

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

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This thesis entitled "Small Urban Centres in South Gujarat During the Nineteenth Century" attempts at investigating the nature of rural-urban dynamism in one of the sub-regions of Gujarat i.e. South Gujarat. This effort to make an historical enquiry has been to register transformations in the making of the South Gujarat territory as an administrative and economic region, taking into consideration the evaluation of its agrarian and non-agrarian potential, classification and categorization of urban settlements, networks between the rural and urban settlements working at the horizontal and vertical levels of mobility, relationships between the various social components in the rural and urban setting and, finally, the changes, which the sub-region passed through during the nineteenth century.

As we have already seen, Chapter I establishes the formation of the South Gujarat territory under examination as a combination of natural and man-made efforts. The Chapter is divided into five sections. The first section begins with an enquiry about the identification of the location of the sub-region as a part of the macro region, Gujarat. It looks into the various aspects of the sub-region as a region of political, strategic and economic eminence. The second section deals with the identification of the administrative aspects of the territory during the nineteenth century and suggests the existence of this political region under the control of a variety of rulers. The ruling authorities included the representatives of the Mughals at Surat and Broach cities, Marathas under Peshwa and Gaekwad, Native State rulers-Rajpipla, Bansda, Dharampur and Sachin, Dang Estates and, finally, their chief rival and a very powerful force in the nineteenth century politics i.e. the British. Obviously, the making of the administrative territory is traced through the understanding of the political developments in the eighteenth century. The first quarter in the nineteenth century ascertains the legacies of the eighteenth

century (see Table 4, pp. 25-30). The political stability could be established only during the second quarter of the nineteenth century when the region was under the control of Bombay Presidency and rulers of the Native States (see Tables 5 & 6, pp. 31-34). The directly administered territory under the British consisted of the districts of Surat and Broach whereas the territory administered by the Native rulers comprised the Baroda State, Rajpipla, Bansda, Dharampur, Sachin and the Dangs administered through the Assistant Political Agent of Khandesh. The Bombay Presidency was indirectly associated with the Native States as well, as the Political Agents were located at Baroda, Surat and Khandesh (see Table 6, pp. 31-32). The third section deals with the administrative experiments, which the South Gujarat territory had to undergo. It traces the hierarchy of officials from the villages to the highest unit of administration i.e., the city/town headquarters. Section IV of the chapter sketches the natural environment and endowments, which this sub-region enjoyed during the nineteenth century. The last section introduces the human resource potential, social groups and a little bit of cultural traits of the region. The sub-region remained the playground of urban, rural and aboriginal human stock.

The assessment of agrarian potential of the sub-region reveals that the sub-region in the first quarter of the nineteenth century remained less productive whereas the rest of the three quarters of the century evidenced improvement in terms of the extent of cultivation, cultivation methods, crop patterns, agricultural yield, revenue management and revenue collection. The reasons attributed to the change is the political stability that had been established since 1820's, irrigation facilities that developed as a result of initiatives taken by the British Government, Native State rulers and individuals in the different administrative territories, introduction of new crops, demand of cash crops against the food crops in the European markets,

introduction of *ryotwari* for assessment of land revenue on a large scale and collection of taxes in cash and their disbursement for further growth.

The computing of various aspects of cultivation done in the section on the extent of cultivation suggests that the actual cultivated land lay in the range of 60% to 65% of the total cultivable land and the rest was waste-cultivable as well as uncultivable. The region proved promising for both food crops and cash crops. The staple food crops were millet followed by rice and wheat whereas the predominant cash crop had been cotton that incurred capital to the cultivator of South Gujarat besides voluminous income to the state. In fact cotton cultivation brought significant transformations in the relationships between the cultivator and the market forces and those associated with money lending in the rural settlements.

Besides agricultural activity, the sub-region observed improvement in horticultural activity too. Enormous amount of *bagayat*/garden land is reported under cultivation in the outskirts of villages and small urban settlements. The villages and small towns became the centre of distribution of garden produce i.e. the vegetables and fruits. These had consumers not only in the sub-region but attracted from the distant areas as well, say, located as far as Bombay. The impetus in this direction was caused by the introduction of railways in the post-1861 period.

Chapter III deals with the outcome of the investigation undertaken in to the mineral produce of the region. Further, it shows the extraordinary potential of the human resources in the sub-region. Besides the availability of regular mineral produce, the sub-region excelled in cornelians and agate that had a market beyond the frontiers of the South Gujarat territory. These places were Bombay, Cambay, and Ahmedabad and, to a limited extent, aboard.

Salt production and salt workshops were another important source of income to the State. The rulers of the Gaekwad State took special interests in it. The salt was collected in the creeks and was brought for refinement to the

salt workshops. Some of the workshops that need mention are Dehwara, Mara, Shatha, Jee ao, Warce, Motto Phullio and Dhekhli. All these sites were villages but, due to the availability of salt, emerged as centres of distribution and registered their existence as small market sites.

Abundant forest produce in the South Gujarat sub-region is universally accepted as the extreme east of the territory consist of heavy forest tracts. In fact, the entire area covering the Native States except Sachin had their income from the agricultural produce. Among the agricultural produce availability of timber and its trade need a special mention. The sub-region in the pre-nineteenth century was well known for its timber trade but during the nineteenth century, the timber trade underwent a distinct transformation. This transformation made its beginning in the post-1861 period. The timber was needed not only for making boats and ships but also the sleepers of the railway tracts. Rajpipla forests in particular finds the special mention in this regard followed by Navsari's *rani* tracts. Because of timber trade, introduction of railways many villages emerged as small timber marts in their surrounding areas. The timber from the Dang forests attracted the Surat merchants, particularly the *Parsees*, who were successful in establishing their monopoly as timber merchants. The timber obtained from the Dangs was mostly carried out to Surat, Bulsar, Bilimora, Kadod, Broach, Gandevi and Navsari for export purposes. The Dang timber was supplied to Bombay Naval Dockyard for the construction of big boats and repair of ships coming from England. Besides the Surat merchants those who were involved in timber trade were the *Vanias*, *Bohoras* and *Parsees* from Bulsar and Navsari. The Dharampur and Bansda forest timber had their markets in Surat and it brought a large share of income to the State and employment opportunities to cultivators who joined this trade as a labour force.

Besides timber, the other forest produce in which the region excelled and had access to local markets within Gujarat included *kath*, gum and lac. In

fact, the forest produce was the main source of income among the aboriginal groups staying in the forests tracts. The aboriginal groups in Dang did not take to settled agriculture as it happened in case of the people in the localities in Navsari or Rajpipla.

Another important production obtained from the forest produce like *mahura* flower and *khajuri*, was the *toddy/daru*. It had a large number of consumers. The *toddy/daru* trade was so lucrative that it was produced and sold in almost all the rural and urban settlements of the South Gujarat territory. It became the source of income for those who were involved in the production process but also to the State. The details of the *abkaree* tax remained phenomenal in case of the Native State rulers and the mercantile class.

In tune to the manufacture from the agricultural and forest produce, the manufacture of coarse sugar/*khandisari* and candied sugar need to be mentioned. The rural settlements and small towns are reported to be the production centre of coarse sugar. However, the second half of the nineteenth century evidenced the coming up of the primitive sugar mills followed by the rice mills and oil pressing mills in the medium and small size urban settlements. The mills added a new dimension to the production process by creating a new urban labour force out of semi-skilled artisan groups who were rendered unemployed due to the decreasing demand of handicrafts and became the handsome sector for the investment of merchant capital and at the same time provided impetus to local trade particularly between the *qasba*/small and medium size towns. The initiatives taken by the British government and Native Rulers in this direction are worth mentioning. A Government sugar mill was set up at Gandevi and oil mills at Bilimora and Navsari began to operate to bring a change in the trade.

Another manufacture initiative in respect to the human resource in South Gujarat was in the textile and allied production. South Gujarat being

rich in cotton procuring excelled in this field. Moreover, it was well known for its handicrafts work however the industry evidenced decay during the second half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century that brought shifts in the manufacturing methods and textile trade. The textile industrial units that were located at large urban settlements like Surat and Broach evidenced transition due to steam-operated factories that saw the light of the day at these centres whereas the medium and small size urban settlements registered the existence of handloom units. The steam-operated ginning factories were located at Surat and Broach whereas the hand-operated units like handlooms, spinning and ginning units at Olpad, Mandvi, Jalalpur, Chorasi, Bardoli, Chikhli, Bulsar, Pardi, Saen, Kathodra, Kim, Rander, Katargam, Nawagam, Nana Waracha, Bhestan, Maroli, Sachin and Isroli do find a mention. The industry that could be said in the making was the manufacturing of *sari/saree* by textile units at Surat in the later part of the century. During the twentieth century *saree* textile units emerged as one of the potent manufacturing sectors. At present Surat is well known for this industry. Production of coarse cloth was another salient feature of the small and medium size urban settlements. The coarse cloth had its consumers from the rural settlements that consistently contributed to the vertical local trade and during the freedom struggle emerged as a sharp weapon against the British rule by providing an alternative to the foreign made cloth.

Continuing the assessment of the manufactures in the middle and small size urban settlements it must be mentioned that the sub-region also entered in the formative phase of the development of iron industry. A special mention to Amod is relevant because it excelled in the making of knives that had an access in the European market. The late nineteenth century sources speak of changes in metal working in Surat under the influence of the Industrial Revolution in England and as a result of the introduction of railways in Gujarat region. Surat evidenced increase in the making of iron

pots and pans as well as plates of iron sheets. This production gave new trade opportunities. The production and trade of these products remained in the hands of *Shia Bohras*. Parsee merchant Manekji Dorabji established an iron factory in 1875. This iron factory provided *employment* to some thirty-five blacksmiths and a few others belonging to the category of semi-skilled artisans and labour force from the rural areas. Production at this unit consisted of iron railings, iron pipes, machinery and casting in iron and brass. Among the small urban settlements that contributed in this direction were the small towns of Rajpipla State as iron was obtained from Rajpipla iron mines. Good use of iron was made at Pardvania near Ratanpur and Nandod. Nandod is reported as a famous centre in knife and sword making.

The other manufacturing units that operated on the small scale in the South Gujarat territory with some distinction in the medium and small size urban settlements were the boat making at Bilimora; leatherwork, leather tanning and making of ginning rollers in the rural settlements of Broach district and at Vegalpur—a small town in the Surat district— and wood engraving, carpentry, *lathe* work and furniture making at Navsari, Bilimora and Ajarai. Besides these small scale manufacturing units, a new beginning of the manufacture of the following items is registered in the second half of the nineteenth century. These were roof tiles, stone masonry work, making of tents, candles, *chandlas*, pencils, matchboxes, buttons and soaps meant for bathing and washing. The new products thus started surfacing not only in large urban settlements but also in the market towns and in the markets that were held on the occasions of religious fairs and festivals where these had a considerable number of consumers.

The essential components of the market forces are the demand and supply. Agrarian and non-agrarian produce catered to the demand factor in the sub-region's economy but the supply factor evidenced numerous transformations. The foremost was in the means of communication. Both

land and water routes remained operational, however, the modes of transport brought revolutionary differences in comparison to the previous period. These differences were due to the laying of railway line and metalled roads on the land route and steam-operated ships, ferries, steamers, boats, etc. along the water route. This development created a network for horizontal and vertical mobility among the rural and urban settlements. Many new urban settlements emerged and the earlier ones received impetus in this process. Among the new ones were the railway station towns. The earlier category included those that were located along the old route. The prominent ones in the later category were Surat, Broach, Baroda, Navsari, Gandevi, Ankleshwar, Bulsar, Bilimora and Jambusar that are placed as large and medium size settlements whereas the former category comprising Pardi, Maroli, Sachin, Vapi, Saen, Kim, Kosamba, Amalsar, Panoli, Palej, Karjan and Chamargam along the B.B.& C.I. Railways and Kavi, Rajpipla, Netrang, Velachha, Mangrol, Songadh, Zankhavav, Bardoli, Vyara, Kala Amba, Waghai, Dungri, Udware, Kankrakhari (closed in 1873) and Amroli along the extended railway lines created with the support of Native States. Likewise, the new road network in the sub-region initiated improvisation in the role of the *qasba*/village towns, which connected the railway station towns with the large and medium size urban settlements. Among the medium and small size urban settlements that acquired prominence along the road routes were Olpad, Mandvi, Chorasi, Bardoli, Jalalpur, Chikhli, Bulsar, Pardi, Saen, Kadrama, Wadoli, Dumas, Bardoli, Karod, Wankaner, Walod, Sarbhon, Sisodra, Supa, Dharampur, Sachin, Jambusar, Amod, Wagra, Dahej, Sukaltirth, Hansot, Kim, Panoli, Ankleshwar, Ilav, Tankaria, Gandevi, Bilimora, Navsari, Palsana, Maroli, Umrat, Kamrej, Sarthan, Mindhola, Kadodra, Devki Unai, Nandod, Bodhan, Chival, Bhimpur and Gaviar.

Along the water route much changes are not noticeable either regarding route or means of transport. The main change was in the role of the

port towns. Because of the development of Bombay as major maritime centre in western India and decline of Surat and Broach, the major trading entrepôts, the inland river port towns/*bara* also evidenced decrease in volume of trade. However, they continued to enjoy their significant status in Gujarat and the sub-region's local trade. The sub-region records Navsari, Bilimora, Tankaree/Tankari, Jambusar, Dehgam, Gandhar, Dahej, Bulsar, Umarsari, Kolak and Bhagva as river ports besides Surat and Broach, which remained consistently active during the nineteenth century.

A glance at into trade transactions reveals that transformations were registered with them also. The sub-region continued to be a part of international commerce although there was a change in the trade. Instead of trading directly with the international centres, the region exported the produce to Bombay and in this process got deprived largely of the benefits that could be incurred through the direct trade and commerce. The other change was in the nature of commodities exported and imported. In the previous century, the export and import trade were favourable because of the demand of handicrafts and manufactured goods. However, in the nineteenth century the demand in the European markets was for raw cotton. This gave a major blow to handicrafts and textile products of the sub-region on one hand and occupation of the sub-region's markets by the piece goods from England on the other. The positive aspects of this development were the change in the nature of agricultural trade at the intra- and inter-state level. The growth in the trade of agricultural produce i.e. grains and cotton led to rise of marts and market towns within the sub-region and further paved the pathway for the emergence of new small urban settlements. This process could take concrete shape in the post-1861 period when the railway lines added to the frequency of trade transaction and passenger traffic. In this way the nineteenth century had the following categorization of trade centres.

Large Size Trading Centres: Broach and Surat

Middle Size Trading Centres: Amod, Ankleshwar, Bhagva Bilimora, Bulsar, Chikhli, Gandevis, Dahej, Dahegam, Gandhar, Tankari, Jambusar, Kolak, Mandvi, Navsari, Pardi, Rander, Songadh, Umarsari and Vyara.

Small Size Trading Centres: Amalsar, Amroli, Bagwara, Bansda, Bardoli, Bhadbhut, Bhatkol, Bhestan, Bodhan, Buhari, Chamargam, Chibad-kutch, Chorasi, Dehgam, Devgad, Dharampur, Dumat, Gala, Haria, Jalalpur, Jurpur, Kadod, Kankrakhari, Kathor, Kathodra, Kholvad, Kim, Khoon, Kosamba, Kotha, Kusal, Lakhamapur, Miyagam, Mangrol, Mahuva, Maldha, Maroli, Mota, Noagama, Palej, Panch Amba, Panoli, Paria, Sachin, Saen, Sarbhan, Sinor, Sisdora, Songir, Sukaltirth, Soopa, Tankaria, Tarkeshwar, Tavra, Tilakwada, Tithal, Udawada, Vankuwar, Vapi, Vidalia, Variav, Velachha, Vakal, and Zankhavav.

The emergence of new trading centres induced an innovative dimension in capital investment, finance management and banking in the middle and small size urban settlements. The new capital during the second half of the nineteenth century obtained by the merchant class through agricultural trade and money lending encouraged the existing indigenous bankers to take initiatives in the formation of banking firms, investment in joint stock companies or adaptation to changing economic circumstances. It was in 1874 that His Highness Malharrao Gaekwad opened a State Bank in Navsari in his own name and the principal bankers of the Baroda State opened accounts with it instead of issuing bills of exchange on Baroda, the latter business being presumably left to the State Bank. However, in 1875, after the deposition of MalharRao Gaekwad, this State Bank was closed down. Henceforth, the State collected taxes from cultivators directly and the *talukdars* made remittances in cash to the *prant's* treasury. The cash was transmitted

two or three times in a year to the Bombay Branch. Another Bank was established at Broach. Besides such type of banks, Navsari *prant* records the presence of indigenous bankers/*shahukars*, pawn brokers/*jansau shahukars* and village moneylenders. Such banking establishments on the small scale were located in Navsari, Gandevi, Bilimora, Songadh and Vyara. The village moneylenders were generally shopkeepers and well-to-do cultivators. These belonged to *Vanias*, *Shravaks*, *Parsees*, *Desais*, and *Marvadi Shravaks* and *Bhatelas* category. There were a few capitalists in the Navsari *Prant* and these were not men of great wealth in spite of capital managing skills. Some of the capitalists of Navsari were Panachand—a *Shravak*; Gokaldas, Narsidas and Ramdas Modi; and Vakta Bhava—a *Marvadi*. The total estimated capital in the possession of the bankers of Navsari was roughly Rs. 5,00,000 in 1882. These capitalists were bankers and managed capital through *hundis*/bill of exchange. These capitalists had their agents who worked for them and they were located at Songadh, Vyara and other places that were lying between Surat-Khandesh trade route. The Navsari bankers belonged to *Vania*, *Shravak*, *Marwadi* and *Parsee* categories of Gujarat. In case of Bilimora, these were mostly *Shravaks* and *Parsees* and in Songad these were *Vania* and *Brahmans*. Among all these *Parsees* were the most organized and daring as they used to go abroad for trade purposes and stayed back for long. Similarly, in Surat district places like Bulsar and Rander also evidenced efforts in the making of modern banking system.

Further, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century a decrease in the number of indigenous moneylenders/bankers in medium and small urban settlements also became evident. It happened due to the change in occupation and opening of post office money-order system. The indigenous moneylenders/bankers of these urban settlements got involved in setting up of ginning factories, business in grain and import of gold and silver from Surat and Bombay for making ornaments.

As we have already gone through earlier, chapter IV explores the functionality of the urban settlements and their demographic aspects. The investigation thus reveals the existence of large, medium and small size settlements. The urban settlements in the South Gujarat territory were of two categories. These were the inland urban settlements and the port cities and towns. There were two port cities and around twelve small port towns, whereas the inland urban settlements had their sub-types, which are as follows:

Large Urban Settlements/Cities: Broach and Surat;

Middle Size Urban Settlements/Towns: Ankleshwar, Bilimora, Bulsar, Gandevi, Hansot, Kamrej, Navsari and Sinor;

Small Size Urban Settlements/Small Towns: Amod, Bansda, Bardoli, Bodhan, Chikhli, Dahej, Dehgam, Dharampur, Gandhar, Jalalpur, Kavi, Kathor, Mahuva, Mandvi, Maroli, Nandod, Olpad, Palej, Palsana, Panoli, Pardi, Rajpipla, Rampur, Rander, Ratanpur, Sachin, Songadh, Tankari, Tarkeshwar, Tilakwada, Tithal, Udwarda, Umarsari, Vakal, Vapi, Variav, Velachha, Vyara and Wagra.

Qasba/Village Towns: Abrama, Ajarai, Amala, Anuroli, Arnai, Astgam, At, Avidha, Balesar, Bardipada, Bawa Rustam, Bhadbhut, Bhadel, Bhalod, Bhatta, Bhimpur, Borsi, Bugwara, Chibad-Kutch, Chokdi, Derbhavati, Devgad, Devjagam, Dev Mogra, Dumal, Dumas, Gadhvi/Garvi, Gajera, Gala, Ghudoie Gorgam, Hathuran, Ilav/Elav, Jeyor Jhaghadia Kadod, Kadodra, Kankaria, Kanwa, Karchalia, Karod, Khala, Kim, Kosamba, Kudiana, Kudrama, Lakhmapur, Libodra, Limodra/Nimodra, Mandvi, Mangrol, Mokhdi Ghanta, Mota, Mota Saja, Munsad, Nagar, Nani Naroli, Naradganga, Navapur, Old Rajpipla, Panch Amba, Panetha, Pangarbari, Panikhadak Pimpri, Rupgad, Rupnagar, Saen, Sagbara/Sakbara, Salehr, Sanjala, Sarbhon, Sarkui, Satem, Sisodra, Sukaltirth, Supa, Tain, Thava,

Timba, Umarpada, Umrat, Unai, Vadoli, Vajpur, Valvada, Valod, Vankaner, Vasurna/Wasurna, Vedach, Vegalpur, Vehval and Vesma.

The medium and small size urban settlements and the village towns are classified into the administrative, market, railway station, village and pilgrim towns that are exemplified as follows:

Administrative Towns: Amod, Ankleshwar, Bansda, Bardoli, Bulsar, Chikhli, Dang, Dharampur, Gandevi, Hansot, Jalalpur, Jambusar, Kamrej, Mahuva, Mandvi, Navsari, Olpad, Palsana, Pardi, Rajpipla Rander, Sachin Sinor, Songadh, Tilakwada, Vajpur, Vakal, Velachha, Vyara, and Wagra;

Market Towns: Abrama, Ajarai, Amod, Amroli, Astgam, At, Bansda, Bardoli *qasba*, Bodhan, Borsi, Bulsar, Chikhli, Choknada, Dehgam, Devgadhi, Dharampur, Dungri, Gala, Jalalpur, Kadod, Kadodra, Kankaria, Kathor, Karchalia, Kavi, Khat, Kosmba, Mahuva, Mandvi, Mangrol, Mota, Munsad, Navapur, Olpad, Pardi, Rampur, Rander, Sachin, Sagbara/Sakbara, Sarbhon, Sarkui, Satem, Sisodra, Songadh, Supa, Sutkheda, Tankari, Tarkeshwar, Tilakwada, Timba, Valod, Valvada, Vankaner, Vehval, Vesma, and Vyara;

Railway Station Towns: Bhatta, Bulsar, Elav, Kamrej, Kim, Maroli, Motiwara, Palej, Panoli, Pardi, Rander, Saen, Songadh, Tain, Udwarda, Vapi, Vedchha and Vyara;

Pilgrim Towns: Bawa Rustam, Bhadbhut, Bhadeli, Bhimpur, Devjagam, DevMogra, Dharampor, Ghudoie, Gorgam, Jeyor, Kanwa, Karod, Limodra/Nimodra, Mokhdi Ghanta, Mota Saja, Naradganga, Sanjala, Sukaltirth, Udwarda, Umrat, Unai and Vedchha.

The sub-region and surveyed urban settlements reflect on the socio-economic network during the nineteenth century. Like the previous century, the sub-region had the same social components that were divided into community, caste and sect categories (see Tables 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, 5, 6, 7a and 7b of Chapter V). These categories underwent transformations largely due to changed economic forces. The economic forces in rural South Gujarat

affected the social structure of the village communities to a considerable extent. The caste system did not disappear but the shifts were registered. Instead of predominance of Rajputs or Kshatriya castes, *Vanias* emerged in status and power hierarchy as compared to the 'producing castes'/artisans who lost their previous status. These now became an essential part of market-oriented urban economy. Another significant change noticed in the rural social structure of the South Gujarat sub-region was regarding the position of the artisan class. In the nineteenth century, the village artisans lost their economic effectiveness due to less demand for handicrafts and payment of revenue in cash to the government. This development drew them to the network of market operations. Further, due to unemployment, commercialization of agriculture and freeing the cultivators from customary local obligations, artisans underwent profound transformations. Now artisans being unemployed took to agriculture and became part of agrarian working class. A section of this artisan class migrated to towns in search of employment opportunities. However, the decreased employment opportunities for the artisans could not help in improving their condition except joining the crowd of urban labour force. The changes in the urban social structure resulted due to migration from the villages of the above-stated class to medium and small size urban settlements and then from these small and medium urban settlements to cities like Bombay, Broach and Surat thus paving a pathway to vertical mobility.

Finally it can be safely stated that though the nineteenth century evidenced relative economic decay, the medium and small urban settlements sustained and paved a pathway to higher degree of urbanisation during the twentieth century.
