Supporters carried their trade in well-equipped ships and accepted pass system. Arabs and Gujarati merchants loaded their cargo in the East India Company's ship which was safer in comparison to native vessels/ships. They

²⁶*ibid.*, pp. 7-20 & 55-76.

²⁷*ibid.*, pp. 55-76.

²⁸*ibid.*, pp. 22-54.

²⁹Laksmi Subramanian, (ed.), *The French East India Company and the Trade of the Indian Ocean: A Collection of Essays by Indrani Ray*, 1999, pp. 77- 120.

convoy the merchant ships which were more secure from piratal aggressions in the Western Indian Ocean. Seven Years War (1756-63) had extended maritime superiority of Britain over France in Western Indian Ocean and overthrew of French as well. During this time British had its factory at *Bandar Abbas* in the Persian Gulf but it was destroyed by French naval force in 1759³⁰ on one hand French Chandernagar/Chandernagore and Pondicherry in India were seized by the British on the other. Further in 1757, battle of Plassey provided greatest opportunity to English East India Company (EIC) when they emerged as ruler from being merely merchants. Western Indian Ocean thus became theatre of wars and maritime violence. Wars were between aspiring European Merchant Companies and maritime violence was happening with merchant vessels on the behest of local potentates. Both *Kathiawad* and *Kachchh* provides exemplary narrations in the Correspondences of the Foreign Department, Diaries of the Secret & Political Department, Foreign Department Political Consultancy and Diaries of Marine Department available at National Archives, Delhi and Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai in particular.

Tirthankar Roy³¹ has highlighted the mercantile and capitalist circumstances in chronological order with paired chapters on each of the major periods of economic change now well-entrenched

³⁰J. G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia: Historical*, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 81

³¹Tirthankar Roy, 'The Indian Ocean Sphere: 1700–1850' in *A Business History of India: Enterprise and the Emergence of Capitalism from 1700*, 2010, pp. 40-68. doi:10.1017/9781316906903.005

within Indian historiography i.e., ‘the retreat of Mughal power and the rise of the East India Company’ (1700–1850), the high noon of ‘colonialism to Great Depression’ (1850–1930), the long march and maturation of imports substituting industrialisation (1930–80) and the economic ‘crisis’ that precipitated liberalisation (1980–present); which impacted steadily and deepened interruption of European mercantile and political power in the form of the knitting together of the worlds of those agents involved in maritime trade with those entrenched in the domestic revenue-bureaucratic and banking-cum-commercial houses of the interior (refer Lakshmi Subramanian)³².

In this chapter, focus is on documentation of instances of piratal / piratical aggressions on the basis of discussion carried out in previous chapter in pirate’s haven for the c. 1750- c1850. The discussion will hold around on incidences of piracy in *Kathiawad*, Gulf of *Kachchh*, Persian Gulf and along the Madagascar coast other than in high seas carried by natives and responses of affected on one hand; natives perception for piratal aggression on other and attempt by English to curb the piratal / piratical aggressions. In the first section on aggression, piracy that continued in pre-c. 1750 is stated in detail manner with the help of narrations in the correspondence from the colonial archives along the western seaboard: Malabar, *Okhamandal*, Persian Gulf, Swahili Coast and Madagascar coast. This is further extended to documentation from

³²Lakshmi Subramanian, “The Politics of Restitution: Shipwrecks, Insurance and Piracy in the Western Indian Ocean.” (downloaded in 2009, available on net and I have discussed with her in DIN Conference held in Daman 2012 and Surat 2013), pp. 1–14.

Reports, *Gazetteers* and Secret and Political Department files in Table I. The last section is about inferences drawn from the unpublished and published primary sources. It is pertinent to mention that the treaties signed between the actors on political scenario of Indian Ocean carry copious material with clauses and sub-clauses for curbing the menace of piratical aggressions. The trial narrations of the pirates are other significant pieces to comprehend the legality and illegality involved in the acts carried out by natives or by professionals who were venturing in WIO for making fortune through maritime violence. I submit limitation of not carrying out discussion based on trials; however the mention of trials in primary unpublished and published material finds place in the discourse.

Saletore's monograph is a handy volume to embark on the natives who indulged in sea plundering and resisting Europeans in the Indian Waters when the economy was under threat. Comprehending from his chapter 5 on Pirate Chiefs; we have the following information for the down south seaboard of western India illustrated through table II and consultation of textual material the same is illustrated on Map I & II.

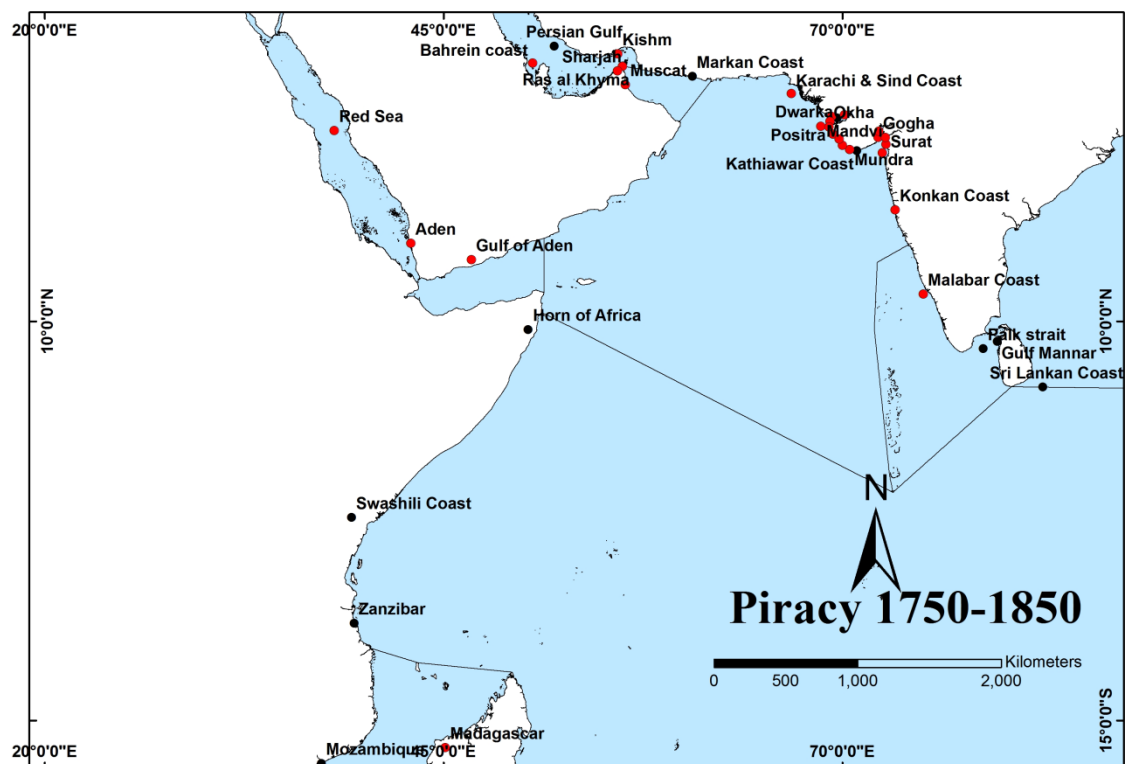
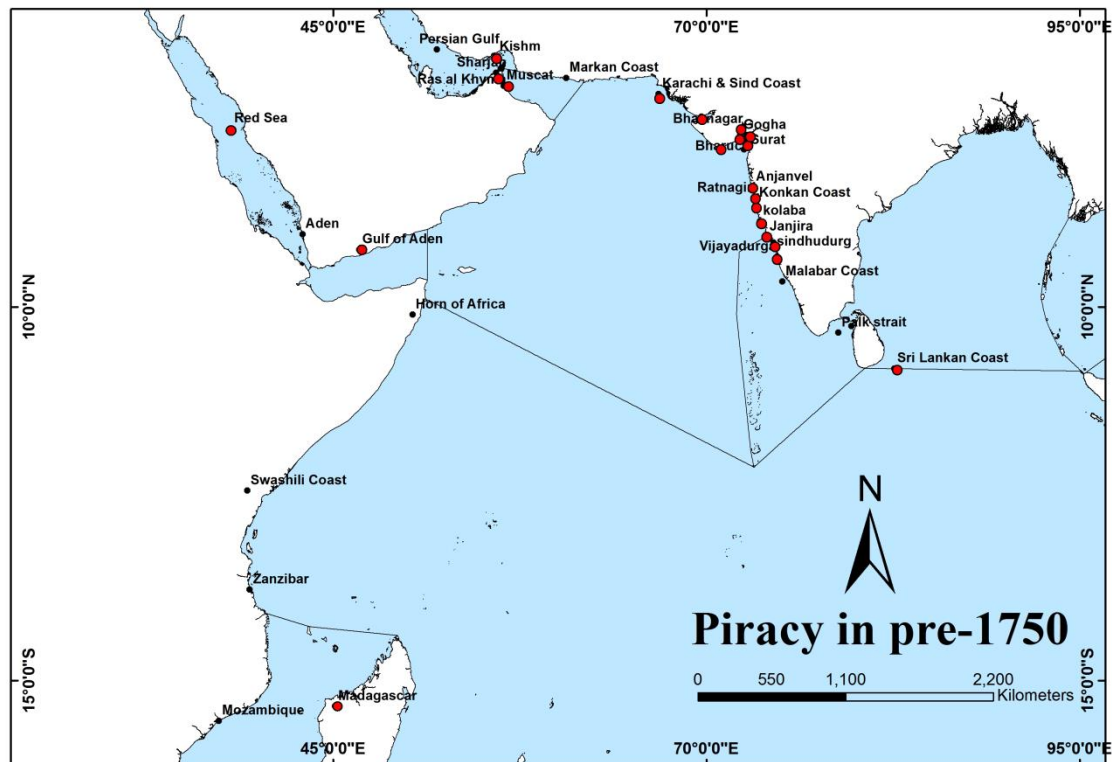


Illustration I: Piracy & Piratical Zones

TABLE I: Coastal Settlements in Gujarat c. 1500-c. 1800

SETTLEMENT ALONG THE COASTLINE	REMARKS (Recorded as)	REFERENCES
South Gujarat/ Sarkar Bharuch and Surat		
1. Daman	<i>bandar</i> (European)	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 485; Abbe, Carre, I, p. 166; Careri, p. 159; Hamilton, <i>Pinkerton</i> , p. 327 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 229.
2. Gandevi	<i>bara</i> -Salbancke, records it as 'very fair haven' -'great store of shipping, where some are of 500 tunnes burthen'.	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 229. Salbancke, <i>Purchas, III</i> , p. 82. <i>English Factories in India (EFI)</i> , (1622-23), p. 310.
3. Swally	<i>bandar</i> as 'Suhali' <i>bandar</i> -in the early 17th century it became an anchorage of European ships owing to discovery of hole. It competed with the Surat roadstead for the position of the outer port of Surat.	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 229. Middleton, <i>Purchas, III</i> , p. 185; Hawkins, <i>Early Travels</i> , p. 96 & note; Pelsaert, pp. 38-39; Mundy, II, 311-13; <i>EFI</i> , 1646-50, p. 319; Thevenot, 37-38 and Fryer, I, p. 299.
4. Surat	<i>bandar</i> widely known.	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 487; Abbe, Carre, III, p. 792; Mundy, II, p. 30; Pelsaert, pp. 38-39; Thevenot, pp. 37-38 and Fryer, I, pp. 266-67 & 302-03; <i>EFI</i> , 1618-21, p. 29; <i>EFI</i> , 1655-60, p. 301; Manucci, I, p.61 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , pp. 212 & 229.
5. Hansot	<i>bara</i> - sources silent on its maritime significance.	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 496 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 201
6. Bharbhut	<i>bara</i> - sources silent on its maritime significance.	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 488.
7. Broach	<i>bandar</i> widely known.	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 488; Abbe, Carre, I, p. 139; Fryer, III, p. 159; <i>EFI</i> , 1622-25, p. 310 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , pp. 199 & 229.
8. Gandhar	<i>bandar</i>	<i>The Rehla of Ibn Batuta</i> , (tr.) Mahdi Hussain, p. 175; <i>Ain</i> , I, p. 496; <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , pp. 207 & 229 and <i>Bombay Gazetteer</i> , II, pp. 561-62.
9. Navsari	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , pp. 215 & 229.
10. Chikhli	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p.229.

11.	Bulsar	<i>bandar/</i> <i>bara</i>	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 488/ <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 229.
12.	Rander	<i>bandar</i> -replaced by Surat	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 488; Hamilton, <i>Pinkerton</i> , p. 315; & <i>Mirat-i-</i> <i>Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 214.
13.	Kawa	<i>bara</i> (near Broach)	<i>The Rehla of Ibn Batuta</i> , (tr.) Mahadi Hussain, p. 174.
14.	Tankari & Luhara	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 229.
15.	Sarbhon	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 229.
CENTRAL GUJARAT/ <i>Sarkar</i> Ahemdabad			
16.	Cambay	<i>bandar</i> : during the sultanate period; but due to silting process the navigability of gulf of Cambay became questionable and it was replaced by Surat, however, Gogha another port in the vicinity served as port of Cambay between the period when Surat acquired prominence due to its navigability.	<i>The Rehla of Ibn Batuta</i> , (tr.) Mahadi Hussain, pp. 92, 116, & 172-73. <i>Ain</i> , I, p. 486 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi</i> , <i>Suppl.</i> , pp. 189-190 & 229. Thevenot, p. 18; Careri, I, p. 139; <i>EFI</i> , 1634-36, p. 217; <i>EFI</i> , 1637- 41, p. 42 & Finch, <i>Early Travels</i> , p. 134.
17.	Gogha	<i>bandar</i>	<i>The Rehla of Ibn Battuta</i> , (tr.) Mahadi Hussain, pp. 175-76; <i>Ain</i> , I, p. 486; <i>Tujuk-i-Jahangiri</i> , p. 206; <i>EFI</i> , 1618-21, pp. 29-30; Abbe, Carre, I, pp.138-39; Hamilton, <i>Pinkerton</i> , p. 314 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , pp. 190 & 229.
18.	Kavi	<i>bara</i>	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 488 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi</i> , <i>Suppl.</i> , p. 229.
19.	Bhangad, Bhariad, Shahpur, Vadgam & Pandad	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
20.	Jhanjmer, Sultanpur, Vartej & Bhaunagar	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
KATHIAWAR/ SAURASHTRA/ <i>Sarkar</i> Sorath			
21.	Talaja	<i>bara</i>	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 500 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi</i> , <i>Suppl.</i> , p. 229.
22.	Mahuva	<i>bara</i>	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 500 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi</i> , <i>Suppl.</i> , p. 230.

23.	Dongar	<i>bandar</i> (located possibly at the old site of Pipavav <i>bandar</i>)	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 500 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
24.	Nagsari	<i>bara</i>	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 500 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
25.	Una & Malikpur	<i>bara</i>	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 500 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
26.	Dongar, Khokla Ahmadpur, Rajpur & Kot	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
27.	Hira	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
28.	Gogola	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
29.	Div	<i>bandar</i> (European)	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 489; Salbancke, <i>Purchas, III</i> , p. 89; Abbe, Carre, I, p. 131; <i>EFI</i> , 1634-36, pp. 196-97; <i>EFI</i> , 1665-67, p. 27 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 231.
30.	Kodinar & Chohar	<i>bara</i>	<i>Ain</i> , I, pp. 489-500 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
31.	Veraval & Pattan-Dev	<i>bandar</i> <i>bandar & bara</i> - as 'Bilawal'	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 500. <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
32.	Mangrol	<i>bandar</i>	<i>Ain</i> , I, pp. 489-500; Abbe, Carre, I, pp. 130-1; Hamilton, <i>Pinkerton</i> , p. 311 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
33.	Chorawar, Udhupur & Piph	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
34.	Porbandar	<i>bandar</i>	<i>Ain</i> , I, pp. 489-500; Abbe, Carre, I, p. 129; Hamilton, <i>Pinkerton</i> , p. 311 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
35.	Navi, Kusa, Bhora, Bhar & Tajpur	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
36.	Jhakar & Salaya	<i>bandar</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
37.	Jodia	<i>bandar</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
38.	Bara, Bahora & Aramda	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
39.	Dwarka	<i>bandar</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
40.	Dubari, Bhavda, Rajpur, Hapir, Kohij, Hara, & Mantarda	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
41.	Rawal	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
42.	Waliparkar	<i>bara</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230 (pearls were found).

43.	Muzaffarabad	<i>bandar/barā</i>	<i>Ain</i> , I, p. 489. <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
44.	Shahpur	<i>barā</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 229.
45.	Thakaria	<i>barā</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 229.
46.	Bharyad, Manji, Bhangadh & Dolera	<i>barā</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 229.
47.	Bhavnagar	<i>barā</i> <i>-old Partej</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 229.
48.	Undi & Banderkot	<i>barā</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 229.
49.	Jhansu, Jhanjmir, Kotra, Walang & Ghadwala	<i>barā</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 229.
50.	Qutubpur	<i>barā</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 229.
<i>KACHCHH/ Sarkar Sulaiman Nagar</i>			
51.	Bedi bandar	<i>bandar</i> -Hamilton refers it as 'Baet' <i>Bandar</i>	Hamilton, <i>Pinkerton</i> , p. 314 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
52.	Anjar	<i>bandar</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
53.	Mandvi	<i>bandar</i>	<i>EFI</i> , 1634-36, (Rean Mundy) & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
54.	Mundra	<i>barā</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
55.	Khubaria	<i>barā</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
56.	Narayansar	<i>barā</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
57.	Duma	<i>barā</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 230.
58.	Tuna	<i>barā</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 219.
59.	Saglo	<i>barā</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 219.
60.	Auranga <i>bandar</i>	<i>bandar</i> - established in c.1651	<i>EFI</i> , 1651-54, pp. 10-11 & <i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p.219 & 230.
61.	Karakala	<i>bandar</i>	<i>Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Suppl.</i> , p. 219.

Source: Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi, 1985, Sheets 5A & B and 7A & B along with notes, pp. 14-16 & 21-26 and Jean Deloche, 'Geographical Consideration of the Location of Ancient Seaports in India', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. 20, 1983, pp. 39-48. (I am thankful to my supervisor for helping me develop understanding on coastal settlements of Gujarat and sharing her reference cards)

Western Seaboard and the East India Company: Perspectives from Piracy and Piratal/ Piratical Aggressions

According to Lakshmi Subramanian³³, in post-1740s the English East India Company concentrated on western India under the observation of Bombay Presidency officials, who with support of Residents and Political Agents in native states and carried out their day to day transactions, which later culminated into alliances and treaties signed in early 19th century. English like in Bengal aspired for control on revenue, rich agrarian produce (Cotton in particular from Gujarat) and attempted for ‘coastal and maritime control’, preconditions to which were the ‘acquisition of the Imperial Admiralty held by the *Sidis*’, and the enforcement of the company’s trading permit along the entire expanse of the ‘littoral’. Every seafarer from ‘Sind in the north to Malabar in the south’ was appreciated to avail of the company’s pass. Implicit in the acceptance of the pass was a ‘restructuring of politics’ in the ‘high seas’ as well as the imposition of ‘controls and a new fiscal structure on the region’s seafarers and traders’. This is obvious, when I surfed various dispute files in Maharashtra State Archives in Political Department and Foreign Department section pertaining to mercantile community, commodity exchanges and costs involved in it.³⁴ All seafaring traders had to apply for the

³³Lakshmi Subramanian, *Medieval Seafarers of India*, 2005, pp. 104.

³⁴Refer Table I and Derek Elliott, ‘Pirates, Politics and Companies: Global Politics on the Konkan Littoral, c. 1690-1756’, *Economic History Working Papers* 136/10, Department of Economic History, London School of Economics and Political Science (London, UK, 2010); Pamela Nightingale, *Trade in Western India 1784-1806*, 1970 and Lakshmi

company's pass which defined the 'sovereign rights of the company to police and patrol the high seas'. Navigations were no longer 'a right to be exercised freely by the seafarer' as happened in 17th century; an individual had to seek the sanction of the company to do so and in return was 'guaranteed protection by the company against the claims of other potentates'. Notwithstanding the benefits of company protection, the imposition of the pass and its rigid enforcement by the guns of the Bombay Marine³⁵, the naval arm of the company establishment in western India at Bombay (Mumbai), implied a set of control that negated the claims of existing 'coastal powers' for instance from *Kathiawad* and *Kachchh*. Similarly, Malabar³⁶ is no exception and need reappraisal for the c.1750-c.1850. Under these circumstances, the interaction between local coastal society, its seafarers and rulers and the English East India Company was bound to be stressed and vehement, which precipitated in the piratal/piratical aggressions. A reading of various treaties and engagements explicitly speaks in volume (see Annexures I to IV) in this direction.

It is an established fact that Malabar Coast and its immediate hinterland were known for its export in spices, best sailors and teak wood. Portuguese records speak of four principal port towns- Quilon, Cochin, Calicut and Cannore; the Arab and other

Subramanian, *The Sovereign and the Pirate Ordering Maritime Subjects in India's Western Littoral*, 2016.

³⁵C. R. Low, *History of The Indian Navy (1613-1863)*, Vol. I & II, 1877, pp. 152-84.

³⁶N. Keshorjit Singh, "Siddis and the Janjira State Glimpses of Courage, Entrepreneurship and Identity", pp. 78-91, in Chattar Singh (ed.), *Minority, Entrepreneurship and Empowerment: The Indian Context*, 2018.

merchants and traders belonging to *Mappilas* community dominated the trade and pepper remained the major commodity in this pocket; plenty of timber was available to be exported to the Persian Gulf. This timber (teak) was used for building strong vessels meant for coastal and long distance trade by natives. It was the sailors of Malabar who carried the mentioned commodities in cargo vessels. East India Company's correspondences³⁷ mention about *Malabari* sailors indulging in piracy whenever they got opportunity. John Biddulph has also narrated on how the Malabar pirate has menaced the East India Company. For instance, the *Qawasimi* pirates procured Malabar timber from the Persian (West Asia) markets to build their vessels. The East India Company tried to control the Persian Gulf trade and assured its safety from piracy.³⁸ They sent expeditions to suppress piracy in the Persian Gulf but were not successful; and therefore Company officials in the Indian Navy suggested that timber import from Malabar should be prohibited to prevent further construction of vessels by the *Qawasimi* pirates.³⁹ The officials also suggested equipping the company with armed fleet similar to the pirate vessel which could hunt down into the deep and critical corners where large vessels' entry was impossible.

³⁷ Secret Department Diary, No. 310 (5), 2nd January-17th February, 1819, pp. 134-147.

³⁸ Anirudh Deshpande, 'The Bombay Marine: Aspects of Maritime Military History 1650-1850', *Studies in History* 11, No. 2 (1995), pp. 281-305; Low, C. R., *History of The Indian Navy (1613-1863)*, Vol. I, 1877, pp. 152-84 & also see William Laird, *The Royal Navy, A History from the Earliest Times to 1900*, Volume V., 1997.

³⁹ Secret Department Diary, No. 310 (5), 2nd January-17th February, 1819, pp. 218-47.

Konkan is a narrow rugged and rocky coastline suitable for pirates in the coastal India as stated earlier. We have discussed at length the havoc created by the *Malabari* pirates and the conflict between them and Portuguese in the first half of the 18th century in the Konkan coast.⁴⁰

To quote Biddulph⁴¹ in order to understand the severity in waters of the Western Indian Ocean in the 17th century and its repercussions in the 18th century:

...every coast was beset by English, French, Dutch, Danish, Portuguese, Arab, Malay or other local pirates. **In the Bay of Bengal alone, piracy on a dangerous scale was practically unknown...**There was no peace on the ocean. The sea was a vast No Man's domain, where every man might take his prey. Law and order stopped short at low-water mark. The principle that traders might claim protection and vengeance for their wrongs from their country, had not yet been recognized and they sailed the seas at their own risk. Before the close of the seventeenth century the buccaneers had passed away, but their depredations, **in pursuit of what they called "free trade," were of a different nature from those of the pirates who succeeded them.** In 1623 the depredations of the Dutch brought the English into disgrace. Their warehouses at Surat were seized, and the president and factors were placed in irons, in which condition they remained seventh months. This grievance was the greater, as it happened at the time that the cruel torture and execution of Captain Towerson and his crew by the Dutch took place at Amboyna. It was bad enough to be made responsible for the doings of their own countrymen, but to be punished for the misdeeds of their enemies was a bitter pill to swallow. In 1630, just as peace was being concluded with France and Spain, Charles I., **who was beginning his experiment of absolute government, despatched the Seahorse, Captain Qaul, to the Red Sea to capture the ships and goods of Spanish subjects,** as well as of any other nations not in league and amity with England. **There were no Spaniards in the Red Sea or the India Ocean, but international arrangements in Europe were not regarded when the equator had been crossed. Qual captured a Malabar vessel, for which the Company's servants at Surat were forced to pay full compensation. The Seahorse returned of enterprise opened up, Endymion Porter, Gentleman of the King's bedchamber, embarked on piratical speculation, in partnership with London merchants, Bonnel and Kynaston, with a licence under the privy seal to visit any part of the world and capture ships and**

⁴⁰R. N. Salletore, *Indian Pirates: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 1978, pp. 46-47 and Johnson, Charles, *A General History of the Pyrates, from their First Rise and Settlement in the island of Providence, to the Present Time*, 1724,

⁴¹John Biddulph, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, 1907, pp. 8, 71 & 75.

goods of any state not in league and amity with England. Two ships, the *Samaritan* and *Roebuck*, were fitted out with such secrecy that the East India Company were kept in ignorance, and sailed in April, 1635, for the Red Sea, under Captain Cobb...The *Samaritan* was wrecked in the Comoro Islands; but Cobb, continuing his cruise with the *Roebuck*, captured two Mogul vessels at the mouth of the Red Sea, from one of which he took a large sum of money and a quantity of goods, though the vessel had a pass from the Surat factory. Again the Company's servants at Surat were imprisoned, and not released till they had paid full compensation. Some small satisfaction was experienced when it became known that John Proud, master of the *Swan*, one of the Company's ships, had encountered the *Roebuck* in the Comoro Islands, and had attacked the freebooter. He was unable to capture it, but succeeded in procuring restitution of the captured goods; the treasure, however, was carried off to London, where it must have seemed as if the days of Drake and Hawkins had come again.

During this period Konkan had an unenviable notoriety on account of these pirates who were known as the '*Malabars*,' and infested the numerous creeks and harbours. Their chief ports were Revadanda, *Suvarnadrug*, Gheria and *Vijayadrug*. As mentioned earlier, under Kanhoji Angria, the Maratha navy forced all the ships sailing nearby his territories to purchase 'pass'/'*dastak*' in order to avoid confiscation, in similar way as done by the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean waters. The European Companies' ships including local merchants' ships were not spared from such seize and confiscation. The pass system issued by the Marathas was not acceptable to the European Companies which lead to frequent conflicts.⁴² One of the contenders against the Maratha supremacy in the Konkan were the *Siddis* of Janjira. Both fought for control on the Konkan.⁴³

⁴² Manohar Malgonkar, *Kanhoji Angrey Maratha Admiral: An Account of his Life and his Battles with the English*, 1959, p. 130.

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 131.

One of the Marathas' violent attacks against the Janjira fort led the ruler *Siddi* Fateh Khan to surrender but due to internal revolt occurred and he was ousted by *Siddi* Sambal, *Siddi* Kasim and *Siddi* Khairiyat. Under these three *Siddis* they battled back and also sought help from Khan Jahan, the Mughal *Subedar* of Deccan. The *Subedar* helped rejuvenate the strength of *Siddis* which led to Marathas suffering losses. Afterwards, *Siddi* Kasim transferred his loyalty to Aurangzeb, then Mughal Emperor. The Mughal Emperor conferred him the title of Yakut Khan and Janjira fort was placed under him. In 1670, *Siddi* Khairiyat was appointed *thanedar* of Danda-Rajpuri. Earlier, we have mentioned that *Siddis* have two forts under their control: Janjira and Jaffrabad. *Siddi* Hallol was protecting trade and commerce around the Surat port. He got share from Jaffrabad pirates for sheltering and protecting them but he seized, Jaffrabad, because the pirates failed to pay tributes for their activities.⁴⁴ The *Siddis* annually got money from the Mughal Empire for protecting their subjects on the sea. There were frequent piratical activities in coastal region of Gujarat as well when the European Companies were trying to monopolise the Indian Ocean trade. In 1761, *Siddi* Hallol signed an agreement with the East India Company that 'no boats or vessels either of the English or *Siddi* Hallol passes/colours should be molested; and both be treated as friend'. In the 18th century, the East India Company and the *Siddis* had relatively good relations. The cordial relation between the Company and the *Siddis* was meant to counter

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 132.

the Marathas Navy.⁴⁵ The Company had supplied armament to the *Siddis* and they were helping each other against the Marathas onslaught in the western coast of India. Safeguarding the sea routes of the western coast of India was the main objective of the Company. The Company made a policy to keep the Maratha power under check so that they would not harass their merchants and the company's ship. They had signed an agreement with the *Siddis* for offensive and defensive alliance in 1733 against the Marathas.⁴⁶ They assisted the *Siddis* by deploying their war ships-*Victoria*, *Bombay* and *Princess*.⁴⁷ The East India Company had a long time ambition to seize the Janjira fort for strategic reasons and they even tried to capture the fort and shift their base from Bombay to Janjira, but were not successful. They have supported the *Siddis* because the *Siddis* were under the Mughal Empire. They feared that misadventure or threat to the *Siddis* might cancel their trading permit. They had to protect themselves from the Marathas' threat also. There were instances of the *Siddis* harassment to the company's and their client's ships.⁴⁸

The *Seedee* of Janjira, who styled himself the Mogul's Admiral, received a yearly subsidy of four lakhs for convoying the fleet, a duty that he was quite unable to perform against European desperadoes. Public opinion at Surat was at once excited against the English, and further inflamed by the Dutch and

⁴⁵C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties and Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries: State within the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. IV, (revised edition), 1876, pp. 439-40.

⁴⁶C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties and Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries: State within the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. IV, (revised edition), 1876, pp. 435-40. (See Annexures of this monograph- I to IV)

⁴⁷Runoko Rashidi, "Black Bondage in Asia", *African Presence in Early Asia*, (eds.) Runoko Rashidi & Ivan Van Sertima, p. 139.

⁴⁸John Biddulph, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, 1907, pp. 8, 71 & 75.

French, who were only too anxious to see a rival excluded from the trade. Sir John Child, to pacify the Governor, offered to send a man-of-war to look for the pirates; but the Dutch and French factors continued to 'spitt their venom' till the Governor laughed in their faces and asked why they did not join in sending vessels to look for the rogues, sing the mater seemed to them so serious...

From the Persian Gulf to Cape Comorin the whole coast was beset by native pirates, and, with the rise of the Mahratta power, the evil increased Petty chiefs sometimes levied blackmail by giving passports to those who would pay for them, **claiming the right to plunder all ships that did not carry their passes; but often the formality was dispensed with. Owing to the paucity of records of the early days, and the more serious hostility of the Portuguese and Dutch, we hear little of the losses sustained from native pirates, except when some ship with a more valuable cargo than usual was captured...** In 1707, the year of Aurungzeeb's death, **the pirates of the Persian Gulf made a great haul of plunder. A squadron of them made their way to the Red Sea, waylaid the Mocha fleet, and returned home laden with booty. In the following year, a squadron of fourteen Arab ships from the Gulf, carrying from thirty to fifty guns, and with seven thousand men on board, appeared on the Malabar coast and surprised Honore, Managalore, and Balasore (?); but the people, having lately been plundered by the Seedee, were ready with their arms, and beat them off with the loss of four or five hundred men.**

The European companies were contesting to control the western-board of India. In between, both the *Siddis* and the *Angrias* also contested and fought many naval battles to hold the supremacy of western coast but the death of Kanhoji Angria subsided the Marathas' naval power. After his death, quarrel for succession started among his son Manajee and Tulajee (refer Charles Johnson in Chapter II). The Maratha navy was split into two between them. Their dissension for the succession led to decline of the Marathas naval power also. The East India Company had defeated both the Peshwas and the Marathas. In 1757, the conflict between the *Siddis* and the companies also rose due to increase of tax against the

company's ship travelling to Surat.⁴⁹ On the other hand, the company no longer supported them as the threat from the Peshwas and the Marathas was lessened. The company's interest in the west coast of India became stronger when *Siddis* faced internal dissension amongst them. It weakened the *Siddis* naval power and the company got an opportunity to control western seaboard. The company recognized *Siddi* Ahmad Khan as *Nawab* of Janjira. After the death of Kanhoji Angria, his sibling carried the piratal aggressions along the Malabar and Gujarat coast; were subsequently checked by the East India Company which led to the decline of Angrias and piracy in the region.

The Company's concern over Kanhoji's increasing hostility is expressed in a letter the President at Surat wrote to the Directors in 1706⁵⁰:

Your Honours will, I presume, from Bombay have a particular amount of the Sevajee Canajee Angra, their ill and near neighbour. (It is astonishing how 26 years after his death, Shivaji's name still crops up in the Company's records). He hath lately taken a ship belonging to Mr. Mildmay and Your Honour's broker at Carwarr, **a ship of Mr. Bouchers of about 200 tons, her cargo amounting to 70,000 rupees, the *Diamond* of Madras carrying 12 guns and 26 Europeans, her cargo worth near two lakhs of rupees, and one of the Island's *manchuas*, another ship of about 200 tons, to whose belonging I don't yet hear, and a Dutch Hoigh man'd with about 26 Dutchmen, besides sundry other small vessels...**

There were also piratal aggressions by pirates of Malwan and *Sawantwaree* between c.1750 and c.1815. Khem Sawant (died in 1803) of *Sawantwaree* and his son, Phond Sawant carried out

⁴⁹R. N. Salletore, *Indian Pirates: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 1978, pp. 46-47.

⁵⁰Manohar Malgonkar, *Kanhoji Angrey Maratha Admiral: An Account of his Life and his Battles with the English*, 1959, p. 131.

several raids⁵¹ against the Raja of Kolhapur. These were so intense that the latter had to reach out for support through complaint to the East India Company and curb piracy. It is to be noted that aggressions by Phond Sawant and his son continued till 1812 (refer Charles Johnson in Chapter II).⁵²

C. R. Low⁵³ has offered this situation which has been analysed by Lakshmi Subramanian⁵⁴ in following words:

Low, despite being an unapologetic chronicler of the greatness of the Company's Marine force, reported how the Desai of *Sawantvadi* resented the conduct of Mr. George Taylor, the English Agent at Karwar who had appropriated the cargo of a ship cast ashore four miles from the factory and insisted that the right to shipwrecks was his alone. By the 1740s, even after Angria power had been substantively reduced, the Bombay Marine was seen repulsing random attacks by the *Malwans*, the *Sawantvadi*, the successors of Kanhoji Angria, and the Portuguese commanding officers of Goa and Bassein. What is evident from the proceedings is **the bitter and protracted nature of the claims that coastal powers insisted upon and also how conditions of strife encouraged maritime violence by small communities of 'Cooleys' and 'Sanganians'.**

The coastline of *Kathiawad* is connected with the boundary of the Gulf of *Kachchh* to the west and to Arabian Sea on the South.⁵⁵

Pamela Nightingale mentioned that *Kathiawad* Peninsula was the

⁵¹John Biddulph, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, 1907, pp. 73-75.

⁵²C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties and Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries: State within the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. IV, (revised edition), 1876, pp. 435-37 & CLVI, Article 2 pp. 446-48 and Consultation of 15 June 172, Public Department Diary No. 38 of 1762, pp. 334 & 41. The Council met to read the letter from Khem Savant about the 'Bhowany' that had been intercepted by the Bombay Marine. See Lakshmi Subramanian, *The Sovereign and the Pirate Ordering Maritime Subjects in India's Western Littoral*, 2016, p. 45.

⁵³C. R. Low, *History of the Indian Navy (1613-1863)*, Vol. I, p. 94.

⁵⁴Lakshmi Subramanian, *The Sovereign and the Pirate Ordering Maritime Subjects in India's Western Littoral*, 2016, p. 43.

⁵⁵Ghulam A. Nadri, "Exploring the Gulf of Kachh: Regional Economy and Trade in the 18th Century" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (2008), pp.460- 86.

home for pirates⁵⁶ like Lakshmi Subramanian long ago (1970) and their activities adversely affected the northern trade; however Lakshmi Subramanian referred it as ‘northward piracy’ based on the collection of primary resource used.⁵⁷ From many generations the pirates of Porbander, Byet and Okhamandal came out from the creeks and inlets of the rocky coast of *Kathiawad*. They hunt down the merchants’ ship carrying cotton from Surat to Bharuch. By 1760, the Marathas established their influence in Gujarat.⁵⁸ The peninsula was fertile but not conducive for cultivation due to frequent depredation of the Maratha *mulk giri*⁵⁹ army. The annual visits to collect *mulluk giri* from the petty chieftains of *Kathiawad*, villagers were stressed due to excessive taxing. Petty chieftains of Chital, Jetpur, Kundla suffered from frequent exaction of the chief of Bhavnagar, Junagadh, Nawanagar, Gaekwad of Baroda and

⁵⁶Pamela Nightingale, *Trade in Western India 1784-1806*, 1970, p. 29.

⁵⁷While attempting a historical geography of the region, it would be advisable to keep in mind that the designation of the Northward as a region is arbitrary and does not in any sense, stand outside the larger history of the western littoral of India...a sub-stretch of the coast where a very particular configuration of maritime violence emerged to undermine and challenge the politics of the English East India Company, forcing the latter to balance its conception of maritime jurisdiction with alternative models of natural law and maritime custom that were largely informed by considerations of political pragmatism rather than legal pluralism...The Northward was an integral part of the larger western littoral, whose profile was determined by the nature of its coastline, which supported economic activities around ports and harbours and accommodated political and economic. If olives and grapes, fish and vegetables were among the typical products of the Mediterranean, determining the diet and cuisine of its diverse peoples, then rice, coconuts, pepper, and fish featured as the west coast’s staple. This was especially so in the Konkan and Malabar stretches, where pepper was also a highly prized export rip, entering the large-scale traffic of the high seas. As the Dutch governor Jacob Hustaert described it, pepper was the bride around whom everyone danced.’ The northern littoral on the other hand was better known for calicoes and cotton). Lakshmi Subramanian, *The Sovereign and the Pirate Ordering Maritime Subjects in India’s Western Littoral*, 2016, p. 32.

⁵⁸*Gujarat State Gazetteer: Amreli District*, 1972, p. 68.

⁵⁹*ibid.*, p. 68 and F. A. H. Elliot, *Rulers of Baroda*, pp. 85-85.

Peshwa of Poona.⁶⁰ They had requested Col. Walker who was the then Resident of Baroda (1802-09) to settle the issue which came to be known as Walker settlement.⁶¹ It fixed amount of tribute to be collected by Peshwa and Baroda from petty rulers of *Kathiawad*. In 1807, Colonel Alexander Walker enforced his tributary right in *Kathiawad* and that brought an end to the *mullukgiri* system of collecting tributes. It was here British were successful in fulfilling their desire to enter the region and have hold on its resources (see Annexures I to IV).

Okhamandal as stated in Chapter I (refer maps), is a small tract of territory on the north-west corner of the province of *Kathiawad*, bounded on the north by the gulf of *Kachchh*; on the west by the Arabian Sea; and on the east and south by the *Rann* of salt marsh that separates *Okhamandal* from Navanagar.⁶² The physical geography of this region is dull, isolated hills and hillocks, covered with *thur*, brushwood, jungles and sandbank on the north of the west coast made the life of the settlers tough; however, the maritime and coastal trade in the second half of 18th century and 19th century created interests in it by several

⁶⁰Howard Spodek, "Urban Politics in the Local Kingdoms of India: A View from the Princely Capitals of Saurashtra under British Rule", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, (1973), pp. 253-275 and Spodek, Howard, (1974) "Rulers, Merchants and Other Groups in the City-States of Saurashtra, India, around 1800", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Sept., pp. 448-70.

⁶¹Extract of a report from Mr Goodwin of his discussion with agents from Byet and Dwarka dated 16 December 1806, Walker of Bowland Papers, Accession no. M13672, accessed at the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh in Lakshmi Subramanian, *The Sovereign and the Pirate Ordering Maritime Subjects in India's Western Littoral*, 2016, p. 47,

⁶²*Gazetteer of the Baroda State: Administration*, Vol. II, 1923, p. 755.

contenders.⁶³ *Okhamandal* nurtured pirates identified in chapter I and discussed in chapter II for the period c. 1650-c. 1750. A note on them and affairs related to them with respect to English, Marathas and Gaekwads of Baroda is documented by J. H. Gense & D. R. Banaji.⁶⁴ It is noteworthy that the directly governed territory of the Gaekwads of Baroda was spread into the mainland Gujarat and also along the coastal *Kathiawad*. According to Article 7 & 11 of the ‘Supplement to the Definitive Treaty’⁶⁵ dated 6th November, 1817 which was signed at Baroda between the Maharaja Anand Rao Gaekwad & the English East India Company’s Resident J. R. Carnac, *Okhamandal* was transferred to Gaekwad’s territory by the English East India Company in 1817. This development depended upon the contemporary circumstances, adjustments and treaties signed between the Peshwa and the British during the first quarter of the 19th century.⁶⁶ A survey of the physical features of this pocket of the Gaekwad of Baroda suggests that this region was made of group of islands with volcanic origin and had numerous creeks and caves. Due to its proximity to the sea and extension towards the arms of Western Indian Ocean, it had evinced seafarers and merchants frequenting for oceanic and coastal trade; and also extended their

⁶³Hitendra J. Maurya, “Port Okha under Gaekwad’s in the Asian Trade, 1850 -1950” in Virendra Singh Yadav, (ed.) *India in New Millennium: Issues, Goals and Policies*, Vol. 2, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 309.

⁶⁴J. H. Gense, & D. R. Banaji, *The Gaekwads of Baroda*, Vol. X, pp. 46-53.

⁶⁵C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, Vol. VI, 1892, pp. 137-38.

⁶⁶*ibid.*, pp.65-71 & also see *Gazetteer of the Baroda State*, Vol. I, Part 2, 2014, pp. 521-26.

influences in the immediate locality and towards the mainland of Gujarat and Rajasthan. This sub-region of *Kathiawad* peninsula was inhabited by *Kolis*, *Kharwas*, *Waghers*, *Sanganians* and *Tandels* who are recorded in *Gazetteers*, Administrative Manuals and Correspondences as pirates⁶⁷ besides their mention in Persian Chronicles.⁶⁸ Their main predations were merchant vessels laden with rich goods and reported to be unescorted. Possibly for this reason the merchant vessels when attacked by pirates were chased by European fleets; however the above mentioned ‘locals’, as skilled navigators drove their craft and predated vessel into their hideouts which were located in the Gulf of *Kachchh*.⁶⁹ The comparison of piracy in both the phases (see Map) illustrates shifts in the piratal aggressions marginally and all this depended upon the nature of trade and the ports in the vicinity of Gulf of Kachchh for the 19th century before piracy was finally quashed and naval forces of British controlled the Arabian Sea Waters.

⁶⁷James M. Campbell, *Hindu Castes and Tribes of Gujarat*, 1988, pp. 519-28 & *Political Department Diary*, No. 356 (10) of 1810, p. 2504.

⁶⁸ M.F. Lokhandwala (trans.), *Mirat-I-Ahmadi: A Persian History of Gujarat*, 1965, p. 391.

⁶⁹*Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency: Cutch, Palanpur and Mahikanta*, Vol. V, 1880, p. 266 & Ghulam A. Nadri, “Exploring the Gulf of Kachchh: Regional Economy and Trade in the 18th Century” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (2008), pp. 460-486.

Table III: List of Ports and Sub-Ports in the *Kathiawad* Possessions of His Highness of the Gaekwad Government

Sr. No.	Name of the Ports <i>bandar and bara</i>	Sub-ports
1	Dwarka	Rupen, Ratneshwar, Gomti
2	Adatra	--
3	Aramda	--
4	Rajpur	Medarda, Samlasar
5	Beyt/Byet	Balapur
6	Positra	--
7	Sagankotda	Kagiatad
8	Khatumba	--
9	Gorirya	--
10	Kuranga	--
11	Mul Dwarka	--
12	Velan	Kotda, Fatalbara

Okhamandal was infested by pirates, which led to many expeditions being sent to suppress piracy by Colonel Alexander Walker, Resident of Baroda. In 1807, Sivji Sunderji, a *Kachchh* merchant, was employed by Colonel Walker on a mission to the piratical state of *Okhamandal*, and was successful in persuading the chiefs of Byet, Dwarka, Aramara/Aramda, Postira and Dhing, to promise that they would abandon piratical habits and renounce all rights of wrecking.⁷⁰

Kathiawar has always been **famous for its Sailors**. In times of unsettled government, when every man's hand was against his neighbour, the coasts of **Kathiawar have swarmed with pirates, who, from the shelter of every creek and headland, took toll on all merchandise that was carried on the Arabian seas. Along the southern coast the leading pirates were Kolis, while, in the gulf of Cutch and near Dwarka and Porbandar, from an early date, Vaghers, Mianas, and Sanghars made their names a terror to merchants. In time Muhammadans joins the local pirates, and roamed the seas with the Hindu allies**⁷¹.

⁷⁰ *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency: Baroda*, Vol. VII, 1883, p. 324.

⁷¹ *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency: Kathiawar*, Vol. VIII, 1884, p. 53.

Aramda is situated on the south of Okha port. A creek opens to the sea on north-eastern side of the village. Due to high tide a vast area submerges on routine basis. During the reign of Muhammad Beghada his officer Azam Khan defeated Siv Rana and seized the territory but the Samla Manek of Dwarka and his brother Malla Manek resolved to expel Muslim invader from the region. They tried to re-install Sanganji who fled to Sind and constantly harassed the invader and he could not continue there any longer. Sanganji regained his throne. He gifted land and rewards to the two brothers who helped him to regain his throne. Saganji was succeeded by his son Sagramjee.⁷² There were number of piratal aggressions that took place during the study period.⁷³ According to Letter of 1815 [Bombay, 7th June, (1815, S. D. 290)] Francis Warden to James R. Carnac,

...Experience has proved the entire inefficiency of the arrangements made in 1807 for restraining the habits of the Chiefs of *Okhamandal* from encouraging piracy and participating in the spoils... The conduct of the agents of Government at Byet and the **piratical ports of Armara/Aramda, Dwarka, and Positra has entirely disappointed the expectation of the Governor-in-Council.** The Governor-in-Council is therefore desirous that an inquiry should be made into the mode in which their agency has been conducted and of the cause of its failure, and a report be made to him on the subject, that he may determine what may be proper to be done respecting them... I am now to acquaint you that it is the intention of Government to propose to the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General the conquest of province of *Okhamandal*; and you will in consequence submit to the Governor-in-Council a plan for the establishment and maintenance of our authority in *Okhamandal* upon a scale its revenues may be capable of defraying without subjecting the Hon'ble Company to any expense from the proposed acquisition, setting apart a suitable allowance for the support and the maintenance of the Chiefs, who may be thus disposed of their authority... The Governor-in-Council is aware that the island

⁷²*ibid.*, p. 31 and J. H. Gense, & D. R. Banaji, *The Gaekwads of Baroda*, Vol. X, pp. vii,12, 45-53.

⁷³ J. H. Gense, & D. R. Banaji, *The Gaekwads of Baroda*, Vol. X, pp. 45-53.

of Byet is a place held in great veneration by the Hindus, to which numerous pilgrim resort, whose prejudices and religious feelings it is the anxious desire of the Government rigidly to respect; and in considering that part of the subject you will submit an arrangement for the realisation of the revenue from the pagoda on that island in such manner as may in your opinion be consistent with the established usages and customs of the nature without imposing on them any additional burdens.

According to another Letter from Fategarh, 8th July, 1815 (1815, S.D. 290): The Governor-General to Bombay opined:

On general principles we are certainly entitled to take measures for the security of our subjects and trade against **the depredations of professed freebooters and pirates and, if other means shall fail, to destroy their power by seizing their possessions.** From your statement it appears that the engagements, made with the Chiefs of Byet and Dwarka in 1808 by Colonel Walker, have been violated. Under such circumstances we may be considered to have acquired the right above stated in its full extent, the degree in which it is to be exercised being to be regulated by our own views of policy and expediency...It appears from the extract from the orders of the Hon'ble Court of Directors under date the 1st of April, 1807, that the Hon'ble Court of Directors gave its assent to the proposed occupation of Byet, though not without evident reluctance and express in the event only of it being found impracticable by measure of a less extreme nature to suppress the depredations of the pirates. **The conclusion of the arrangement, effected by Colonel Walker, superseded for the time the necessity of acting on the conditional authority of the orders above referred to; but the infraction of the engagements then contracted may be considered to restore the operation of those orders to their original force...**On these grounds then I request you to consider yourself to be authorised to enter on the proposed system of measures for the reduction and occupation of *Okhamandal*, when the force, employed **against Jodiya, Amran and Balambha**, shall be disengaged.

In continuation another Letter from [Baroda, 5th August, 1815 (1815, S.D. 291)] by James R. Carnac to Francis Warden on plan of faction:

“In reference to your dispatch, dated the 7th of June last, calling upon me to submit a plan for the establishment and maintenance of the Hon'ble Company's authority in *Okhamandal*, I have the honour respectfully to offer the following observations to the consideration of the Right Hon'ble the Governor-in-Council. Having completed his plans for the final occupation of the country, the commanding officer should be instructed, in concert with the authority from this Residency, to assure the several Chieftains that the Hon'ble Company will make a suitable provision for their maintenance, and especially to satisfy the officiating Brahmans and others at the temple of Dwarka and Byet, that they will be protected in the free exercise of the rites of their

profession, and that no revenue or contributions will be required from them or pilgrims resorting [*thither*] conformity to former usage; and finally that the British Government has no intention of interfering with the religious worship, customs or opinions of the Hindus, while they conduct themselves with fidelity to the State and maintain the peace and good order of society. It should also be a primary object with the commanding officer to appoint guards at the several places of religious resort. Those guards should invariably be selected from the superior caste in the force; and it should be their prescribed duty to prevent all intrusion within the sacred limits, except by those Hindus, whose caste admit them to the privilege. The guards ought also to see that all the intentions of the commanding officer are scrupulously carried into effect. **These observations are offered in the conception that no resistance will be made by the Chieftains of Okhamandal. In the event of resistance, circumstances will point out to the discretion of the commanding officer the most eligible mode of effecting these important objects; and all that appears practicable in this case is to bring them to his notice as measures which Government view with considerable anxiety, and require him to execute with punctual attention.** It will for a short time be necessary to retain a larger force in Okhamandal than what will eventually be required to keep it in subjection, until a final adjustment for the administration of the country, **till the Chiefs are convinced that the good faith of the British Government will be maintained in assigning them a suitable provision, and until the religious orders experience the protection which will be extended by the Government of the Company to their property, and persons, and in the free and uncontrolled exercise of their religious avocations.** It appears to me on general considerations that it might be politic to demolish those fortifications in the country, which it may be useless for us to occupy in a military point of view, reserving at all events the fort of Beyt itself (which is represented as a respectable place of defence) on account of sacred temples being within its walls. In order to provide temporarily for the administration of the affair of the country I would also suggest my Assistant, or such other authority as may be appointed by Government, be instructed to take measures (without involving our pledge for the continuance of the same) that will tend to secure those objects in a way most consonant to established usages and the feelings and prejudices of the natives. With a view also of enabling the Right Hon'ble the Governor-in-Council to frame a system for the future government of this territory, it is my intention to instruct my Assistant in Kathiawar to transmit without delay a particular and detailed report of the resources of the country during the last 5 years. I would also call his attention to the intentions of Government in favour of the several Chiefs and request his opinion on the extent of the provision which it may be necessary to make for their maintenance. In connection with this subject, the resources, which under an improved system may be derived from the soil, are deserving of particular consideration. **The district of Okhamandal is doubtless susceptible of great improvement, and particularly in the branch of agriculture. The occupation of the country by the Hon'ble Company will compel the people to renounce their irregular habits, and the absence of the means derived from piracy must lead the inhabitants to look to the earth for supplying their wants.** Policy dictates, that the income of the Chiefs from government should leave scope for the exertions of their own industry, especially when it is in their power, by the

cultivation of the extensive waste tracts in the district, to increase their comforts. It will probably be desirable that one of the first acts of the Company's Government, on assuming the administration of Okhamandal, should be a formal resignation of all claims of this nature. It will stimulate the industry of the people, when conscious of security of property unknown in preceding times, and will prove the means of contributing to the maintenance of the Chiefs. With a view of promoting this object, and of rendering the reduction of the country less burdensome, my Assistant might also be required to report the probable expense which might be occasioned by removing the jungle of bawal wood, with which the face of the country is covered. **It prevents the extension of cultivation, and invites the retreat of the disorderly and licentious. The bawal wood is applied in manufacture of various implements of husbandry and eagerly sought after by native States for the construction of wheel and gun carriages.** The trees, which would not answer for such purposes, might be burnt on the spot for charcoal and taken for sale to Surat or Bombay. In the estimates of the revenues of Byet no item on account of customs on imports has been observable; but I have no reason to believe that imports are exempted from duty, either by sea or land. I conclude that no inconsiderable sum is realisable from this omitted source and from taxes on the artisans of the towns. The endowments of the temples will of course form a subject of particular inquiry. I am inclined to think these endowments fall far short of former times, but they chiefly contribute to the expenses of the temples; and if their tenures will admit of the management being assumed by Government; their process will in every likelihood exceed any amount which they have hitherto yielded. The system observed in the collection of the tax from pilgrims will also form an important object of investigation. The administration of justice and the establishment of an efficient police are likewise subjects demanding deliberate consideration. The interior economy and management of the temples should in my opinion remain undisturbed. **Sudaram Bramachari, who now rules in Beyt, is the chief priest of the temples in that island, and in virtue of this office he will continue to retain the influence and resources. There appears no reason that Sadaram should be considered on the assumption of the government of Okha, as he has usurped his authority in Beyt, and the heir of the late Chief will naturally repeat his claim on the justice of the Company's Government.**

...Independent of these considerations, the conduct of Sadaram in his civil capacity, since the period of his usurpation of power at Beyt, does not entitle him to any indulgence. **It appears he has entertained several piratical boats; and the visits of Captain Vashon and Dobbie commanding vessels in His Majesty's service, are evidence that these boats have been severe scourges on the trade of the Company's subjects.** Such funds as have been considered applicable to the temple and the charitable establishments, will necessarily continue under his control as the high-priest; and it only seems requisite that, on assuring the government of the country, Sadaram is distinctly informed that, in consequence of the enjoyment of such resources, the Hon'ble Company will on no account consider itself responsible for any deficiency. I beg to submit to the Right Hon'ble the Governor-in-Council the expediency of two of the Company's cruiser being on the coast when the force is directed to enter Okhamandal. Circumstances may occur, in which the co-operation of such a description of force might materially contribute to success; and at all events

these vessels would prevent the escape of any of the pirate boats to the haunts on the coasts of Cutch and Sind, whence they might prosecute depredations on the trade. **By being stationed at Porbandar, the cruisers might leave that port in time for their appearance in the harbour of Beyt, corresponding with entrance of the force into Okhamandal.**

In response to this some resistance from the natives was reported. Hence, another letter is quoted here for information on further affairs and testimonies.

Letter from Baroda [10th August, 1815 (1815, P.D. 423) by James R. Carnac to Francis Warden speaks:

The accompanying copy of a letter from my Assistant apprises me of the Chieftains of Okhamandal having taken preparatory steps for uniting their means in the event of the advance of our troops into that district.

Letter from Captain Ballantine to James R. Carnac Report:

I have the honour to forward a paper of **intelligence furnished me by Sunderji** Sivji, descriptive of the present disposition of the Chiefs in Okha and Cutch.

Translation of Letter to Captain J. R. Carnac from Sundarji Sivji, received at Baroda, 8th August, 1815 on Okha Chieftains it as follows:

On the 1st *Ashadh* a letter was received from Meghraj of Positra in Okhamandal, saying that Maneck Mulu has arrived at Adutra near Armara, and that he had sent for Rana Sangram to that place. That after meeting and some consultation they came to Gopi Talao; they then sent for Meghraj, and told him that the English troops were coming into that quarter, and that they would most likely also enter Okhamandal, and therefore they demanded to know from him whether he would join them or not. **Meghraj answered that, when misfortune befell his house, no one came to his assistance; that he was placed in his station by the sarkar, and that he would remain so; he would not join them. They said, if that was his determination, they would not spare him. He told them that he was also a Rajput. Meghraj wrote this and sent it for your information:**

An approval in form of minutes is also quoted here:
Bombay minutes, 22nd August [Approval]

Ordered that Captain Carnac will communicate through Sunderji Sivji to the Chief of Positra the satisfaction the Governor-in-Council has received from his proceedings as reported by Captain Ballantine and to assure him that he will not be unmindful of his conduct.

Porbandar: 3rd January, 1816 (1816, P.D. 427)

C. W. Elwood to James R. Carnac on pirates in Okha

1. I have the honour to communicate the enclosed information regarding the **residence of pirates on *Okhamandal* and the acts of piracy which they have lately committed.**
2. Previous to the last monsoon I was informed that Husain Nurudin had been invited to live on *Okhamandal* by Rana Sangramji of Beyt; and by order of the Right Hon'ble the Governor-in-Council I acquainted the Rana that the Governor-in-Council looked to him for the **security of the pirate Husain Nurudin, and that in the event of his failing in his engagements he would be subjected to all the consequences resulting from a breach of treaty.**
3. I am now informed that Husain Nurudin is at sea in a small boat on the Cutch coast, and it is supposed he is the person who lately sent the two captured boats into Beyt.
4. I fear it is but too evident from **the nature of the enclosed information that Rana Sangramji is an abettor of the *Okhamandal* pirates, otherwise they would not have run their prizes on shore on the island of Beyt, neither would the Rana have realised them, nor made evasive and disrespectful answer which he did to Sunderji's agent.**
5. **Vassi is a small village about 4 kos inland from Dwarka, it is now evidently a nest of pirates.** I am informed that by Colonel Walker's arrangements for *Okhamandal*, Vassi was considered as under the control of Dwarka, but the Dwarka-man, **Mulu Maneck, evasively states that the village now resists his controlling authority, although it is well known that it does not possess any defence.**
6. In the absence of a military controlling authority such as Col. Walker possessed on *Okhamandal* in 1809, the Chieftains of that country are regardless of the British Power and of the existing treaty with its Government.
7. I am consequently apprehensive that, unless it may be practicable to impose an effectual check on *Okhamandal*, that remote corner of this peninsula will hereafter prove injurious to the peace of its neighbours both by land and by sea.
8. Throughout the whole correspondence and communication of Sunderji Sivji, his agent, and myself, with Rana Sangramji and Mulu Maneck of Dwarka, these Chieftains replies have been most evasive on the subjects of pirates residing on *Okhamandal*. I fear there is no hope left that these persons will be induced to listen to reason but by coercion, since the repeated attempts, which have been made by **Sunderji Sivji and myself during that last 18th months to induce them to adopt a proper line of conduct, have entirely failed of success, although our repeated mild remonstrance were frequently interspersed with a warning of the unpleasant consequences which must result from a breach of treaty.**

9. I have instructed Sunderji's agent in Okhamandal to watch any opportunity which may offer of gaining possession of Husain Nurudin's person.

1816: Bombay, 15th January, 1816 (1816, P.D. 427)

[Bombay Resolution - Offer]

Should the Gaikwad Government feel itself competent to control the country, and His Highness feel disposed to hold himself answerable for the future good conduct of those piratical States, engaging for the liquidation of the sums still due to the British Government, and for that purpose be desirous of introducing his own authority into *Okhamandal*, the British Government is by no means desirous of occupying a territory far more likely to produce trouble than profit in the management, and would readily acquiesce in any other arrangement, which may be more acceptable to its ally.

[Orders]

After leaving a force in Cutch sufficient to support Lieutenant Macmurdo in the conduct of the negotiations in which he is employed, the Resident at Baroda should direct Colonel East to proceed to *Okhamandal*.

The Governor-in-Council does not expect that the Chieftains of Okhamandal will offer any opposition to the views of the British Government; but, should he be disappointed in these expectations, Colonel East will apply the force under his command to the attainment of the object of his instructions, being ever careful to abstain in every instance from active hostility, until every attempt to reduce the country to subjection by negotiation shall have failed.

The native agents, who are at present in *Okhamandal*, should be appointed to the charge of the districts where they are now stationed under the responsibility of Sunderji Sivji and the control of Captain Ballantine, until further arrangement can be made.

1816: Baroda, 29th January, 1816 (1816, P.D. 427)

James R. Carnac to Francis Warden on Future of Okha

It was received with great satisfaction, when I communicated the disposition of Government to surrender Okhamandal, on its conquest, to the Gaikwad under the terms specified in your dispatch; and though the acquisition might not be profitable, it was peculiarly grateful to this Government to introduce its authority into the district from the high veneration in which the Gunti pilgrimage is held by the Hindu people.

One Narain Rao/Narrain Row Venkatesh, a Manager of *Okhamandal* under Gaekwad of Baroda, in 1837, was accused for helping pirates of Samlasar in *Okhamandal* to plunder merchant ships. Captain G. B. Brucks, Senior Indian Naval officer at Surat

reported⁷⁴ that Williams, Commander of “Royal Tiger” a schooner of the Indian Navy had discovered *Sardar* Bhow, Governor of Byet and Narrain Rao, Manager of *Okhamandal* giving protection to pirates.

Another instance of sponsorship to pirates by local chief of *Okhamandal* can be traced from the deposition of Rana Poorjam. He was 36 year old *Kharwa* sailor and an inhabitant of Sankhodar. Before October 1833⁷⁵, Narrayan Rao Venkatesh ordered Rana Poorjam and *Kharwa* Shewa to engage in piratical aggressions and bring whatever they plundered from the Indian Ocean. He also provides name of pirates from Samlasar like Manek Roordiu, Shidee Shoowa, Manek Nagjee, Manek Tharoo, Soobajee Sawooja, Kasur Iaja, Manek Vallia to accompany the raid. They sailed towards Sind to plunder but they did not find any ship while returning from Sind they found ship of Iodee (Jodee) which was in the vicinity of Jambu *bandar*. They plundered three bags of rice and clothes of the sailors from the ship. They had brought the booty to *bandar* Keya; while Narrayan Rao came from Gomti and collected the plundered three bags of rice but the clothes were shared between the pirates. Four cowries were given to each pirate. Newly constructed ship of Narrayan Rao was called *Runchord Prusad* and it was given under the command of *Nackwa* Booda, *Nackwa* Essa and *Nackwa* Hussain. They had waiting *Waghers* at

⁷⁴Letter from Charles Malcolm, Superintendent of Indian Navy to Earl of Clare, President and Governor in Council, Surat, *Extract from the Proceedings of Government in the Marine Department* dated 23rd April, 1834, p. 205.

⁷⁵Deposition of Rana Poorjam, inhabitant of Shankhodar, Foreign Department, Political Consultancy, No. 12 to 21, Part II, 20th March, 1837, pp. 350-55.

Adturra Chabukey Adhera to assists in raid. *Manek* Raghay, *Maneck* Thoray, *Shidee* Sooya, *Maneck* Jehta, *Manek* Doonger and *Maneck* Thoro and other four peoples boarded to *Runchord Pursad*. The ship sailed towards Konkan and plundered a ship which carried dates, pots, coconuts, matchlock, deg (copper cooking pot), bettlenut and iron board. The pirates returned to the *Keya bandar* and on hearing their return Narrayan Rao sent Oody Sing, *Jamadar* of *Wagher* in Samlasar Vujia to embark the cargo.

J. William, Political Commissioner of Gujarat got a letter from J.P. Willoughby, Political Agent of *Kathiawad* in 1834 regarding two more piratal aggressions committed by *Waghers* of *Okhamandal* and the booty was shared among the authorities of Okha. Willoughby⁷⁶ requested the Gaekwad of Baroda to send the accused involved in the acts of piracy to Rajkot for examination. Captain G. B. Brucks letter to Charles Malcolm informs that there were instructions for vigilance of northern parts of *Kathiawad* and Sind coast. Similarly in several other places raids by pirates were conducted; such as Jafferabad, pirates took off their boat and plunder ships without the fear of detection.⁷⁷ Increase of piratal aggression was due to the interest of the East India Company in *Kathiawad* region because they wanted to hold on cotton trade of the *Kathiawad* region. To have good conduct of trade they needed

⁷⁶Letter from J. P. Willoughby, Political Agent in Kathiawad to J. Williams, Political Commissioner of Gujarat, Foreign Department, Political Consultancy, Nos. 12 to 21, Part-II, 20th March, 1837, pp. 203-204.

⁷⁷Letter from G. B. Brucks, Senior Indian Naval Officer at Surat to Charles Malcolm, Superintendent of Indian Navy, at Surat in 5th April, 1834, Foreign Department, Political Consultancy, Nos.12 to 21, Part-II, 20th March, 1837, pp. 206-208.

to ally with the local chieftains through diplomacy or force. Import and export of goods was possible with peaceful conduct from the local chieftain while procuring and distribution of goods. Profit generated after cotton was sold from Gujarat to China. The revenue generated from cotton export was used for financing the East India Company. There is a letter from A. Malet Political Commissioner in-charge of Baroda to J. P. Willoughby, Secretary to Government, Bombay on 27 November, 1837 informing that the Maharaja of Baroda was unwilling to send Narreyen Rao Ventakatesh⁷⁸ for the trial of Piracy at Rajkot. The Maharaja wanted to have trial before the two governments.

Based on letters cited above it can be comprehended for Dwarka, another pirate haven in *Kathiawad*.

Dwarka is located in east of the Arabian Sea. Dwarka also have main temple of Shri *Dwarkashish* (*Lord Krishna*). Dwarka was ruled by Bhimji. Other contender who wanted to rule was Manekji. He along with the help of *Waghers* defeated Bhimji and seized the villages and town. He proclaimed himself with title of raja of the place. In 1812, a *pattamar* name *Bhowny Pursad*⁷⁹ was captured by a pirate *dingee* from Dwarka on the way from Kachchh to Bombay. The *pattamar* was carrying oil and rice. Dhackjee Dadajee, a merchant sent request to the Francis Warden, Chief Secretary to Government to assist him in recovering the boat.

⁷⁸Letter from A. Malet, Political Commissioner in-charge of Baroda to J. P. Willoughby, Secretary to Government, Bombay on 27th November, 1837, Foreign Department, Political Consultancy No. 27, 3rd January, 1837, p. 1.

⁷⁹Political Department Diary, No. 389 of 1812, p. 62.

In 1820, their frequent predations led to the English East India Company under the command of Colonel Stanhope seize Dwarka and the clash led to the loss of Mulu Manek and his younger brother Versi Manek. The Company loss the life of Captain Marriot and few soldier also suffered casualties. In 1810, Col. Walker directed Sunderjee Shivji to recover piratical property from Dwarka and Byet. Sunderjee reported that the recovered property was settled at Rs. 18,181/- but he got only Rs.12,501/- from *Kathiawad*. Walker reported that from Byet he required to collect a sum of 50,000 *kories* but Muloo Manek was unable to pay the amount. Muloo Manek sent his representative to the government to decrease the imposed amount and they met Capt. Greenwood at Mandvi to settle amount. The representative requested Capt. Greenwood to settle the amount at 30,000 *kories* but Capt. Greenwood departed from the Mandvi and Muloo Manek was called at Beyt and settled the amount at 37, 501 *kories* which is equal to Rs.12,501/-.

Bet/Byet is an island located along the Gulf of *Kachchh* about 3.218688 Sq. Kms. to the north of the mainland of *Okhamandal*. It is usually called *Byet-Sankhodhar* because of the conch shells found extensively on the coast. The main temple of this island is *Shankh Narayan* dedicated to lord Vishnu's first avatar or incarnation of *Machchi*. The island earned revenues from conch

shell (*shank*) and pilgrims. Devotees came to Byet to take bath in the Gomti river. Suresh Chandra Ghosh⁸⁰ observed about Byet:

The island has good harbour well secured from prevailing monsoon winds; but the anchorage is rocky. It has nearly 150 vessels of different sizes belonging to it, which are employed chiefly to and from Mandavee-a number of there until very lately were piratical vessels so much dreaded by the coast traders.

The island did not produce sufficient food to feed its population. They imported food from other regions. This small island provided spacious harbour where small boats could anchor in all seasons. Numerous and shoal at the entrance of the harbour could wreck any boats. Skill *maullim/malam* was required to sail in this harbour. Pirate had that skill so they took big vessels and carried the goods to this harbour. It was not possible to chase this pirate. Talking about the religious obligation James Hornell reported that:

...if no religious or caste scruples bar the way, the *Waghers* probably would make excellent fishermen-certainly the curing of fish ashore is well within their capacity. Seeing that they come of a race of freebooters, men ever ready **for a broil or for piracy if it offered, they should ever take to such a life then the present suggestion would go far to solve what appears to be recurrent industrial problem in Okhamandal in regard to the finding of congenial or satisfactory employment for this clan**, whose old occupation of preying on their neighbours being ended, seem to have difficulty in finding work that will satisfy what we must consider to be an instinctive longing for excitement.⁸¹

In 1836, H. Pottinger, resident of *Kachchh* sent a letter to Willoughby Secretary to Government regarding plunder of *Goojawur*⁸² boat near Byet. Gande Darsee Raichand informed Pottinger that the plundered boat worth of Rs. 20,000/- and containing 264 *bales* of cotton; but the crews of the boat collected

⁸⁰Suresh Chandra Ghosh, *The Peninsula of Gujarat in the Early Nineteenth Century*, 1977, p. 43.

⁸¹James Hornell, *Report to the Government of Baroda on the Marine Zoology of Okhamandal in Kattiawar*, Part 1, 1909, p. 28.

⁸²Letter from H. Pottinger to W. Willoughby, Secretary to Government *Foreign Department, Political Consultancy*, Nos. 12 to 21, Part-II, 20th March, 1837, pp. 444-45.

only Rs. 20/- to 30/- per bales after the incident. Authorities of Byet refused to release remaining bales before their demand could be entertained.

Positra was famous for pearl fishing in the *Okhamandal* region. According to Wilberforce Bell, Postira was “the headquarters of the pirates of *Okhamandal*”. According to him the depredations committed by them on the sea had laid serious menace to trade, and in spite of many attempts to put down the piracy, it continued unabated.⁸³ The East India Company was trying to suppress piracy in the *Kathiawad* since 1809 and MacMurdo was sent to the region to assess the ground reality of Positra piracy. In Positra he found that pirates **were keeping their boats on the bay**. Fatteh Mohammed gave protection to piracy from the East India Company either side of Positra or the inlet of *Kachchh*. Piracy was also instigated by higher officers of Gaekwad of Baroda. Minutes of Governor on 20th June, 1836 recorded that piracy was committed by peoples of *Okhamandal* by the instigation of Gaekwad *Carcoon/Karkun* (Clerk).⁸⁴

⁸³H. Wilberforce Bell, *The History of Kathiawad: From the Earliest Times*, 1980, pp. 142-43.

⁸⁴Letter from J. P. Willoughby Esquire Political Agent in Kattywar to Rajcote and Letter from the Superintendent of the Indian Navy to Right Hon’ble Earlaf Clare President & Governor in Council in Foreign Department, Political Consultancy Nos. 12 to 21, Part II, 20th March, 1837, pp. 203, & 205-06.

[There are several other letters pertaining to act of pirates and piracy suppression by English in this section of the National Archives-Delhi and Maharashtra State Archives. I am thankful to ICHR & ICSSR for awarding the scholarship so that I could explore these file which reflect on how the piracy was conducted and what was their response and their supporter’s response during the trial; these files also apprised of their life style, relations with their counter-parts, local potentates and the Gaekwads in case of *Kathiawad* and *Jadejas* in case of *Kachchh*].

James Tod visited *Kathiawad* in the end of December, 1822⁸⁵ and travelled in January, 1823 in the localities of *Okhamandal*. He opined for various port towns, their inhabitants and affairs related to them in the following words:

Regarding **ARAMRA and BATE (Byet)-**

For eighteen miles we marched along the margin of the gulf, on an excellent road, passing the walled town of Beerwalla, and the little castle of Cutchgur'h. The ancient and interesting town of Aramra is separated from Bate by the sea, but all was waste, and the *t'hoor*, or *cactus*, was the sole natural product throughout the morning's march... **The piratical habits of ages have inflicted the vice of barrenness on their lands;** yet we found the **industrious Loharra Bhatti, who may be met with wherever money can be made, mixed with the Kharwa mariner, and the piratical Waghair or Macwahana, the latter being the most numerous class.** The Patel of Aramra, however, still vaunts his pure Rahtore blood, and if correct, he may indeed be vain of his descent. With several other sites, Aramra puts in its claim, and with good reason, to be considered as *mool* or 'ancient' Dwarica; its own appearance, and the many decayed shrines about it, furnishing strong evidence in favour of the boast. ...There is much that is interesting in the environs of Aramra, in which are several temples, but all bearing testimony to the rough usage of the Mahomedans. **Let us quit the graves of the giants of Aramra for its more interesting memorials, the pallias of the pirates, which speak in a language not to be misunderstood, albeit a species of hieroglyphic, though one which will not admit of a double interpretation;** for amidst the mouldering cenotaphs and broken tomb-stones, there remain two, on which are sculptured in high relief **"the ships of Trican-râe" engaged in combat. One of these is a three-masted vessel, pierced for guns; the other is of a more antique form and character, having but one mast, and none of those modern inventions of war. Both are represented in the act of boarding the chase. One of the piratical sailors, with sword and shield, is depicted as spring from the shrouds; another from the bow of his ship; and it may be supposed they are the effigies of the heroes who lay here. Another pallia was inscribed to the memory of "Rana Raemul, who, in S. 1628 (A.D. 1572), "performed the saka, when attacked by the king; twenty-one of his "kindered were slain with him, and the Jaitwânî* became Sutte."** *Pallias* are erected to each of the twenty-one. There was another, and the latest in date, erected to the memory of these buccaneers of Aramra, and sufficiently laconic: "S. 1819, (A.D. 1763), Jadroo Kharwa was slain on the

⁸⁵James Tod, *Travels in Western India Embracing a visit to the Sacred Mounts of the Jains, and the most Celebrated Shrines of Hindu Faith between Rajpootana and the Indus; with an Account of the Ancient City of Nehrwalla*, 1839, pp. 429-43.

seas.” **Kharwa is the most common epithet of the Hindu sailor...**(JANUARY 1st 1823).-Crossed over the **Pirates’ isle, emphatically called Bate, or ‘the island,’ but in the classic traditions** of the Hindu, Sankho-dwara, or ‘the door of the shell,’ one of the most sacred spots of his faith. Sankho-dwara is still renowned for its shells, and one bank, uncovered at low water, whence they are obtained, is close to the landing-place; but as the *rin-sank’h*, war-shell, with which he was wont to peal a blast, the onslaught to battle, no longer graces the hand of the Rajpoot in these degenerate days; its use is now restricted to the Brahmin, wherewith “to awake the gods in the morning;” to let the world know when he dines; or, what is of more importance, to form *chooris*, or bracelets, for the arms of the Hindu fair. Bengal is the best customer for the shells of Sankho-dwar; and I recollect an entire street occupied in the ancient city of Dacca by shell-cutters, all supplied from Bate. **The banks are framed of the Guicowar government by a Parsee merchant of Bombay, who contracts with the Kharwas, at the rate of twenty kores (from five to six rupees) per hundred, and loads them for Bombay, whence they are shipped for Bengal.I have said that the pirates’ castle was formerly called Kullore-kote. This castle, situated on the western side of the island, is compact and imposing, having lofty massive towers, on which there is no lack of iron ordnance, and very judiciously, the shortest and most efficient face is to the sea. It is fortunate for the lovers of the picturesque, that the determination of the last pirate chief to bury himself in its ruins was overruled; and there it will long stand as a memorial of a scourge, which from the earliest periods of history infested these waters, from the Sankho-dwara, at the entrance of the Red Sea, to the Gulf of Cutch, and the eradication of which is not the least of the benefits derived from British supremacy in the East. I had the satisfaction to encounter a most intelligent chieftain of the Jhala tribe, whose sister was wife to the last pirate chief of Bate, and who not only supplied me with some curious traditions regarding the origin of his own tribe, but of the Badhails, who has occupied the mundala, or region of Oka, for the last seven centuries. ...Oméd Sing Rahtore was father to the first chief of this who settled in Oka, and whose son obtained the epithet of Badhail from the treacherous massacre (*badha*) of the Chaoras, who then possessed this region. Aramra was the chief city of the Chaoras, and is still the teelât, or place of installation of the Badhails.** Neither the Jhala chieftain, nor the chronicler, could give me the date of this event, or the number of generations elapsed; but the difficulty is cleared up by the annals of Marwar, which state that a branch of the founder of this race in Maroost’hali, or the great Indian desert, settled in Oka. The unscrupulous Rahtore, who, in his extirpation of the Chaoras, merely obeyed the first impulse of the Rajpoot, which is “to get land,” soon adapted himself and his hardy followers to their new mode of life, and that of their predecessors the Chaoras, whose piratical habits, as has been related **in the annals of Anhulwarra, caused the destruction of Diu in the eighth century of Vicrama. Sungum-dharra, the mom-de-guerre of the sea-kings of Bate, was**

made the title of one who lived some generations **after the first Badhail. He was the most notorious pirate who had swept the seas for ages; but his audacity at length led him into the toils-he was made prisoner, and conveyed to the king.** But his spirit was as indomitable in the presence of Timoor, as on the deck of his own ship; they could not make him bow to the throne. He was not the first who experienced the clemency of these magnanimous princes. The pirate, instead of losing his head, returned to Bate with a title. He afterwards espoused the daughter of the Jhareja Rao of Cutch, and fell in an attack on Warasurra, a town belonging to the Jaitwas. Three generations after Sungum-dharra, was Rinna (the new title) Sowah, who was not inferior to him in daring intrepidity. To illustrate his gallantry we can desire no stronger terms than the language of the chronicle:-“he gave sanctuary (*sirna*) to Mozuffer, the king of Guzzerat,” and not only refused to surrender him, but sent him safely in one of his own ships across the gulf, while he stood a siege in Aramra, and nobly fell in its defence. What a contrast does this pirate’s conduct afford to that of Rao Bhara of Cutch (the son of Khengar, the founder of Bhooj, twelve generation ago), who bartered the person of his suppliant sovereign for the district of Morbee, in the peninsula! The emperor kept his word; he surrendered Morbee to the infamous Jhareja, but his head was the *nuzzerana*, or fine of relief for the gift, in this atrocious traffic of his allegiance;-and still further to mark his **sense of the infamy of the Jhareja, and the honour of the pirate Badhail, he erected tow *pallias* at the gates of Delhi, issuing an edict that whoever passed that of the Badhail should crown it with chaplets of flowers, while on that of the Jhareja the passer should bestow a blow with his slipper. Nor was the *pallia* of Jam Bhara exempt from this indignity until the period of Jam Jessa, who having by some service gained the royal favour, and being permitted to proffer any suit, intreated that the *pallia* might be taken down, or, at least, relieved from insults which affected the honour of every Jhareja.** Rinna Sowah, or Sowae, was only the title of this noble pirate, whose name was Raemul, and whose *pallia*, recording his death on the saka of Aramra, in S. 1628 (A.D.1572), I had the satisfaction of discovering, as already mentioned. This date gives us the clue to this eventful epoch in the history not only of the sea-kings of Bate, but of their suzerains of Guzzerat. The following collateral lists show the descendants of the worthy and unworthy of that day, exhibiting nine chiefs from Raemul to Singram, a man of forty-five years of age; and eleven from the infamous Bhara to his descendant, who bears the same inauspicious name.

CHRONICLES OF THE SEA-KINGS:

Rinna Raemul, Rae Bhara, Akhirâj, Meg, Bheem, Tumachee, Singram, Raedhan, Bhajraj, Prâg, Dadoh, Ghor, Bahap, Dessil, Makha Bae, Lakho, Singram, Ghor, Raedhan, (Bhara and Desil) brothers.

...Rinna Bheem drew upon him the whole power of the Imaum of Muscat, who attacked him by land water, in retaliation of the mischief done to his subjects

by his piracies. Rao Dessil of Cutch was a partisan of the Muscat admiral on this occasion, and the small castle called Cutchgur'h was erected on the main by him to batter Kullore-kote. Several descents were made upon the pirates' isle, whose castle's strength laughed to scorn their united efforts; and the admiral having had several vessels stranded in the intricate navigation, and his ally of Bhooj being bribed by a promise of the lands around Cutchgur'h in *gros*, the fleet withdrew, and the admiral was compelled to rest satisfied with a single trophy of his success, the wooden portals of the shrine of Sank-Narayn. These he converted forthwith into a bed; but to his horror was overturned in the night, and awoke with the infidel trophy laying over him, which, according to the legend, he forthwith sent back to Bate. There is little of importance in the history of the pirates until Singam, the last of the Dharaets of the *Sungum*, whose grandfather had been visited by an English frigate, which excited their astonishment (having never seen such a vessel before), destroying their vessels and soon reducing them to submission. The benevolent Colonel Walker, subsequently, by pacific measures, reclaimed them from their piratical habits, including them in his general arrangements for the peace of the peninsula. But his treaty, it is said, was not observed, and some ill-treatment received at the hands of the Guicowar officers, made the pirates rise upon his garrisons. At the same time, the priest of Tricum-Rae, who was prime-minister to Singam, had received a dispensation to violate his engagements, and once more to collect booty on high seas. This sealed the fate of the lord of Sankhodwara, and the same blow which destroyed the Wagair pirates of Dwarica, annihilated the Badhails of Bate. The rapidity and severity of the vengeance, in the escalade of the of the strong-hold of the former by the British force under the Hon. Colonel Lincoln Stanhope, induced Singam to sue for terms, and he agreed to surrender Bate, and to live at Aramra on a stipend furnished by his suzerain, the Guicowar. It may be supposed that this surrender on his part was linked with a guarantee on ours; but, be this as it may, Aramra is no longer a place of *aram* (repose) for Singam; the last of the Badhails has been ejected, and is now a refugee in Cutch. Of the Wagairs of Dwarica, who, with the Badhails of Aramra, were so long the terror of these seas, it is necessary to say something. They are a spurious branch of these seas... branch of the Jhareja family of Bhooj, one of whom, called Abra, with the cognomen of *Moochwal*, or 'whiskered,' from a tremendous pair of these adjuncts to the face, came from Cutch in the time of Rinna Sowah, in whose family he intermarried, and from....

Reading of Tod's account reveals that the pirate community was in operation for centuries together; and depending upon the role they enacted in the theatre of sea gave them identity as *Kharwas*, *Wagher* and *Bhadel* irrespective of their movements in *Kathiawad* and *Kachchh* or Persian Gulf or Malabar. The Hero stone in their memories by their community folk which were visited by Tod

further reveals that the inhabitants of *Okhamandal* of Gaekwad territory revered their acts of seafaring which was an established occupation for them. It can also be derived that the seafarers who are branded as pirates were ‘also traders in their own capacities’ and remained engaged in exchanges, sale and purchase of goods which they shared with their community because the territory they inhabited was difficult and not suitable for agriculture.

Narration of Tod can also be verified in the correspondences of the colonial archives.

For instance Secret and Political Department Diaries⁸⁶ exhibits the following:

To: Nathan Crow Esqr., Agent of Government at Surat...That your Petition by leave to represent that my **Bottela** by name **Kudo Ben** Tindel Panchia burthen 200 candies laden with a cargoes of Bajree and Jwary to the amount of Rupees ten thousand, laden at Bownaghur, and on her way from that Port to Bombay, unfortunately **met with two Piratical vessel off Danoo, my Tindel when they attempted to seize my Boat, produced them the English Pass, lately took at Surat, but your Petition sorry to say they paid little or no attention to it, and immediately boarded and seized my said vessel with cargo.** They carried my vessel to Gomtee my Tindel on landing, there waited on the Rajah of that place, produced him the British Pass, at first **he promised to restore her, but afterward referred it, demanded 1400 Rupees for the release of her, when my Tindel and Crew obliged to return to Surat** In submitting the above your favourable consideration, and respectfully by leave to implore your...will be pleased to take such step on this subject as you deem expedient **in causing my Boat and cargo to be restored to me which amounting to Rupees 12, 000 or there about.** Surat 3rd April 1804, And your Petition in Duty bound shall ever Pray/Signed/Aziz Allanah (True Copy), (Signed) N. Crow, Agt. of Govt. Surat. Copy of a letter from the agent of Govt. to Moolo Maneek the Rajah of Gomtee.

⁸⁶ Surat: Petition of Aziz Allanah Merchant and Inhabitant of Surat; Secret and Political Department Diary- No. 157, 1804, pp.1699-1701; Surat. Letter from the agent of Government forwarding copies of representation received from two Merchants-respecting depredations committed on their Properties by the Northern Pirates; Secret and Political Department Diary No.173 (13), 1-28 November, 1805, pp. 5813-5814; Political Department Diary No 323, 3-15 March 1809, pp. 1909-1914 & 1978.

Read the following letter from the agent of Government at Surat with Enclosure.

Hon'ble Sir, I have the Honor herewith to forward copies of Representations, which I have, this day, received from two merchants here, also of the Letters which I have, in consequence dispatched to **the Raja of Ooka and Goomtee. The owners of these rich captures have sent in foot an agency for negotiating the Recovery of them from the Coolies and timely operation of your Influence, they think will enable them to succeed at a moderate sacrifice;** Surat 23rd November, 1805; I have the honor to be &ca &ca /signed/ N. Crow Agent of Governnt.

Bombay Castle 3rd March 1809; Read the following letter the acting Resident at Baroda with Enclosures. Baroda. Letter from the Acting Resident transmitting letter from **Sunderjee Sewjee advising of the Positra Pirates having capture 3 vessels laden with sugar and carried them into that Ports.**

To: Francis Warden Esqre, Chief Secretary to Government Bombay
Sir,

1. I beg to forward for the Information of the Hon'ble the Governor in Council copy and translate of a letter from Sunderjee Sewjee apprizing me of Information which he has received from Kutch, of the Positra Pirates having captured 3 vessels laden with sugar, and carried them into that port.

2. I have also the honor to transmit copy of a consequent letter which I have addressed to the Commanding officer of the nantitus directing him to proceed with the vessel under his command to the port of Positra and in the event of Sunderjee Information being confirmed to permit no Boat to enter or depart from it, until he may receive further advices from this Residency.

3. I have also enclosed the substance of Kosberjee Mehtas reply when I apprized him of Sunderjee's report to the Hon'ble the Governor in Council the result of this person's Communication to Futteh mahomed, and of the enquires which I have particularly directed Sunderjee to constitute, through his agents on the Coast.

Baroda, 20th February 1809, I have the honor to be, &ca &ca &ca (signed) J.R. Carnac, Actg. Residnt.

1

Baroda: Translated Extract of a letter from Sunderjee Sewjee to the acting Resident.

Translated Extract of a Letter from Sunderjee Sewjee to Lieutenant Carnac dated Moorbee Mangvud without dated February 1809.

Article 5. Two or three vessel has been brought to Poseetra, laden with sugar and other goods I am not sufficiently acquainted to say from whence the vessels belong. I have learned the circumstance from Kutch; A true Extract (signed) F. D. Ballentine Frandr.

2

Baroda: The letter from the acting Resident to the officer commanding the Hon'ble Companys cruiser Nantitus.

To: The Officer Commanding the Hon'ble Company cruiser Nontitus.
Sir,

I beg to enclose for your Information the accompanying translated Extract letter from Sunderjee Sewjee apprizing me of the Positra pirates having captured 3 Boats laden with sugar.

I have therefore to request that you will on receipt of this letter proceed with the vessel under your command off that port and in the event of your having ascertained beyond a possibility of doubt that Sunderjee's Information be correct, you will have the Goodness to permit no vessel to enter or depart from Poseitra, until you may hear further from this Residency or the captured Boats may have been given up to any of the Company's servants.

It is not intended that you should adopt any measures but those of preventing all kind of Intercourse with the Poseitra pirates but you are nevertheless authorized to capture or destroyed such Boats as may have actually proceeded to sea for the purpose of committing piracy.

I will be much obliged to you for any Information connected with the Duty on which you are employed, and Sunderjee Sewjee will duly forward any letters you may have occasion to transmit to this Residency.

Baroda: 21st February 1809, I have the honor to be, & ca & ca & ca, (signed) J.R. Carnac Acting Resident.

Baroda. The verbal Information of Coobarejee Vaneeram.

The Verbal Information of Coobarejee Vaneeram. Baroda 20th February 1809.

Coobarejee Vaneeram being made acquainted with the Information stated in Sunderjee Sewjee Letter, in February without date, mentioning that three vessels had been seized and carried into Poseitra this Person explains that he has not any Information from Kutch within that firm, he however repeats that the object of his master in having this Tannah at Poseitra is solely to check Piracies, and other irregularities and that he promises in the name of his master that in the event of these Pirates having committed this outrage he will himself make them responsible for their conduct, for the satisfaction of the sirkar, and to the end of recovering the vessels and Property, In the meanwhile he will transmit a letter by Express to Futteh Mahomed. True Copy (signed) F.D. Ballentine

Translation Baroda. The acting Resident advised of the arrival of the Nontitus at the Presidency and to report such proceedings as may occur with respect to the Recovery of the captured property.

Minutes:

1st March: Ordered that the acting Resident at Baroda be advised that the Naontitus has returned to the Presidency but that the **Zephyr schooner with three Pattamars is still cruizing in the Gulph of Cutch or in the vicinity under the command of Lieutenant Harrist, Lieutenant Carnac is accordingly to address his communications (which are in their purport approved) to Lieutenant Harrist or the officer for the time being in command of the Zephyr and to report such further proceedings as may occur with respect to the Recovery of the capture Property for which every Exertion is to continue to be used.**

Read the following letter from the acting Resident at Baroda with enclosures from Lieutt. Conyers & ca.

Baroda: Letter from the acting Resident transmitting letter from Lieutt. Conyers commanding the vessel cruising in the Gulf of Cutch apprizing of his proceeding to recover the Dingey.

To: Francis Warden Esqre, Chief Secretary to Government Bombay
Sir, The enclosure Transcript of a letter from Lieutt. Conyers Commanding the Hon'ble Company's vessel cruising in the Gulf of Cutch; will apprizing the Hon'ble the Governor in Council of the proceedings of that officer to recover the Dingey mentioned in Lieutenant Colonel Walker's Instructions dated the 17th of last December, and I request you will also have the goodness to submit the accompanying copy of a letter with its enclosure which I have address to the Chief of Surat, with a view of ascertaining to whom the captured property may belong as Sunderjee information states the Dingey to have sailed out of that part.

Baroda: 21st February 1809; I have the honor to be, (signed), J.R. Carnac, Acting Resident.

Survey of the selected archival material helps us in inferring that *Okhamandal*, inclusive of its ports, port towns and villages were inhabited by seafaring people who indulged in the profession of plundering, particularly in Gulf of Kachchh and beyond it, towards Malabar or Persian Gulf in the Arabian Sea. These sources speak in volume about their identities and habitations which actually gets clarified only when one visits these settlements, and the stories are still alive in their minds. The hero-stones seen by Tod survive even today and are revered by the locals. The seafarers names appear in the songs, sea-literature, folklores. We have also observed that the European companies which fished in the Arabian Sea have now streamlined and it were the English who wanted to control the region. They had been partially successful in controlling the Marathas and the Gaekwads were their allies. The act of piracy can be interpreted as: (1.) A normal feature as profession of seafarers and, (2.) Showing resistance towards the East India Company's ventures.

Kachchh: On the historical writings of Kachchh sub-region, one now finds several works which have appeared in the last decade ranging between polity, economy, society and navigation acumen because like *Kathiawad* sailors and seafarers, *Kachchhis* also traversed to Swahili coast, Oman, Muscat, Mozambique, Mombasa &c. My understanding of *Kachchh* is constructed on the basis of locals' information and visits to port towns Mandvi & Mundra besides works of established scholars on *Kachchh*. Contemporary published sources by Marianne Postan (c. 1810-1865) entitled *Cutch...*, 1839 and Rushbrook William, *The Black Hills, Kutch in History and Legend...*, London, 1958, (reprint), Bhuj, 1981 is most useful for my studies. Postan based her information on the official papers in this sub-region during British period whereas Rushbrook William traced the history of *Kachchh* from the earliest times narrating battles, political resolutions, murders and conspiracies up to post-independence period with the help of local traditions. A parallel understanding to British scholarship period however could be sketched through Gujarati corpus. Works by Dungarsi Dharamasi Sampat and Douleray Karani have been most influential. Sampat was an amateur historian who had been interested in trade and history of *Kachchh*. A glimpse of his historical style based on oral traditions can be had from the articles in *Bhatiya Yuvak* (published in 1930's), *Kachchhni Vepari Tantra* (published in 1935), *Sagar Kathao* (published in 1940), *Saahasik Sodagaro* (published in 1950) and *Kachchhni Lokvaarta* (published in 1943). Karani wrote in bards' tradition and his style

is reflected in *Kachchhni Rasadhar* (published in 1972), *Kachchh Kaladhar* (published in 1988a) and *Kachchhna Santo ane Kavio* (published in 1988b). These Gujarati books provide wonderful insights to understand *Kachchhi Kharwa* and *Kachchhi Vadhel*.

Geographically, *Kachchh* is believed to be a dry bed and an arm of sea. It lies between the peninsula of *Kathiawad* on the south and the province of Sind on the north, extends from 20° 47' to 24°N latitude and 68° 26' to 71° 10'E longitude. This covers an extreme length of 168 miles and breadth varying from 48 miles in the west to scarcely 30 miles in the east. At one place it narrows down to 13 miles i.e. between Dudhi and Bachau and is surrounded by the *Rann* on the north, east and south-east; by the Kori mouth of the river Indus or Lakhpat on the north west, by the Arabian sea on the west and by the Gulf of *Kachchh* in the south-west. The Gulf of *Kachchh* separates it from *Kathiawad* peninsula. The Great *Rann* or salt desert marsh in the north contains the islands of Khadir or Pachham, with some smaller ones⁸⁷ named as Chorad and Bela; and also the grass tract of *Banni*.⁸⁸ In the earliest times when *Rann* was an arm of Arabian Sea and *Kachchh*, an island, was easily approachable from Sind. It formed a kind of 'Adam's bridge' between Sind and *Kathiawad*. The navigability of

⁸⁷James P. Campbell, *Gazetteer Bombay Presidency-Kutch, Palanpur and Mahikantha*, 1880, p. 13.

⁸⁸James Burgess, *Archaeological Survey of Western India, Report of the Antiquities of Kathiawad and Kachch: Being the Results of Second Operations of ASI of Western India, 1874-75*, Varanasi, 1971, p. 189 and see P. Culterbuck, *Report on the Possibility of Development of the Forest Areas in Kutch*, 1933 and MacMurdo, 'An Account of the Province of Cutch, and of the Countries Lying Between Guzerat and the River Indus', *Transaction of the Literary Society of Bombay*, Vol. II, 1820, p. 208.

Rann is a proven fact. The historical geography⁸⁹ of the sub-region marks the presence of *Kathis* migrating from Sind and settling in central and southern part of *Kachchh* and further moving to *Kathiawad* territory for political compulsions; *Charans* and *Abiharas* settling in different pockets; temporary presence of the Arabs along the coastline. This period evidenced in the making of the sub-region as politically potent, economically far-fetched and culturally prosperous. As far as navigability of *Rann* for this period is concerned no direct reference is available. It was under Lakha Jadeja of Samma tribe that region acquired political permanency and Bhadreswar is reported as a significant port town in twelfth century.⁹⁰ It is at this juncture we also hear of one merchant prince Jagdusa, who through his philanthropy supported *Kachchh* sub-region during famine of c.1259. In 1592, *Kachchh* rulers accepted the suzerainty of Mughals under Akbar and continued to remain chief feudatories. Since that time, the rulers of *Kachchh* had been the most important feudatory chiefs under Mughal *subah* of Gujarat, being free from attack, and bound only to supply a contingent of troops whenever called upon to do so. *Ain-i-Akbari*⁹¹ records the *Kachchh* sub-region as a separate territory with 250 *kos*

⁸⁹ Adhya Bharti Saxena, 'The Making of Kachchh: A Historic-Geographic Profile, from Earliest Times to c. 1700', paper presented in National Seminar Kutch in History and Legend, Department of History, The M. S. University of Baroda, 27th -28th March, 2001, (Cyclostyle copy), pp. 11-14.

⁹⁰ Rushbrook William, *Black Hills*, pp. 92-93 and *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency-Kutch*, pp. 133-34.

⁹¹ *Ain-i-Akbari*, (tr.), Jarret, II, p. 255.

in length and 100 *kos* in breadth. It also mentions *Rann*⁹² which is a low lying tract, 90 *kos* in length and 7 to 30 *kos* in breadth between Jhalwara in the *sarkar* of Ahmedabad, and Patan and Sorath, provided salt produced in *Rann* and remained under successors of Rao Khengarji I founder of Anjar (c.1546), Bhuj (c.1549) and Rayanpur-Mandvi (c.1581). This administrative status continued under Emperor Jahangir,⁹³ Shahjahan and Aurangzeb as well as we do not register any significant political change. However, Kachchh ruler Rao Desal I (1718-41), who by his able management had greatly increased the revenues of *Kachchh* and raised the country to a prosperous condition, gave tough resistance with the help of his loyal *Bhayads* and so impressed the Mughal official, who later were forced to withdrew. Similarly another attempt on the part of Mughal *subahdars* met failure due to fortification at Bhuj and strong garrison collected under Rao Desalji in 1721 and 1729 respectively.⁹⁴ The Persian sources remain silent on the situation of *Rann* or it being traversed from inland region. *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*⁹⁵ refers to *Kachchh* as ‘*sarkar Sulaimannagar*’ and accessibility to ‘*Rann*’ from various routes via Katariachol and Radhanpur which was located at 100 *kos* north west of Ahmedabad, adjoining Thatta in Sind. While referring its history it reveals that under Sultans of Gujarat the sub-region had

⁹² *ibid.*, (The salt collected from the *Rann* fetched duties and was submitted in the administrative territory of *pargana* Jhalwara).

⁹³ *Waqiat-i-Jaahangiri*, in *History of India As told by Its Historians*, VI, p. 356 & Rushbrook Williams, *Black Hills*, p. 121.

⁹⁴ *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, II, pp. 53, 116, 121-22 & 136-38.

⁹⁵ *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, (Supplement), pp. 217-219.

2,080 villages with 4000 cavalry as contingent and at the time of compilation of *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* (c. 1760) the number of villages increased to 8000 and many *baras* along with active *bandars* could be located. It provides details to *parganas* in the *Kachchh* sub-region with their headquarters. European travellers' make passing reference to *Kachchh* and *Rann* as far as the physiographical account is concerned. What clearly appears from their account is the confusion for the two sub-regions i.e., *Kathiawad* and *Kachchh*.⁹⁶ For instance, Edward Michelborne in 1607, while writing on the advantages of the trade of Indus to the East India Company refers *Kachchh* as 'Jeketta' and its location within the mouth of Indus; similar confusion can be observed in the accounts of Fremlen, Middleton, Bornford, Wylde, Thomas Roe, Pietro Della Valle, Niclo Conti, Fryer, Hamilton, Linschoten and Varthema who struggle for the identity of *Kachchh* and *Rann* in the Gulf of Cambay.⁹⁷ This confusion on geographical knowledge prevails even during the 19th century as well. Thus *Kachchh* and *Rann* remains a mystery to them. This mystery attempted solution during 19th century under British when they explored possibilities for annexation of Sind. What finally appeared is the change, preserved in the very name of *Rann* was accompanied by a change in the delta of the river Indus i.e., through the shifting of the main river of Indus valley from its eastern limits to its medial regions

⁹⁶ J. Abbott, 'The Ran of Cutch II' in *Sind: A Re-Interpretation of the Unhappy Valley*, London, 1924, reprint, Madras, 1992, pp. 35-36.

⁹⁷ See the maps of Herbert, Mandelslo (1720), Harris (1705), Pietro Della Valle, Bernier (1670 & 1672), Hamilton (1744), Rennell (1793), and others in 'MAPS', *ibid.*, pp.36-38 & 111-13.

thus hastening the formation of delta. *Nani/ Little Rann* underwent considerable changes during the 19th century. In 1815 the water was imperceptibly draining off.⁹⁸ In 1866 the head of the little *Rann* was said to be sinking, and therefore an inquiry was made.⁹⁹ Two officers gave their opinion, one Captain Hebbert did not believe that the *Rann* was depressed; the other Major Watson, thought it was. In 1875 Col. Barton opined that depression does not seem to happen as yet to have been proved. The dryness occurred as the main body of the Indus water began to move from the eastern to the western branch.¹⁰⁰ The fresh water lagoon dried up and the salt water started occupying the space. This development was the result of seismic disturbances to which the *Kachchh* sub-region is frequently prone. Significant change in the physical characteristics of the sub-region was observed after the earthquake of 1819 in the western portion of *Rann*.¹⁰¹ This portion of *Rann* started drying up round the Kori/eastern branch of the Indus and emerged as a salt bed. Since then by the Hamtai and Mukti creeks the sea has continued to encroach. According to Col. Barton who wrote in 1875 that year by year the sea reached further eastward, and places, a few years ago inland villages were then open to water traffic. The cause was by some observers traced to the formation of a gyrate at the entrance of the Gulf of Cambay,

⁹⁸ *Selection Asiatic Journal*, I, XXVIII, 1816-19, p. 35 & in *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency-Kutch*, p. 16.

⁹⁹ *Memoir of Geological Survey*, IX, p. 11 in *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency-Kutch*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁰ *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency-Kutch*, pp. 11-12 & 16.

¹⁰¹ James MacMurdo (March, 1820), 'Papers Relating to the Earthquake which Occurred in India in 1819', *Transactions of Bombay Literary Society* Vol. III, London, pp. 90-107.

making sea shallower, forcing the tidal wave higher upland. It is noteworthy to remember that *Kachchh* evidenced earthquakes in 1819, 1844, 1845, 1864 leading to topological changes.¹⁰² A dual phenomenon of depressing the sub-region west to the Kori creek and an elevation of land on the northern side which was 5.5 meters tall and 80 Kms long and 24 Kms broad. This totally separated the Indus tributaries from *Kachchh* and the waters of the Arabian Sea filled up the depression turning it into a large arid saline marsh, a situation that could be observed in present times. With this great transformation in the deltaic region of Sind the history of *Rann* must have a course far different from its past.¹⁰³ The *Rann*, now a dried-up sea, was the creation of alluvial deposits by rivers that have played their part once and for all. The Luni got silted up, its mouth bordered by sand hills and a great salt lake: the Hakra ceased to be a perennial stream, and the mouth of the Indus-a hundred miles further west, was beyond the *Rann*. Its history as the gradual silting up of an island sea by the alluvium of rivers is not ended; a new history has opened in the process begun, whereby aeolian deposits, carried by the wind from the desert of the Thar and Parkar, continued inevitably to obliterate the process of the past.¹⁰⁴ The relevance of bringing in the discussion in the formation of *Kachchh* lies in providing explanation of how the villagers got involved into the act of piracy. It can also be inferred

¹⁰² *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency-Kutch*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁰³ R. Sivewright, 'Cutch and the Ran' in *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, May 1907 in J. Abbott, *Sind: A Re-Interpretation of the Unhappy Valley*, p. 33.

¹⁰⁴ J. Abbott, *Sind: A Re-Interpretation of the Unhappy Valley*, London, 1924, reprint, Madras, 1992, pp. 31-33.

that as the locals were aware of the tributaries of Indus they used it to plunder with their friends sailing in the deep sea water. This point has been carefully brought out in chapter II as the *modus operandi* of pirates where creeks and other choke points were ample. This part of the Arabian Sea, Gulf of *Kachchh* and Gulf of Cambay saw a rise in piratal/piratical aggressions.

Kachchh has a long coast line of approximately 350 kms. which since time immemorial maintained external trade relations in all the directions via water and land and cultivated a tradition of commercial enterprise. *Kachchhi* merchants have long established themselves in most of the sea-ports of India, throughout the Red Sea, Persian Gulf and Middle East, coastal towns of Zanzibar and East and West Africa. The fame of the *Kachchh* navigators, pilots, and seamen equalled the reputation of the merchant-venturers, whom they carried in their stout *Kachchhi* craft across the oceanic waters. Since the ancient times *Kachchhis* were seafarers and its *Vadha* (*Badhel/Vadhel*) community was famous for ship building.¹⁰⁵ Their seafaring tradition explains that why *Kachchh* had five ancient ports/*bandars* at Mandvi as Rayan, Anjar near Mundra, Jakhu, Lakhpat and Koteswar in relation to its sparse population and *baras* along the southern and eastern shores, namely Tuna, Rohr, Vavyana and Jhangi which served the ancient merchant town of Anjar.¹⁰⁶ Published works by S. R. Rao, Shireen Ratnagar, Pulin Vasa, Lalanji Gopal, Surendra Gopal, Om Prakash,

¹⁰⁵ *The Black Hills*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

Takashi Oishi, Ghulam Nadri, bears testimony to trade from the *Kachchh* frontiers towards Sind, Malabar, Bengal, Red Sea, East African Coast, Persian Gulf, Mediterranean and South East Asia in time and space. Trade volume details of the sub-region are found in the account of Rushbrook William.¹⁰⁷ With the entry of Portuguese in Indian waters in late 15th century their interests became quite evident in Gujarat waters with their success over Sultan Bahadur Shah in mid 16th century (c.1555). Portuguese were strong enough to sack Thatta in Sind and controlled piracy in the sub-region's water. It was for this reason Akbar, very prudently, maintained pact with the Portuguese viceroy and ensured safety for *hajj* pilgrims in India. At this time both Portuguese and *Kachchhis* were the daring seafarers however, we do not have information for the later. Rushbrook William has opined that both avoided encounters and carried their trade separately and peacefully. We have trade history of *Kachchh* for medieval centuries in references from chronicles, administrative manuals and late 18th and 19th century documents.

Rushbrook William¹⁰⁸ reports that from the very ancient times up to early 19th century the five main *bandars*-Mandvi, Mundra, Jakhau, Lakhpat and Koteswar in *Kachchh* had a prosperous history. This was 'enshrined in their fortified walls and long jetties in hewn stone; in the palace like houses of their merchants; in their numerous votive temples and in shrines commemorating the past

¹⁰⁷ *The Black Hills*, p. 118.

¹⁰⁸ *The Black Hills*, p. 40.

prosperity'. The British policies and their interest in the *Kachchh* principality provided a set back to the trade of the region. So what emerged was the ports/*bandars* of *Kachchh* became foreign ports and their trade, instead of serving a larger hinterland in western India, diminished to the trickle which sufficed to satisfy the needs of *Kachchh* itself and small re-export business of goods carried in *Kachchhi* crafts from Africa and Arabia and re-shipped in bond to the Bombay market took place frequently. Rushbrook inform us of *Kachchhi* merchants whose reference were household names in Bombay, Calcutta, Karachi, Aden, Zanzibar and the Persian Gulf during late 18th and early 19th centuries.¹⁰⁹ According to Table II *Kachchh* has following *bandars*: Bedi *bandar*, Khubaria, Mandvi, Mundra Narayansar, Tuna, Saglo Auranga *bandar*, Karakala, Jakhau, Lakhpatt etc. The *baras* and *bandars* served as pirates' haven.

A discussion on the piratical aggressions is documented here.

Jakha'u an important port of *Kachchh* is situated in North latitude 23°13' and East longitude 68°43' stands on the south-west coast of *Kachchh* more than sixty miles west of Bhuj. The town, lies between three and four miles inland in a dreary plain bare of trees but yielding good crops. It is low-lying and marshy. Goods were unloaded near Godia creek five miles away from the sea. The creek has muddy bed, dry at low water and has full tide a depth of from eight to twelve feet. Springs boats of from twenty to twenty-five tons (60-70 *khandis*) can pass the creek. Jakhau carried on a

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*, p. 41.

large trade with Bombay during late 18th and early 19th centuries, exporting field produce and importing piece-goods, groceries, and timber. Vessels lying about four miles from the landing place discharge into small boats, and from the small boats goods are carried in carts to the neighbouring towns of Naliya, Tera, and Kothara. Jakhau carried on a considerable trade, importing from Bombay dates, sugar, and oil, and from Sind, coarse red rice. There was also a slight traffic with Muscat and Daman.

Another port town Koteswar is situated near Kori river, three miles from Gondia creek. Following the curve of the coast, the landing place at the east mouth of the Indus, forms a natural canal joining Jakhau with the Indus. Across the Kori from Koteswar, about nine miles to the north-west, is the tomb of Ra Kanoj built in 1773. Ra Kanoj is said to be the son of the daughter of Ra Bhalot, chief of Ujjain, who, about the end of the ninth century, in a fight with a Musalman army, was killed at Sekot a small fort half a mile north-east of Narayansar. The priests of the shrine used to be sailors of the *Bhadala* caste, now they are Jats.¹¹⁰

Tuna Bandar: Willoughby Secretary to Government letter's to H. Pottinger, the Resident of Kachchh referred piratal aggression took place in 1836¹¹¹ near Tuna Bandar. A boat was travelling from Tuna Bandar to Shah Bandar in Sind was plundered away from Jakhau port and Willoughby informed the resident to

¹¹⁰Colonel Barton's Tour in Cutch (February 1878), 21; Sir A. Burnes' MS, 1828.

¹¹¹Letter from Willoughby, Secretary to Government to H. Pottinger, the Resident of Kachchh on 30th July, 1836, in Foreign Department, Political Consultancy, No. 12 to 21, Part II, 20th March, 1837, p. 436.

investigate to know the amount of goods plundered and submit the report to the government. H. Pottinger¹¹² found the plundered goods and estimate the amounted was Rs.742/- excluding Rs.2000/- *Kachchh* carries in copper piece, gun rod and 4 swords carried by pirates.

The East India Company interference in *Kachchh*: Political instability in *Kachchh* and frequent harassment of British ships by pirates led the British government to interfere in the internal affairs of *Kachchh*. In addition to this the British government was eyeing to get cotton monopoly in the region. *Kachchh* was commercial centre for export of cotton and importing dates, grapes, ivory and rhino horns. Fateh Mohammed at Bhuj and Hansraj Shah at Mandvi were the two important minister of Raos who were trying to control power of *Kachchh*. Fateh Mohammed arrested Rao Raydhan, who was the reigning ruler of *Kachchh* in 1786.

The State of *Kachchh* had been state of disorder and was ruled by Rao Raidhan who was superseded by two officers-Hansraj, a Hindu merchant and Fateh Mohammed, an officer of Arab Mercenaries in the service of Rao. The two were disputed for the post of Minister and divided the power of the prince. There was frequent request from both the government to the British for the settlement. The dispute came to end after the death of Hansraj in 1809 and Fattah Mohammed became the undisputed minister till 1813. *Kachchh* became more troubled after the death of Rao

¹¹²Letter from H. Pottinger, the Resident of Kachchh to Willoughby, Secretary to Government 15th August, 1836, in Foreign Department, Political Consultancy, No.12 to 21, Part II, 20th March, 1837, pp. 444-45.

Raidhan. Rao was inclined to Islam when Fatteh Mohammed was an undisputed minister. He left a son Manuba or Bharmalji. Rao was the head of Jhareja rajput and other military tribe of *Kachchh*. Conflict started for the succession of Manuba as he was consider illegitimate and an outcaste and nephew of the Rao's Lakhpati or Ladhuba succeed the throne.

The company made an agreement with the State of *Kachchh* in 1809. In the agreement, provision of suppression of piracy was included but the provision did not accomplish the desire of the Company to suppress piracy in the Gulf. Sewraj succeeded his father Hansraj in Mandvi imposing tax to the ship coming into the Mandvi port except the company vessel which possessed pass. The Company also deployed ships to control piracy in the Gulf. For effective control of piracy in the Gulf, James MacMurdo was sent in the Mandvi to investigate about pirates and their strength. He discovered that the pirates not only received protection at that place but were even permitted to remain unpunished under the immediate eye of Fatteh Mahommed.¹¹³ He also found that there were piratal/piratical aggressions against Shah Darab a prince of Kabul in the Gulf of Kachchh. Nackwa Hussian, the pirate carried away his goods to Bhuj. Koteswar is located near the mouth of Kori creek in west of *Kachchh*. The creek facilitates safe passage of pirates to carry goods. The company was avoiding direct conflict with the local chieftain. They advised their officials to

¹¹³James Burns, *A Sketch of the History of Cutch*, 2004, p. 15.

prevent any conflict with the chieftain who were in relation with the company.

Jewa Nackwa at Lakhpat

Lakhpat, one of the port towns of *Kachchh* is situated on the Kori creek and it has about 140 kms to north-west of Bhuj. Fatteh Mohammed was *Jamadar* of Maharao Raidhan (1778-1813) who had it based at Bhuj but due to lack of experience Fatteh Mohammed got opportunity to control western *Kachchh* which served as the headquarter of Dewan Hansraj who represented *Bhatias*, *Banias* and *Lohanas*. He also controlled Lakhpat, Koteswar and Jakhau. Between 1801 and 1808, Fatteh Mohammed built the impressive fort of Lakhpat, During his reign he supported the pirates who plundered the East India Company's goods. They sent *Sylph* Cruiser to protect numerous grain boats plying from Lakhpat to other regions. The Company heard that the chief had sent small vessel to intercept these grain boats. The Company warned the chief for supporting piratal/piratical aggression in his port or sheltering in neighbourhood. Mohur Meeya¹¹⁴ pleaded for his innocence and refused that he did not shelter or provide support to any pirate in his port. Mariam Dossal¹¹⁵ opined: 'Lakhpat had advantage to the pirates because of the geographical features having creeks and inlets of Loonee river allow the pirates to hide or sail swiftly to the

¹¹⁴ Letter from J. R. Carnac, Resident of Baroda to Francis Warden, Chief Secretary to Government, Bombay, *Political Department Diary*, No. 388 of 1813 pp.M287-288.

¹¹⁵ Mariam Dossal, "Touched by Winds of Many Seas: The Port Town of Lakhpat" in Sara Keller and M. N. Pearson (eds.), *Port Towns of Gujarat*, 2015, pp. 74-76.

land. The British Government found it difficult to suppress piracy because of geographical features and cultural acceptance of the piracy from time immemorial.’ In 1810, *Nackwa* Jewa one of the popular pirate in Lakhpat had full support from Fattah Mohammed to plunder Pattamar *Sallamutty* of Veenarsee Pragjee which was coming from Bombay to Gogha with cargo. Veenarsee was attacked with armed which included matchlock and killed two of the passengers. He came on board examined the *tindal* and crew. The condition of pirates became worse because the piratal / piratical acts were no longer safe. Earlier, *Nackwa* Jewa¹¹⁶ had 100 men to carry piratal/piratical aggression with 3 or 4 boats and left him with 50 men with 2 or 3 boats because the piracy was restricted in many parts. Jewa settled in the Lakhput *Bandar*. Jewa *Nackwa* had three *dingy* for piratal/piratical actions. In 1812, Lt. Thomas Blast was in Lakhpat and he got information about Jewa *Nackwa* was at Koteswar. He suggested Lt. Henry Hardy should proceed to Koteswar to capture Jewa *Nackwa* but there was fear that they could get in conflict with Fateh Muhammad.

On 12 July, 1812 *Nackwa* Jewa took shelter in the creek of Sheer in Sind and he had two piratical vessels. His brother *Nackwa* Jehaik and along with his family were sheltered in the village of Terah belonging to the Jaheejah Dewajee. Meher Meeya of Lakhpat provided Jeewa *Nackwa* and his associate pirate with a house and they were employed in his service but they had to give

¹¹⁶ Deposition of Ramjee Inhabitant of Gogo, Political Department Diary, No. 390 (3, 5 & 12) 1810, p. 2734.

up piracy. The pirates were permitted to sell the pirate property that they had captured before coming to the Lakhpāt.

Mandvi or the mart¹¹⁷ is situated near the bank of Bukhi and it was considered an important place among the mercantile ports of Western India due to skilful pilots, good seamen, adventurous merchants and favourable shipping for long distance trade and commerce. It was also a favourable port town for merchants coming from different regions from such as Bombay, Malabar, Sind, Persia, Makran and Zanzibar on various types of boats like *Batellas*, *Nawdees*, and *Kotiyas*.

Having assessed both the regions, *Kachchh* and *Kathiawad*, it is clear that geography played a significant role in the making of professionals to decide upon their engagements and occupation, whether they were on land or sea. Seafarers, who are branded as pirates in the official records were carrying out their day to day business as a seafarer, they were harvesters of profit in the Indian Ocean. Thus piratical aggressions were 'business to them'.

When frets and spates have had their fill
And gentle calm the coast will clear,
Then haughty hearts shall have their will,
That long have wept with morning cheer;
And leave the seas with their annoy,
At home at ease to live in joy.

¹¹⁷*Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency: Catch, Palanpur and Mahi Kanta*, Vol. V, Government Central Press, Bombay, 1880, pp.237-244.