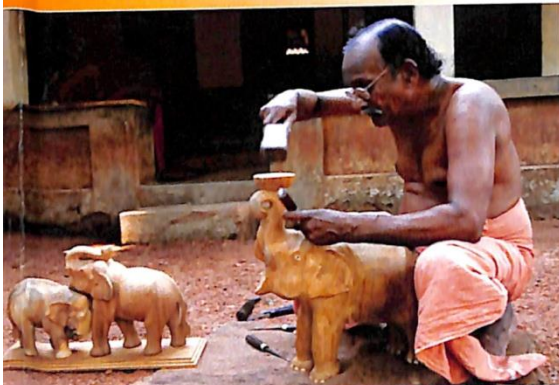


MINORITIES ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT

THE INDIAN CONTEXT



Edited By:
CHATTAR SINGH



MINORITIES ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT (The Indian Context)

Nongmaithem Keshorjit Singh
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14/12/2018

Preface By
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Edited By
Chattar Singh

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Edition 2018
ISBN : 978-93-86558-55-8

Published by
Mohindra Publishing House
SCO 289, 1st Floor, Opposite Nirman Theatre
Sector-32D, Chandigarh - 160 031
Ph. 0172 - 5088686, 9872889970
email: info@orderyourbooks.com
www.orderyourbooks.com
Printed and Bound at Amit Arts, Chandigarh

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7.

Siddis and the Janjira State: Glimpse of Courage, Entrepreneurship and Identity

- N.Keshorjit Singh*

Introduction

This paper tries to discuss courage, entrepreneurship and identity of *Siddis* in the Janjira State. In the middle of thirteenth and fifteenth century, *Siddis* were migrated from East Africa as concubines, mercenaries, soldiers, slaves, traders and seafarers. Many of the slaves were exported from East Africa to South Asia. The imported *Siddis* were employed as slaves and many of them were recruited as soldiers, guards of fort and royal guards. The East African goods were imported to the markets of the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Gulf Kachchh which includes gold ivory, cloves, tortoise shell, rhinoceros hide and skin, gum gopal, coconut, bee wax and slaves. These trading items were further redistributed to regional markets. Between 16th and 17th century, the African slaves were imported by the Portuguese and exchange with goods. They were used for household work and those who have good skills, intelligent and courage were recruited as soldier. They are known for maritime soldiers. Later, they became as guards, royal-guards, *Nakhodas*, chiefs and the ruler of Janjira State. Their skill allows them to become good entrepreneur. Investing themselves in military campaign and their maritime skills allow them to capture the *kolis* of Janjira. After they became the ruler of Janjira State, pass was issued against ships of merchants and the European companies to generate incomes of the Janjira State. Goods of those merchants and the European companies were seized if they failed to show their pass.

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The Maratha appointed Kanhoji Angria as admiral in its navy to control maritime supremacy on the west coast of India. *Siddis* also understand that they need alliance with the Mughal Empire so that they would safeguard their interest in the west coast of India. The Mughal Empire appointed *Siddis* as the admiral of its navy and the *Siddis* protected its merchants and ports. Annually, the Mughal Empire had paid fixed money to the Janjira State for maritime protection. Even, the East India Company paid tax to prevent harassment in Surat.

The study of African migrants had been undertaken mainly in the backdrop of the Marathas and the English East India Company in the Indian Ocean. The literature on the African Diaspora in the India mainly focuses on the *Siddis* of Gujarat and Karnataka. Scholars on the study of *Siddis* of Janjira completely lack on discourse of *Siddis* living in the Janjira. The information on *Siddis* has been gathering from the literatures on the History of Marathas, and the British power in west coast of India. The important documents of the *Siddis* of Janjira were burned and fewer materials are available which find difficulties for historian to present perfect history of the *Siddis* of Janjira. The *Siddis* in India are understood as migrants from African continent especially from East African coast who migrated in the era of slave trade. Scholars from all the streams have shown their keen interest in understanding *Siddis* as migrants, mercenaries, merchants' sailors and 'other settlers'. The Afro-Indians' are generally known as Sidi/Siddi or Habshi/Habsi. These ethnonyms partly tell us that they were in the employment of Sayyads, the Muslim rulers of India, and partly that they came from Ethiopia. Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta observed that many habshi were employed as sailors and soldiers by rulers from north India to Sri Lanka. In the nineteenth century, the name 'Sidi' was indiscriminately applied to black slaves and seamen. At that time, Zanzibar was the hub of the slave trade. It was both a destination and a centre for the dispersal of African slaves mainly to Arabia, but also to India. The *Siddis* of Gujarat traced the roots of their saint and community progenitor, Baba Gor, a Pir, who usually described as an Abyssinian who came to Gujarat to trade in the 14th century and

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whose arrival is associated with the extension of trade in locally mined agate to Africa. D. K. Bhattacharya worked 'Indians of African Origin', *Cahiers d' Études Africaines*, (Vol.10, 1970) which mentioned that two Siddis kingdoms were established during 1100 A. D. on the western coast at Janjira and Jaffrabad. The Siddis are settled in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Goa and Kerala. But the three major Siddi populations in India are found in the states of Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Besides being named Siddis, others than themselves also refer to the African descendants as Habshi, Kaphri, Shamal, Badsha, Landa, Kafira, African and Negro in various languages such as Marathi, Kannada, Konkani, Gujarati, Telugu and Urdu. Beherroz shroff studied the identities of Siddis in Maharashtra and Gujarat in socio-economic terms. Historiography of Sidis draws attention from the scholars D. R. Banaji, Halene Basu, Imtiaz Ahmad, Charles Camara, Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy, Abdulaziz Y. Lodhi, Jonathan Mark Kenoyer and Pashington Obenge &c.

The paper focuses on courage and skills which led the promoted them from soldier to ruler of the Janjira. The Janjira fort is located in Murud, Raigad district of Maharashtra State. The Siddis in India are understood as artisans, migrants, mercenaries, slaves, eunuch, merchants and sailors from African continent. The Afro-Indians' are generally known as Sidi/ Siddi or Habshi/Habsi. There are about 250,000 Afro-Indians, i.e. Indians of African origin, in India, in the state of Gujarat bordering Pakistan and, in the states of Andhra Pradesh in south-central India (former kingdom of Hyderabad), Maharashtra (formerly Bombay State), Kerala and Karnataka in the south, and the former Portuguese territories of Daman, Dui and Goa. In Gujarat they are found in the districts of Ahmedabad, Amreli, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Bharuch near Ratanpur, and the former Kingdom of Kachchh. They are normally settled above mentioned places but they are mixed in Ahmedabad, Broach and Kachchh. The physical features of Siddis are medium high, thick lips, broad nose, long and narrow head, scanty body hair, woolly hair on the head and dark complexion. One of the most amazing about the Siddis is that they have learned and spoke the Indian languages. From the time of their arrival

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in India, however, they would quickly have learned Urdu, the colloquial language of many Indian Muslims, their men, in each other, and to this day Urdu is the mother tongue of the Siddis of Janjira. Some Janjira Siddis also learned Persian, which until the nineteenth century was the formal language of government and diplomacy in India, or the Marathi and Konkani of their non-Sidi subjects. They follow Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Gujarat Sidis worshipped Baba Ghor, an agate merchant who came from Abyssinia to Gujarat for trade and commerce. There was trading relation with Africa and Khambat. The Siddis of Gujarat built dargah in the memory of Baba Ghor. The Siddis of Gujarat are fond of singing and dancing. On marriage and other high days men and women dances together in circles to the sound of the drum (dhol) and a rough rattle (jhunjhuna). They go in one group which includes ten to fifteen people, playing the drum and singing in praise of Baba Ghor. They hold their musical instruments in great veneration, never touching them unless they are ceremonially pure. The Siddis of Gujarat perform Siddi dhammal which is one of the popular folk dance of Gujarat. Some of them make their living through by performing this folk dance.

The Janjira island not far from the Murud village in the Raigad district of Maharashtra. The island of Janjira was believed to be the important place for trade and commerce. Strategically importance place for trade and commerce between the Bahmani kingdom and Gujarat. Koli is the one of fishing community living in the Murud village. Before the arrival of Siddis, the fort was built by koli fishermen. The fort was built the fort with wood and it was meant to protect the kolis from pirates. Later on the Siddis Sardar hatched conspiracy and captured the fort through force. The Siddis settled around the Murud of Janjira had built their houses made of bamboos and cover their roof with paddy straw or grass. But the Siddis landlord have two story building which were built of brick and timber.

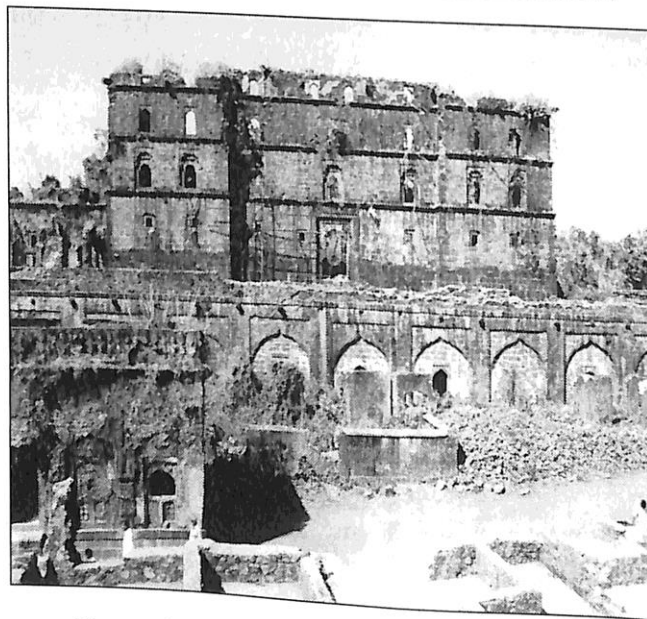
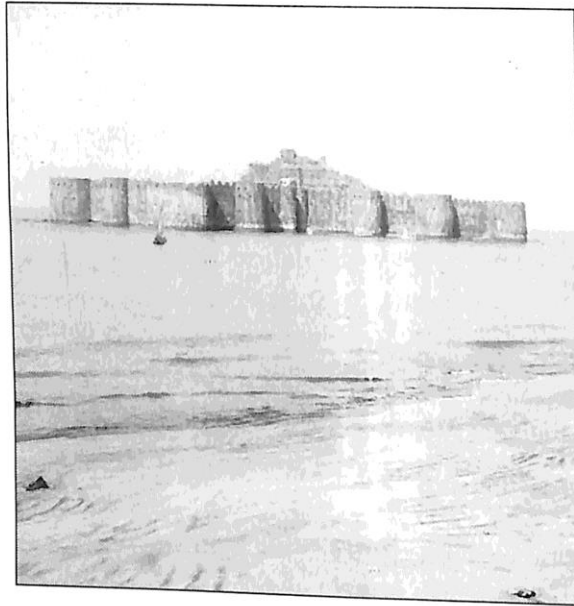


Figure 1: Janjira Fort (personal collection)

Janjira is the Marathi corruption of the Arabic 'Jazirah', meaning 'an island'. Though the whole country is generally called Janjira, yet the name

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truly refers to the island fortress, namely the Fort of Danda-Rajpuri. It lies between 17°59' and 18°32' north latitude and 72° 57' and 73°21' east longitude. Now, it is known as Murud-Janjira. The island fortress enters from Rajpuri creek and it is less than a kilometre from the mainland. It has large entrance gate facing towards the sea and small gate for emergency exit. The form of this fort is semi-circular having large masonry with the high of about 20 feet. It was defended by bastion on every 30 meters. In the bastion and the wall of the fort, ten guns (three of natives and seven of European). The European guns were made in Sweden (three guns); Spain (one gun); Holland (one gun) and one in France. We have found that there are three big cannon placing toward Danda-Rajpuri. These cannons are known as Kalal Bangdi, Landakasam and Bhavani which remained cool in all the season. These cannon had protected Danda-Rajpuri. The Janjira fort has a palace which is now in bad condition and the palace was having six storeys with many rooms. There was a women quarter in the fort. The Siddis dug up wells and tank for storing drinking water. Most of the structures in the fort are in dilapidated condition. In 1860, the fort got fire and burnt most of important documents of its administration which make us difficult to reconstruct the history of Siddis of Janjira State. The Muslim of Janjira was Sunni sect and they belong to Hannafi School. The Siddis of Janjira intermixed with other communities living around the Janjira. They married with the daughter of Janjirkar (Konkanis Muslim). Janjirkar was the largest Muslim community living in Janjira. The courage of the Siddis is informed through travels account of Pliny and Ptolemy, the Mughals histories, History of Marathas by Grant Duff, D.R. Banaji, Bombay and the Sidis, Malgonkar, Manohar, Kanhoji Angrey Maratha Admiral: An Account of His Life and His Battles with the English, Gazetteer, Treaties and Correspondence of the English East India Company.

In the middle of thirteenth and fifteenth century, African slaves were great demand in western India and the Bahmani ruler employed them as slaves, sailor and soldiers. The African slaves were engaged in domestic help for the local as well as the Europeans Companies. It was also considered honour for having many slaves. Particularly, the Siddis on

account of intelligent and courage they were appointed as royal guards and Sardars. The imports of African slave are believed to be highest during rise of the European Companies such as the Estado da India (Portuguese), the VOC (Dutch), the East India Company (English) and the French East India Company (French). P. P. Shirodkar work, Research in the Indo-Portuguese History mentioned that African slaves were imported and exchanges with Portuguese prisoners. According to legend says that, Adil Shah had sent Perim Khan along with two Abyssinian sardars posing as merchant and unloaded boxes containing soldiers. They offered drink to koli soldier and later captured the fort. The Sultan of Bijapur ruled over most part of Deccan and Siddis hold Janjira as the vassal to the Sultan. The Sultan entrusted Siddis to protect the coast and facilitate transport for Muslim pilgrims going to Mecca. Loyalty, courage, skillful and daring maritime sailor raised them into one of the unbeatable authority in Western India. Manohar Malgonkar, wrote about the Sidi in his book that:

...in the early part of the seventeenth century, helped Malik Umber to set up a new dynasty in the Deccan, and as a reward, were appointed to guard the coast. By the middle of the century, the Siddis were firmly established as a powerful, if small, naval power on the west coast.

The Siddis of Janjira was the admiral of the Nizamshahi fleet in the days of Malik Ambar and owed a nominal allegiance to Bijapur from 1636 to 1670. Later on in order to prevent the threat from the Marathas under Shivaji, they have entered alliance or allegiance to the Mughal service. Afterwards they have supervised all ships sailing in the Arabian seas. They became rival of the Marathas, the Portuguese and the English. Conflict was ascertained for trade monopoly and sea route of the west coast of India which brought a century of struggle between the Siddis and Marathas. The European companies also took the opportunity by siding the Siddis or the Marathas. In 1672, under Siddi Yakut, they have entered Bombay harbour with the object of ravaging Shivaji's Kurlahs-the lands and villages of Panvel, Pen and Alibag. The Siddis naval superiority was known in the west coast of India. V.S. Sardesai stated that 'the Maratha navy was born because of Siddis'. Shivaji had tried to build its own navy with the help of

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the Portuguese but the latter failed to give help. The Portuguese feared that in future the Marathas would be powerful and its navy would be used against them. Shivaji had an ambition of powerful navy controlling the west coast of India. The objective of building navy was to increase state incomes and the developing overseas trade in Indian hands. A series of raids by foreign ships on the Konkan coast, their attendant atrocities, for a thousand year past, had burnt into the memory of the Marathas people the bitter truth that they were helpless if they could not defend their seaboard. There was frequent fight between the Marathas and the Siddis in west coast of India. Shivaji tried hard to capture the Janjira fort and he attempted twenty times during his reign. But all his effort was not fulfilled and after his death in 1680, his son Sambhaji continued the campaign against the Siddis. The Maratha had appointed Kanhoji Angria as admiral of its navy. Kanhoji Angria one of best naval leader in west coast of India. The Siddis also attacked many forts and territories of the Marathas. Kanhoji Angria once averted the surrender of Suvarnadurga fort to the Siddis. He became the terror not only to the Siddis but also the European companies such the Portuguese (Estado da India), the Dutch East India (VOC) the East India Company, and French East India Company. In 1699, Sargargad battle was fought with the combine force of the Siddis, and the Portuguese against Kanhoji Angria. But latter had defeated them and made the Siddis to sign a treaty which Siddis had given Kolaba and Sargargad, the east of Alibag to Angria. But the two-third of the revenue of Khanderi was ceded to Siddis. Shivaji with his admiral could not capture the Janjira Fort. One of the Marathas violent attacked against the Janjira fort which led its ruler Siddi Fateh Khan to surrender but internal revolt occurred and ousted him by Siddi Sambal, Siddi Kasim and Siddi Khairiyat. Under the three Siddis they fight back and they sought help from Khan Jahan, the Mughal Subedar of Deccan. The Subedar helped rejuvenate the strength of Siddis which led the Maratha to suffered heavy losses. Afterward, Siddi Kasim transferred his loyalty to Aurangzeb, the 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 Siddi have

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two kingdom Janjira and Jaffrabad. Siddi Hallol was protecting trade and commerce around the Surat port. He got shared from Jaffrabad pirates for sheltering and protecting them. But he siege Jaffrabad because the pirates failed to pay tributes for their activities. The Siddis annually got money from the Mughal Empire for protecting their subjects on the sea. There were frequent piratical activities occurred in coastal region of Gujarat when the European Companies were trying to monopoly the Indian Ocean trade. In 1761, Siddi Hillol signed an agreement with the East India Company that no boats or vessels either the English or Sidi Hallol passes/colours should be molested and be treated as friend (see C.U. Aitchison, 1909). Jaffrabad remained dependency of Janjira till the latter merged in the Indian Union in 1948.

In the eighteenth century, the East India Company and the Siddis had good relation. The cordial relation between the Company and the Siddis was meant to counter the Marathas Navy. The Company had supplied armament to the Siddis and they were helping each other against the Marathas onslaught in the west coast of India. To safeguard the sea routes of the west coast of India main objectives 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. They assist the Siddis by deploying their war ships- Victoria, Bombay and Princess. The Siddis were known for their courage and they were considered as "guarantors of safety on the Indian Ocean."

The East India Company had also long time ambition to seize the Janjira fort for strategic reasons and they even tried to capture the fort and shift their based from Bombay to Janjira but failed. 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 itself from the Marathas threat. There were instances of the Siddis harassment to the company's and their client's ships. In order to prevent this, the company in 1733 signed

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an agreement with the Siddis to provide mutual help and defend their enemies. The Marathas navy, Kanhoji Angria was a frequent threat to the European companies as well as to the Siddis. The European companies were contesting to control the west coast of India. In between, both the Siddis and the Angrias also contested and fought many naval battles to hold the supremacy of west coast of India but the death of Kanhoji Angria in 1742 subside the Marathas naval power. After his death quarrel started for succession among his son Manajee and Tulajee. The Marathas navy was split into two between Manajee and Tulajee. Their dissension for the succession led to decline of the Marathas naval power. 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. On the other hand, the company no longer supported them as there was less threat from the Peshwas and the Marathas. The company interest in the west coast of India become stronger when Siddis faced internal dissension amongst them. It weakens the Siddis naval power and the company go an opportunity to control west coast of India. The company recognized Siddi Ahmad Khan as Nawab of Janjira. The nawab was too young to succeed from his father Siddi Ibrahim when the later was died in 1879. He was only nineteenth years old and so the British took over the island in 1879. During Siddi Ahmed reigned, the Siddis were producing salt, cultivated poppy and also imported opium. The forest of Janjira State has found plenty of trees which were used for fire woods and it was sold in Bombay market. The forest of Rajpuri was lease out to the contractor for a fixed period to cut trees but in 1848 to 1870, it was prohibited because of mass cutting of trees. Salav, Mandla, Nandgaon, Murud, Rajpuri were some of the important trade centre of the state. They exported teak rafter, sand, rice, betalnuts, hens, eggs and salt. The state introduced ferry service between Kolaba and Ratnagiri district. In 1874, steamer service was started by Sherpherd and Company between Janjira and Shrivardhan. The company restricted production of salt by the Siddis from the Janjira State without their permission. Prohibition was enforced with the agreement

signed in 1884 with the British government. He was recognised as Knight Grant commander of Indian Empire in 1895. The British government did not take revenue from the Janjira State. In 1901, the Janjira State gross revenue was Rs.4,425.593 with population of 85, 414 but they did not pay any tribute to the British Government. The Siddis no longer claimed for naval superiority against the company. All the power was under the company and limited number of soldier were allowed to keep in the Janjira State. In 1905, Janjira State posse's 18 Imperial infantry, 14 artillery men, 11 serviceable and 168 unserviceable guns and 74 armed police.

After India got independence in 15th August, 1947, the nawab of Janjira State was allowed to merge with the Indian Union in 1948. In 1960s, the Siddis living in the Janjira fort shifted to the Murud village. The separate identity of Siddis of Janjira State faded away from the eyes of peoples.

Conclusion

The Siddis who came as slaves, migrants, artisans, mercenaries, merchants, eunuchs and sailors were settled in Diu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. The Siddis of Janjira by acts of skill and valour they were became tributaries of the Adilshahi, the Nizamshahi and the Mughals. By their courage, intelligent and skills their position rose from slaves to freemen, mercenaries to royal guard, soldier to nobles, and then became ruler. Some of the prominent Siddis are Siddi Sirul Khan, Siddi Yakut, Siddi Ambar, Siddi Yusuf, Siddi Fateh Khan, Siddi Sambal, Siddi Kasim, Sidi Khairiyat.

The Siddis made their separate identities through skill and valour. They hold high post such Siddi Hallol, fujdar of Jaffrabad; Jamal Al-Din who was royal courtier of Razia Sultanate; Jhujhar Khan, the noble of Gujarat who killed Chengiz Khan; Siddi Ismail, minister to the Babis of Radhanpur and Siddi eunuch nobles of Delhi and Lucknow. After the slave trade was abolished in 1840, it led to decline migration of Siddis population. They are no longer independent and powerful people after they came under

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the British Crown. The British policy of divide and rule segregate different Siddis groups and their condition became from bad to worst. Janjira State merged into the Indian Union in 1948. The soldier and guards lost their jobs, they no longer have to guard and protect the Janjira and they have also change their occupation. They became farmer, trader, businessman, doctor, engineer and so on. The Siddis migrated to cities and other states to earn their livelihood. They were intermingle or mixed with general population and they also married other communities. The last ruler of Siddis of Janjira State, Siddi Mohammad Khan also migrated to Indore, Madhya Pradesh. In 1904, Ahmed Khan had built a palace which later known as Ahmed Gunj Palace. It was inherited by his son Mohammed Khan. The Janjira fort was handed over to the Government of India. For a long time it was laying there unattended and not properly maintained by government of Maharashtra. The internal building of they were falling apart but the fort was undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of India and the latter started renovation work to preserve the distinct symbols of Siddis. Many tourist visited everyday to the Janjira fort and unfolded the legacy left behind by the Siddis in terms of courage, entrepreneurship and identity.

Footnotes

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MARCH - 2019

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**OKHAMANDAL: PIRATES HAVEN
DURING THE 19TH CENTURY GUJARAT****NONGMAITHEM KESHORJIT SINGH****TEMPORARY ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, UGC DRS-I [2016-21] DEPT. OF HISTORY,
FACULTY OF ARTS, THE MAHARAJA SAYAJIRAO UNIVERSITY OF BARODA****SUBJECT:**

Okhamandal¹ presently situated in the north-west corner of Kathiawar peninsula/Saurashtra is identified to be located in Jamnagar district of Gujarat which remained under control of the Gaekwads of Baroda State within its Amreli prant during the 19th century. It is noteworthy that directly governed territory of the Gaekwads of Baroda was spread into the mainland Gujarat and also along the coastal Kathiawar. According to Article 7 & 11 of the 'Supplement to the Definitive Treaty'² 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.³ 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 influences in the immediate locality and towards the mainland of Gujarat and Rajasthan. This sub-region of Kathiawar peninsula was inhabited by Kolis, Kharwas, Waghers, Sanganians and Tandels who are recorded in Gazetteers, Administrative Manuals and Correspondences as pirates⁴ besides their mention in Persian Chronicles.⁵ 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 they preyed vessel into their hideouts which were located in the Gulf of Kachchh.⁶ This paper explores geographical

¹ Erstwhile Baroda State territory, see *Gazetteer of the Baroda State: Administration*, Vol. II, Bombay, 1923, p.755.

² C.U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, Vol. VI, Calcutta, 1892, pp.137-138.

³ *Ibid*, pp.65-71 & also see *Gazetteer of the Baroda State*, Vol. I, Part 2, reprint New Delhi, 2014, pp.521-526.

⁴ James M. Campbell, *Hindu Castes and Tribes of Gujarat, Haryana*, 1988, pp.519-228 & *Political Department Diary*, No.356 (10) of 1810, p.2504.

⁵ M.F. Lokhandwala (trans.), *Mirat-I-Ahmadi: A Persian History of Gujarat*, Baroda, 1965, p.391.

⁶ *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency: Cutch, Palanpur and Mahikanta*, Vol. V, Bombay, 1880, p.266 & Ghulam A. Nadri, "Exploring the Gulf of Kachchh: Regional Economy and Trade in

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features of Okhamandal, structure of social groups involved in piracy & piratical aggressions in the Arabian Sea or elsewhere within Western Indian Ocean; Okhamandal as safe haven for these social groups who were excellent in navigating skills in the waters of Arabian Sea, Gulf of Kachchh and Gulf Cambay/Khambhat.

I

A survey of the Indian Ocean studies⁷ and historical literature⁸ records the instances of piracy and piratical aggression both in Eastern Indian Ocean (frequent) and Western Indian Ocean (moderate). It is an established fact that piracy on high seas occurred for political, economic and cultural reasons. One came across to references to naval warfare and in history monographs such an act is classified as maritime violence. Piracy and piratical aggression is an act where indiscriminate seizure of seaborne or coastal property takes place under the threat or use of force. It involves holding of passenger and crew for ransom. The English word 'pirate' is derived from Greek word 'peirates'. The ancient term seems to have represented a broad range of maritime violence in the multi-coastal environment of Greece and the wider Mediterranean waters.⁹ Scholars engaged in offering definition & classifying the activity of sea- pirates have considered pirates as 'anti-imperial' on one hand and also have branded their act as 'legitimate struggle' for a share in trade and revenue on the other. Their exploits and courage stories have been narrated in varied manner. We often come across term 'pirate' besides English in Dutch, French, Chinese, Sanskrit, Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi and other 'languages and dialects' and 'state documents'. For example in Gujarati they are referred as "chanchiya"¹⁰; samudriyacauda" in Sanskrit; "pirata" in Portuguese; "pirate" in French; "piraat" in Dutch and "samudridaku" in Hindi. Defining piracy is indeed a difficult task because an individual was having several roles to play. For instance, a trader is reported to be a pirate if opportunity arose; individual in several

the Eighteenth Century" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (2008), pp.460-486.

⁷ See K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, UK, 1985; M. N. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, London, 2003; Ashin Das Gupta, *India and the Indian Ocean World: Trade and Politics*, New Delhi, 2004; Rila Mukherjee (ed.) *Oceans Connect: Reflections on Water Worlds Across Time and Space*, Delhi, 2013 & Abdul Sheriff & Engsang Ho (ed.), *The Indian Ocean: Oceanic Connections and the Creation of New Societies*, London, 2014.

⁸ See Vincent William, *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, Part 1, London, 1800; John Biddulph, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, London, 1907; Philip Gose, *History of Piracy*, Michigan, 1934; Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, 2nd edition, Vol.1, New Delhi, 1995; David Pickering, *Pirates*, London, 2006 and Nigel Cawthorne, *Pirates: An Illustrated History*, London, 2006.

⁹ Patricia Risso, "Cross-Cultural Perceptions of Piracy: Maritime Violence in the Western Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf Region during a Long Eighteenth Century", *Journal of World History*, Vol. 12, Fall, 2001, pp.293-319, p.296; Laurel Benton, "Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Oct., 2005), pp. 700-724.

¹⁰ *Political Department Diary*, No.356 (10) of 1810, p.2504.

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References to individuals who commissioned themselves for piratical aggression took serves with Portuguese group or Zamorin of Calicut; or Kanhoji Angria in Maharashtra. They defied the European law on high seas. A serious reading of both primary and secondary sources suggest that piracy remained active on seas and their acts was different from 'privateering' because privateer is employed by state to protect its ship from enemy or pirates. A privateer can indulge in the act of piracy. Main reason for privateering depended upon political situation and economic conditions.

It is an established fact that harsh climate and arid zone of this sub-region did not help for cultivation of high food and cash crops. Rather sub-region evinced rise of minor and semi-major ports. Population of the sub-region engaged in seafaring activity where they were crew members or captained the vessel. With establishment of the British rule new ports started developing as there was increase in volume of trade in the 19th century. Piracy is possible in double cape, narrow strait and choke points. Such geographical locations could be identified along Horn of Africa and Arabian Sea (Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, Hadhramaut coast, Gulf of Oman, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Kachchh, Gulf of Khambhat), Konkan coast and Malabar coast within the Western Indian Ocean and its Islands reach. Islands like Madagascar, Seychelles, Comoros, Reunion. Pemba, Prison Islands proved to be the safe heavens as for long period these remained lesser/unknown destinations to state symbols and were used as hideouts by pirates, and privateers. Cultural factors also encouraged sea raids. The acts of piracy in some communities have been acceptable and were carried as professional legacy. It has been noted that rival-merchants, state-chiefs and others supported pirates in their acts for their own reasons. Piracy was done on high seas by seizure of vessels of merchants, travellers and pilgrims; the targets were surrounded and looted forcibly or were forced to sail at difficult destinations. The published works on piracy addresses cross-cultural context in a limited way whereas political and economic dimension has seen emergence of rich literature under study. To understand pirate and piratical aggressions, we need deep study of economic phenomenon that led to piracy in the Indian Ocean in the light of the oceanic trade, emerging maritime polities, and maritime laws during phases of colonialism and imperialism policies.

Historical literature on piracy has been broadening by tireless work of scholars from different disciplines. Some of the works that needs special mention include Charles Ellms, *The Pirates Own Book: Authentic Narratives of Lives, Exploits and Executions of the Most Celebrated Sea Robbers* (1924) and Pamela Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India: 1784-1806* (1970) discusses about the English East India Company's commercial interest and territorial expansion in western India. Gujarat remained one of the company important places to get monopoly on cotton and textiles. Their interest clashed with the local chieftains of Kathiawar who were not ready to be subjugated that easily and local politics reflected in potential way. Depredation or conflict was in the form of piracy in the Kathiawar peninsula that hampered the trade and commerce of the East India Company. J. L. Anderson, "Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation," *JWH*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1995) view piracy from economic perspectives and it was committed by small groups of people due to poverty. When this small group became successful they allied with

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state and shared their booty. Success of their piratical aggressions legitimized their authority but on defeat caused the disintegration of their groups. Patricia Risso, Merchants, and Faith: Muslim Commerce and Culture in the Indian Ocean (1995) and "Cross-Cultural Perceptions of Piracy: Maritime Violence in the Western Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf Region during a long Eighteenth Century" in JWH, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2001), pp. 293-319; Ghulam A. Nadri, Eighteenth-Century Gujarat: The Dynamic of Its Political Economy, 1750-1800 (2009); Lakshmi Subramanian, Medieval Seafarers of India (2005) "The Politics of Restitution: Shipwrecks, Insurance and Piracy in the Western Indian Ocean" ; "Piracy and Legality in the Northward: Colonial articulations of law, custom and policy in the late eighteenth-and early nineteenth-century Bombay Presidency", JCH, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2014 and "Piracy and the Northward Coast Problems of Definition", in Sara Keller and Michael Pearson (ed.), Port Towns of Gujarat (2015) also help in understanding of the northward piracy through the lens of sovereignty, maritime regulations, restitutions and politics of the English East India Company in trade and commerce.

Further a survey of published literature on Piracy and Piratal Aggressions for sixteenth and seventeenth century and Indian pirates by R. N. Salatore suggests that this activity was sometimes periodical and sometime reflected frequently. It was due to political, economic and social conditions of the time. In the late eighteenth century with the weakening of the Mughal rule, predation came under Kanhoji Angria. Piracy was common from sixteenth to nineteenth century in the arms of Indian Ocean. Portuguese were guided by Christian law and chartered out Indian Ocean as nobody was claiming over of it. Those who defied their law were claimed to be "the pirates". The European influence further increased this and led to the militarization of the coastal region. The English East India Company was the only one of the several powers trying to dominate the Arabian Sea between the seventeenth and eighteenth century. In this period piracy frequently occurred in the region and exposed the limits of naval technology possessed by the marine. The Malabar, Cambay and the Persian Gulf were natural bases preying on unarmed and armed merchants. My visits to National Archives, Delhi and Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai made me understand nineteenth century piracy through correspondences; dispatch between officials of the East India Company in the Kathiawad region, the Gulf of Kachchh and the Gulf of Cambay. C.U. Aitchinson's, Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries, Vol. VI, (India, 1909): and J.H. Gense and D.R. Banaji (ed.) The Gaikwads of Baroda: Anandrao Gaekwad 1805-1808 (English Documents) Vol.VII, (Bombay) are two significant documents that reveals various treaties signed with the local chiefs of Gujarat to give up piracy and to help the British government to curb piracy. From the available documents in my possessions and understanding from historical literature on Western Indian Ocean and piracy suggests that the East India Company's interest in trade and commerce were really threat to the regional economies or offered political and economic instability in the region. This would be taken as one reason for act of piratal aggressions in the Arabian Sea.

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II

Okhamandal is situated on the uppermost tip of the western side of Kathiawar peninsula. It consists of important coastal towns like Bet/Beyt¹¹, Dwarka¹², Aramda/Aramara¹³, Positra¹⁴ and Dhing/Dhenki¹⁵. The word Okha signifies anything bad or difficult, and mandal is a term applied to any distinct district or division of a country.¹⁶ It is located between 22° and 22°28' N. Latitude and 68°58' and 69°12' E Longitude and covered an area of 402.336 Sq. Kms.¹⁷ According to descriptions in Gazetteer (1884) & Administrative Manuals of the sub-region it had isolated hills and hillocks; cactus and scrub jungles, brushwood, sand-dunes, bays and creeks making it distinct from its surroundings expanding towards the Gujarat mainland. A peep into the water bodies indicates of a small stream or nala called Gomti river which then traversed from Bhovda village (east) to Bardia village (southward direction) which generally over flowed during raining season. It also had Bhimgaja lake near the village of Nagnath and Rangasar which covered areas 8.04 Sq. Kms. and served the purpose for cattle and for agriculture in limited ways. Further, Mulvasar, Mulvel and Samlasar recorded as three largest reservoirs supplied water in all seasons except drought period. The soil in northern half of the sub-region is recorded as light red with black mould and sandy characteristic. In fact this was unproductive along the coastline. The southern portion had red light, rocky and barren soil. The sub-region produced bajra, tal and jowar during the monsoon season along with pulses like urad and moong in limited quantity. Settlers in this sub-region domesticated buffaloes, cows, camels, sheeps, goats, ponies and donkeys. Buffaloes were reared by Rabaris who were land people. From climatic point of view it was comparatively cooler in winter and had unbearable heat in summer despite it being located on shore. It was inhabited by Waghers, Badhels, Sindhis, Kharwas, Mers, Brahmans, Banias, Lohanas, Mehmans, Rabaris and Charan. The aboriginal inhabitants of Okhamandal were divided into three-Kaba, Moda and Kala. The Kabas was the inhabitant of Saurashtra (Kathiawar) and are now extinct similarly Modas' also disappeared.

Wagher trace their descendent from Kalas.¹⁸ The word Wagher/Vagher is derived from the Sanskrit va, a prefix meaning without, and geha, smell. The description was primarily applied to the tiger, because it had been deprived by a merciful providence of the sense of smell, in order to counteract a taste that had been developed by the animal, for scenting out and devouring human inhabitants of cities and towns. In process of time, the term was applied to the remnants of the Kala tribe in Okhamandal, who were equally cruel and ferocious which the tiger, used to prey upon defenceless mortals, as relentlessly as their

¹¹ *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency: Kathiawar*, Vol. V III, Bombay, 1884, p.582.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.581.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Selections From the Records of the Bombay Government* No. XXXIX, New Series, Bombay, 1856, p.18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p.56.

¹⁷ *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency: Kathiawar*, Vol. VIII, Bombay, 1884, p.580.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.587.

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predaceous prototype.¹⁹ They had always been a turbulent class, and in early times had been the most daring pirates of the Arabian sea. According to Kincaid Waghers were partly Hindu and partly Mussalman, and difference of religion forms curiously enough no bar to intermarriage.²⁰

The sub-region has four important towns: Dwarka as largest and important pilgrimage in India and Barvala, Aramda, Bet and Positra comparatively smaller in size but part of overseas & land trade route networks.

The region had thirty-four villages and Dinghi, Vasai, Goriali, Gadechi and Dhransavel were the important villages. Okhamandal has external trade with Karachi, Surat, Bombay and Zanzibar. It exported bajra, tal, ghee, grass, lime and small quantities of salt and imported rice, gram wheat, jowar, cotton seed, sugar, spices, potatoes and piece-goods. The region had only two ports- Rupan (two Kms. to the north of Dwarka) and Bet/ Beyt. Following are the important towns that give shelter or sponsor piracy and piratal aggressions.

Dhinge/Dhenki: Dhinge was the dependent of Dwarka. Wagher Manak family ruled Dhinge. The place had difficult terrain and was inaccessible from jungle. The instances of act of piracy from this region were not found but it occurred due to the act of neighbouring place. People offered service to the pirates.²¹ They obtained predated property from the pirates and it was later shared among them for their services. The people in Dhinge were mainly Waghers who had migrated from Kuchchh in 13th or 14th century. During monsoon session they use to leave their vessels on the coast and took agriculture. They grew bajra and jowar in their field.

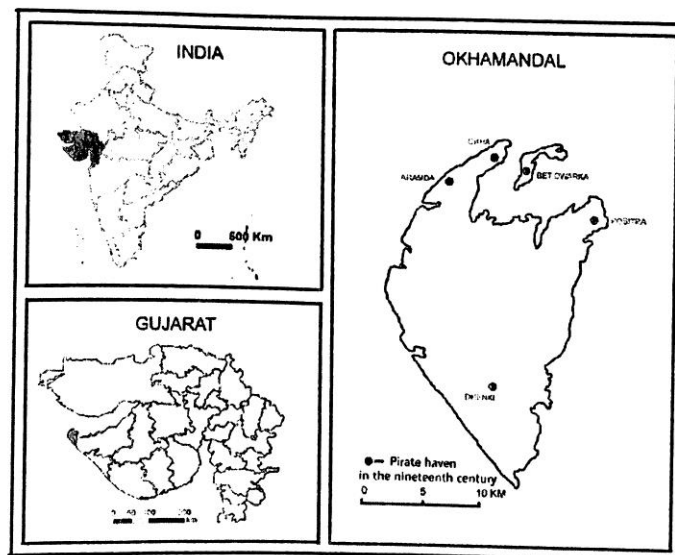


Figure 1: Map of Okhamandal (prepared by Dr. Ch. Chandabadani Devi, Dept. of Geography, The M. S. University of Baroda)
Aramda/Aramara:

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰C. A. Kincaid, *The Outlaws of Kathiawar and Other Studies*, 1905, pp.10-11.

²¹*Ibid.*, p.45.

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Aramda is situated on the south of Okha. A creek opens to the sea on north-eastern side of the village. Proximity to sea high tide submerged the vast area on routine basis. During the reign of Muhammad Begada [1458-1511] his officer Azam Khan defeated Siv Rana and seized the territory but the Samla Manak of Dwarka and his brother Malla Manak resolved to expel Muslim invader from the region. They tried to re-install Sanganji who fled to Sind and constantly harassed the invader and invader could not continue there any longer. Sanganji regained his throne and gifted land and rewards to the two brothers who helped him to regain his throne. Saganji was succeeded by his son Sagramjee.²²

Port Okha²³:

The port Okha finds special mention in the 19th century as it played a significant role between 1800 and 1950 in restoring the economy of Gaekwads of Baroda. Port Okha is situated on the North-West of Kathiawar at a few kilometres distance from Dwarka on the Bombay and Karachi route and it was part of the Baroda Government. The importance of Okha got further recognized with the coming of railways in the second half of the nineteenth century as Gujarat being the northern part of Bombay Presidency was rich in terms of commercial crop and trade legacy. Both British and princely rulers were interested in exploiting it in all possible ways due to its location and easy anchoring. More over the landscape was marvellous.

Table I: List of Ports and Sub-Ports in the Kathiawar Possessions of His Highness of the Gaekwad Government.

Sr. No.	Name of the Ports	Sub - Ports
1	Dwarka	1. Rupen 2. Ratneshwar 3. Gomti
2	Adatra	--
3	Aramda	--
4	Rajpur	1. Medarda 2. Samlasar
5	Beyt	1. Balapur
6	Positra	--
7	Sagankotda	1. Kagiataad
8	Khatumba	--
9	Gorirya	--
10	Kuranga	--
11	Mul Dwarka	--
12	Velan	1. Kotda 2. Fatalbara

²²*Ibid.*, p.31

²³ (Late) Hitendra J. Maurya my Principle Investigator in UGC Major Project entitled as "Potentialities and the Process of Deforestation and Conservation, c.1750-c.1960: A Case Study of Princely States of South Gujarat (2010-12) published article on "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, p.309.

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Sources: Huzur Political Order, Revenue Department, Port and Harbour, Daftar No. 379; File No. 254/2; pp. 73 -80 & c.f. in A. B. Trivedi, Kathiawar Economics, Bombay Vaibhav, Press, Bombay, 1943, p.45 in Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. VIII, Bombay, p.236.

Marine Surveys in the nineteenth century disclosed the potentialities of the harbour and the idea got materialized with the building of the port during the early years of the reign of Sayajirao III in 1882 when Lt. Prascoe of Royal Indian Marine was deputed for survey on the site of Okha.²⁴ The port was informally opened on 25th October 1925 and formally declared opened to traffic by His Highness Maharaja Sayajirao III on 14th February 1926.²⁵ Between 1882 and 1926 port Okha developed and offered following facilities: pilot service remained free; wharf-age dues and other charges levied were extremely low; labour was abundantly available with quality of being cheap and hard working; loading and unloading charges were nominal and so on with all other advantages which could be expected from a promising port. The port also maintained direct traffic with United Kingdom, Banking facilities, post and telegraph services were available; and steamers of Clan Lines and Hansa Line, anchor of City and Hall, passenger and cargo services from British India Steam Navigation Company and Bombay Navigation Company served all purposes. Thus, the archival information thus suggests that by the beginning of twentieth century region became importance harbour and port Okha was realized and diversion of trade started taking place since the nineteenth century. This situation has been evidenced with Rao's Kachchh- Mandvi as well during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Mandvi in due course acquired international importance. Similarly in the second quarter of the twentieth century Okha gained significance.

Dwarka: Dwarka is located on east of the Arabian Sea. Shri Dwarkashish Temple was very popular for pilgrimage in Dwarka which was ruled by Bhimji. Other contender who wants to rule was Manakji. He along with the helped of Wagher defeated Bhimji and seized the villages and towns. He claimed as title of raja of the place. In 1820, their frequent predation led to the English East India Company under the command of Colonel Stanhope seized Dwarka and the clashed led to the lost of Mulu Manek and his younger brother Versi Manek. The Company lost the life of Captain Marriot and few soldier also suffered casualties.

Bet/Beyt: Bet is an island located on the Gulf of Kuchchh about 3.21 Sq. kms. to the north of the mainland of Okhamandal. It is usually called Beyt-Sankhodhar because of conch shell which is 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 Bet to take bath in the Gompti river. Suresh Chandra Ghosh observed that:

²⁴ The place of Okha was surveyed for fixing the portion of the pier and re- surveyed in 1911 for the same purpose in 1922-23, the whole harbour was surveyed again by the Royal Indian Marine. *OKHA PORT MANUAL*: corrected up to July 1931, Baroda, 1931, p. 1. (cf. Hitendra 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, p.314).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

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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.²⁶

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. Skilled maullim was required to sail in this harbour. Pirate had that skill so they dragged big vessels and carried the goods to this harbour. It was not possible to chase these pirates. 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.²⁷

The frequent piracy therefore compelled the English East India Company (EEIC) to occupy this island in 1817 for smooth conduct of trade in the Gulf of Kachchh. It is to be noted that frequent visit of the devotees to this island imported food from the neighbouring regions.

Positra: Positra is famous for pearl fishing in the Okhamandal region. It is not very far from Bet island. Marine archaeologist found hero tones in their onshore excavation which had a boat motif. According to Wilberforce, Positra is: "the headquarter of the pirates of Okhamandal. The depredations committed on the seas by these robbers had always been serious menace to trade, and in spite of many attempts to put down the piracy, it continued unabated".²⁸

In 1809, the EEIC made arrangement at Bet and Dwarka to wipe out piracy and similar steps were taken for Positra as well. In the same year, Captain James MacMurdo of the EEIC visited to Positra to investigate about piracy in Positra and he found pirate boats in the Bay.²⁹

III

After decline of Mughal empire and the rise of regional power like the Marathas who constantly raided Kathiawar. Kathiawar was then divided into 292 States³⁰ some of which were very small states and these small chiefs were

²⁶ Ibid., p.43.

²⁷ James Hornell, *Report to the Government of Baroda on the Marine Zoology of Okhamandal in Kattiawar*, Part 1, 1909, p.28.

²⁸ H. Wilberforce Bell, *The History of Kathiawad: From the Earliest Times*, New Delhi, 1980, pp.142-143.

²⁹ Suresh Chandra Ghosh, *The Peninsula of Gujarat in the Early Nineteenth Century*, New Delhi, p.31

³⁰ S.B. Rajyagor, *History of Gujarat*, New Delhi, 1982, p.357.

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called Talukdars. Marathas did not interfere in the internal affairs of these states. In 18th century, Marathas carried out expedition to collect annual tribute from these states. In this way they protected the small states from neighbouring threats. If they failed to pay the tribute the mulukgiri³¹ forces destroyed the standing crops of that village and harassed people. The mulukgiri was extracted from these villages both by the Gaekwad and the Marathas which further deteriorated the political and socio-economic condition of the local potentates. The local potentates approached English East India Company (EEIC) to redress these grievances. Further, it strengthened the Company to interfere in the local politics. The English East India had commercial interest to conquer Kathiawar region because they wanted to acquire fertile region of Kathiawar to grow cotton. The export of cotton from this region could sell in Chinese market in order to get tea import for England. But the lawlessness in the Kathiawar region had injured their commercial interest, and frequent piracies in addition with opportunity in Gaekwad government led to send Col. Walker to Baroda (1802).³²

In 1800 Okhamandal pirates seized goods belonging to merchant of Surat which led to loss of one-and a half to two lakhs of rupees. Officers of Indian Navy under the English East India Company reported that Bet was the pirates stronghold, and it was a fortified island possesses about forty cruiser. The company tried to capture the Bet because it owned famous temple which will generate revenues by attracting many pilgrimage. The revenue would be capable of maintaining its establishment. Political and administrative turmoil in the Gaekwad govt. led the Bombay Government to send Col. Alexander Walker, Political Agent of Baroda in 1802. According to Pamela Nightingale, Col. Alexander Walker set himself the task of reforming the administration of Gaekwad and fixing of tribute collected by Gaekwad and Marathas. The annual collection of mulukgiri by both Gaekwad and Marathas caused devastation in many areas of Kathiawar.³³ He fixed the annual collection of tribute and made settlement which later known as Walker settlement.³⁴ Frequently collection of tributes by the Gaekwad and the Marathas led to several chiefs in the Kathiawar regions sought the British assistance against their powerful oppressors.³⁵ In 1804 the pirates captured a Bombay vessel sailing up to the coast of Okhamandal. The East India Company sent vessel to punish the pirates but failed. They sought compensation for the vessel and the Wagher did not bother for the complaint. Such predation was reported earlier but the after the English East India Company influence in this pocket crippled the old business of this community.

Report of Lt. J. MacMurdo reveals that people adapted to piracy and little creek on its coast allowed safe places for small craft to hide behind rocks from

³¹ F.A.H., Elliott, *The Rulers of Baroda*, Baroda, 1934, p.84.

³² Mani Kamerkar, *British Paramountcy: British-Baroda Relations 1818-1848*, Bombay, 1980, p.8.

³³ Pamela Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India, 1874-1806*, London, 1970, p.210.

³⁴ H. Wilberforce, Bell, *The History of Kathiawad: From the Earliest Times*, William Heinemann, London, 1916, p.178.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

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cruizers.³⁶ Neither large vessel could enter the creeks nor do they chase them. Poor quality of soil which offer only two crops-Bajri and Til. The farmers and cultivators depended on monsoon for the agriculture. The geographical character of Okhamandal indicates that there was little possibility of cultivate in subsistence level. The other option was that they could earn money from predation.

The EEIC under its Political Agent and their native representatives made agreement and treaties had been signed between the local potentates of Kathiawar peninsula. In 1802, the East India Company deputed Captain Seton to sign an agreement and treaty with Hansraj under Rao Rayadhan, Raja of Kachchh.³⁷ The treaties bound Rao Rayadhan to assist EEIC in suppressing piracy from Okha. They camped their troops at Kachchi Garh. Both the government had agreed to share revenue collected from piratical regions of Bet, Dwarka and Okha.

The EEIC's correspondence reveals interesting information related to tindel/tandel. In 1810, EEIC correspondence reported that a tandel became pirate when he had disagreement with his vessel owner. About 15 or 16 years ago Nackwa Neya was the Tandel of a vessel which traded between Mandavee (Kachchh) and Bombay. He had disagreement or quarrel with his owner. Later, he left and joined the Pirates at Bet. He remained pirates for 10 years but his vessel was destroyed by Captain Vashom.³⁸ He gave up piracy and started a new life by commanding a trading vessel from Mandavee (Kachchh) to Bombay.³⁹

Piracy was not an easy task. Pirates had risky lifestyle and they could be caught or killed by the East India Company. Earlier, they were provided shelter and guarantee for their safety by local potentates because the latter sponsor or took their share from piratical aggressions. But when local potentates could not defend themselves and they agreed term imposed by the English East India Company. It led to pirates to changes their shelter and they carried their family to safe place. On 28th April, 1810 Samuel A. Greenwood, Assistant to Resident of Baroda wrote a letter to Lieut. J. R. Carnac, Acting Resident of Baroda who observed that Sunderji Shivji, agent of the English East India Company's at Bet, Dwarka and Positra informed that pirates of these sub-regions had left because they were neither getting encourage nor protection.⁴⁰ Possible reason to become pirates were- (i) they were unable to practise agriculture because of the harsh climatic condition; the Waghers turned into pirate and charge tax (vol) on pilgrims visiting Krishna's shrine at Dwarka.⁴¹ (ii) ncrease of trade (iii) easy way to earn money (iv) local potentates sponsoring piracy; guaranteed safety and

³⁶ Lt. J. MacMurdo, 'Historical Sketch of the District of Okhamandal in Kathiawar,' submitted to Government on 23rd April 1812, in *Selections of Records from the Bombay Government*, No. XXXIX, New Series, Bombay, 1894, pp.296.

³⁷ Aitchison, C.U., *Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads relating to the States within the Bombay Presidency-Kutch, Cambay, Surat Agency*, Vol. VII, Calcutta, 1909, p.2.

³⁸ *Political Department Diary* No. 356 (10) of 1810, p.2481

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.2481.

⁴⁰ *Political Department Diary* No.357 (3) 1810, p. 2629.

⁴¹ Ian Copland, *The British Raj and the Indian Prince: Paramountcy in Western India, 1857-1930*, New Delhi, 1982, p.100.

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protection of their family members (v) culturally approved. Pirates act in a strange manner before they go out for piratical aggressions. They intoxicated themselves by drinking bhang, which was made of seed like hemp-seed, that had intoxicating quality and it turn them furious. They were long hair, and when they let it loose, they'll give no quarter.⁴² Suresh Chandra Ghosh commented on Okha piracies that:

The Piracies of Oka are of a very early date, and the disposition of the people is at this moment addicted to that mode of life, as much as it was several centuries ago. The natural strength of their country, the peculiar adoption of their coasts, their favourable situation in a Gulf which carries on a Brisk trade, may be considered as no small incentive to this pursuit; and above all may be accounted [for by] their faith in the God of Dwarka. His Priests and attendants are great instigators of Piracy. They derive a certain share of all plundered property in return for the protection of [them by] Ranchorjee [while they are] at sea.⁴³

In 1810 the Okha Chiefs in spite of the agreement with the EEIC started the same business but this time Captain Carnac, the successor of Col. Alexander Walker sent Gaekwad cavalry to suppress the piracy. The pirates have memorial stone known as Pallias. The memorial stone signifies the bravery of the pirate who died in the battle.

The EEIC sent Alexander Political, Agents of Baroda in Aramara and Bate to get agreement and treaties. In 1807, an agreement was executed by Suggaramjee of Aramra and Kooer Babjee by the Agency of Adekaree Suddaram, renouncing in future piracy and all right to wreck.⁴⁴ The article 1 (one) of the agreement stated that they will not permit neither any acts of piracy living under their authority nor protection under them. Further, the company suggested that they may appoint Shivji Sundarji or his agents to vigil this region. The company would check the region whether they were obliged the agreement or not. Similar treaty was signed with Positra. Though the agreements and treaties were signed but it local potentates no longer followed them. The East India Company's navy tried to suppress the piratical chief by using force. In 1808, lieutenant Macdonald was employed blockading the port of Bet and Positra, with the schooner 'Lively' and two armed Pattamars, and succeeded in forcing the piratical chiefs to give in their submission.⁴⁵

The English East India Company sent expedition to Bet, Dwarka and Positra. Futeh Mahommed Jamadar of Kachchh was order to vacate Positra because he had protected pirates and share the predation. In 1809, J. R. Carnac, Acting Resident of Baroda sent a letter to Francis Warden, Chief Secretary to Bombay

⁴² James Hornell, "Hero Memorial-stones of Kathiawar", *Antiquity*, Vol. XVI, No.64, December, 1942, pp. 292-293.

⁴³ Suresh Chandra Ghosh, *The Peninsula of Gujarat in the Early Nineteenth Century*, New Delhi, p.47.

⁴⁴ C.U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries: Relating to the Bombay Presidency-The Peshwa, Baroda, Kathiawar, Palanpur Agency, Mahi Kanta and RewaKanta*, Vol. VI, Part 1, Calcutta, 1892, p.172.

⁴⁵ C.R., Low, *The History of Indian Navy 1613-1863*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1985, p.274.

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Government that Sunderjee informed him about pirates have captured three vessels laden with sugar and carried to the Positra port.⁴⁶

In 6th May, 1810 a letter was sent from J. R. Carnac, Acting Political Agent, Baroda to Francis Warden, Chief Secretary to Bombay Government regarding Shivji Sundarji to look into the piratical port of Okha, Dwarka and Positra. Shivji was authorised over these regions to monitor piratical aggression. The letter informed that Sunderjee had to instruct his agents whether the local potentate's follow the treaties and agreement signed with the company to give up piracy and sheltering pirates from their soil.⁴⁷ Some of the piratical states abandon their predation and the pirates left the country. Rarely, there was any piratical aggression in broad daylight. In 26th November, 1812 correspondence from C.W. Elwood, Agent to Government Porbander to Francis Warden Esquire, Chief Secretary to Bombay Government informed about the pirate Jewah Nackwa in charge of vessel Ruparell landed on the Okhamandal shore⁴⁸ but they were ran away after leaving prize goods. Because they feared that they might get caught the company's armed boat at the mouth of the Gulf of Kachchh. In 1813, Captain Grant of Indian Navy⁴⁹ was appointed to command a naval fleet formed by the Gaekwad of Baroda. It was from to suppress piracy in Kathiawar and Kachchh coast. The British government captured Bet and Dwarka in 1818-19 and it were given to the Gaekwad on a undertaking to pay the balance of compensation due by the Wagher Chiefs for piracy and the expenses of management since the conquest of Okhamandal.⁵⁰ Sayajirao II (1819-47), authority was challenge by groups of chiefs in Okhamandal between 1819 and 1820. Captain Barnewell of EEIC warned the chieftains that if they make any trouble they would face severe punishment. He assured that their right would be protected from Sayajirao II. Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay was trying to take over collection of tribute from entire Kathiawar. In 1831, the British Government eatablished criminal court in Kathiawar to solve crime occurred in small states that were not under its control. Okhamandal was rampant by piracy and a case of instigation of piracy by Narayan Rao Venkatesh⁵¹, manager of Okhamandal was found out by the EEIC. In 23rd April, 1834⁵², letter from Malcolm, Superintendant of Indian Navy to E. Clare, President & Governor in Council informed about a report sent by Captain G. B. Brucks, Senior Indian Naval officer at Surat that Liett. William who commanded schooner named 'Royal Tiger' found that Sundarji Bhow, Governor of Bet and Narayan Rao Venkatesh, manager of Okhamandal had provided protection of pirates. James William⁵³, Political Commissioner of

⁴⁶ *Political Dept Diary* No y 323, 3-15 March 1809, p.1908.

⁴⁷ *Political Department Diary* No. 357 (3), 1810, pp.2625-2629.

⁴⁸ *Political Department Diary* No 390 of 1812, pp.M176-177.

⁴⁹ Bell, H. Wilberforce, *The History of Kathiawad: From the Earliest Times*, New Delhi, 1980, p.202.

⁵⁰ S.B. Rajyagor, *History of Gujarat*, New Delhi, 1982, p.376.

⁵¹ *Foreign Department, Political Consultancy*, Nos.22 to 31, 29th March, 1837, p.27-38.

⁵² Extract from the Proceedings of Government in the Marine Department dated 23rd April, 1834, *Foreign Department, Political Consultancy*, Nos.22 to 31, 29th March, 1837, p.205.

⁵³ Extract from the Proceedings of Government in the Marine Department dated 3rd September, 1834, *Foreign Department, Political Consultancy*, Nos.22 to 31, 29th March, 1837, pp.235-237.

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Gujarat wrote a letter to L. R. Reid, Secretary to Government, Bombay on 4th August, 1834 that Sayajirao II had informed him about Wagher pirates of Samlasar committing piracy. Sayajirao II found out that they had committed piracy and he would punish the pirates. Goods they had captured would be sent to victim in Rajkot. James William had opined that the British government was interested in suppression of piracy and tracing the place where the pirates were sheltered. Pirates were need to be trail in High Court of Criminal Justice in Kathiawar before they were punished and James William believed that this process would not be object by Sayajirao II.

Deposition of Kayet Poursourab, native of Lucknow and Havildar of Salmlasir in Okha had informed us that Bechra Pousand, Jemadar of Okha and Beejs, Dewo and Sews Waghers of Jambusar village in Okha were instigated by Narayan Rao Venkatesh to commit piracy. Bodha Singh was tindal of the piratical vessel that plundered a boat near Jakhau which contained 5500 double copper pieces, 1 gun and 4 swords. 1400 copper pieces was paid as share to the crews and 1/4th was given to the government and 200 to Bechra Poursand.

Sl. No.	Items	Number of Goods
	Mats of dates	65
	Moorahs (Sinde) of rice	9
	Chests of Tea	2
	Bags of Sugar	13
	Tubs of Sugar Candy	9
	Bags of Supari	4

Source: Deposition of Kayet Pursourobo, native of Lucknow & Havildar of Samlasir, Extract from the Proceedings of Government in the Marine Department dated 7th May, 1834, Foreign Department, Political Consultancy pp.219-220.

Willoughby request Sayajirao II to send Narayan Rao Venkatesh for examination of his involvement in piracy but Narayan Rao Venkatesh refused the claimed and Sayajirao II did not send him for examination because Narayan Rao Venkatesh did not take part or helped the Wagher pirates.⁵⁴ The British government wanted Narrain Rao Venkatesh¹ to be trail in before the court of Kathiawar and full compensation would be demanded from Gaekwad government to compensate the victim. The British government threatened Sayajirao II that they would cancel the Supplementary treaty of 1817 (take the possession of Okhamandal & Bet). Wagher pirates betrayed Narrain Rao Venkatesh by promising to give information of pirates from Samlasir. To maintain cordial relation with the British government, Sayajirao II removed Narayan Rao Venkatesh from office and imprisoned him. The Wagher pirates were captured and Sayajirao II asked the British government to send two guards to help new manager of Okhamandal for trail in Baroda. But matter was not resolved between the Sayajirao and the British government because the British set free the Wagher pirates to check Sayajirao II's intention. It angered maharaja and he claimed that it was his right to arrest and punished the Wagher pirates if necessary. Earlier, British Government's agent asked him to send the Wagher

⁵⁴ Mani Kamerkar, *British Paramountcy: British-Baroda Relations 1818-1848*, Bombay, 1980, p.148.

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pirate to Rajkot for trail but not they let them free and it would be in awkward position for maharaja to free known offender. Sayajirao II was died in 28th December 1847 and he was succeeded by his son Ganpat Rao Gaekwad. Ganpat Rao Gaekwad (1847-56) reigned was not short-lived and he left no heir inherent. His brother Khanderao Gaekwad (1856-1870) succeeded him. Khanderao was physical well built and good memory. He built Makarpura palace, spending his almost time in hunting animals, fond of luxuries, jewels and buildings.

Revolt of 1857 had influenced the Wagher of Okhamandal to rise against the Gaekwad of Baroda State. The Waghers of Okha took out open rebellion against Khanderao Gaekwad and captured Dwarka and Bet in 1858 but the rebellion was suppressed by Colonel Honour of the East India Company in 1859 and the British government conquered and handed over all the administration of Okhamandal to the Gaekwad. The Wagher remained turbulent and captured Waghers in the Wagher rebellion were confined in jailed but they escaped easily. In 1868, Mulu Manek, the chief of the 'Wagher rebellion was chased by Porbandar sibandi and killed near Ranpur. Piracy and piratical aggressions of Wagher in Okhamandal was receded in of course of time.

In conclusion, Okhamandal became a pirates haven due to its geographical features of creek, inlet and bays which allowed the pirates to attack and return with plundered goods. The region was not fertile for agriculture and people were depended on seafaring, trade and commerce. The English East India Company failed to chase them down because they did not know the geography of Okhamandal and their big vessel unable to cross the small passage that pirates hide. Chiefs of Dinghi, Dwarka, Okha, Bet and Positra had protected and shelter pirates of Okhamandal gave another opportunity to carry out the piratal aggression towards the Gulf of Kachchh and Kathiawar. Indian Navy that the English East India Company employed in this Okhamandal unable to suppress this pirates due to lack of manpower and arm vessels. Maritime regulations were imposed on the Chieftains of Okhamandal and it was not easily agreed by the chieftains because piratical acts were followed from many generations. The treaties and agreements were only on the paper. Further, they engaged same phenomenon as usual but later part of 1868 piracy was suppressed by the Gaekwad of Baroda.

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