

CONCLUSION

On the eve of the sixteenth century Gujarat was one of the most important regions of medieval India. Under Mahmud Begada's sway a more or less balanced socio - economic order was established. Being an important region Gujarat attracted the attention of various powers. The Portuguese saw in Gujarat, and its coastal areas a prosperous have for commercial endeavors. The Gujarati's on the other hand had capable merchants who had established contacts with West Asia, African coast and South East Asia regions. Having strategic ports and flourishing trade, the Sultans of Gujarat had to defend themselves from external encroachments. For this they sought eh friendship and amity of the neighboring kingdoms. By interfering and participating in the local politics of Idar, Mandu ad Malwa the Gujarati merchants had created a barrier or buffer states which served as protective shields.

The reactions of the Sultans of Gujarat to the Portuguese were initially abhorrent but with the periodical entry of the Mughals things altered. Whereas the Portuguese only wanted to eclipse the commercial activities of the Gujarati merchants by building factories and erecting fortresses, the Mughals wanted to conquer the entire kingdom. So the Gujarati Sultans weighing the two 'foreign' powers decided to seek the help of the Portuguese against eh Mughals. In this fashion certain areas were given to the Portuguese for the help rendered by them. The Mughal Gujarat

and different repercussions. The Mughals did not mind the Portuguese presence in Gujarat as long as their commercial activities in Surat were not interfered with the Portuguese.

Nobility, an important aspect of the Gujarati society took a new shape during the sixteenth century. Created by the Sultans. Its importance lay in the integrity and strength of the Sultans. Even though, fragmentarily, they were trying to crystallize into a single unit, was impossible. The hamperings were due to the personal clashes of the nobles, which were due to economic reasons or were politically motivated. Their main aim was to establish themselves commercially even if it meant displeasing the Sultans or compatriots. The case study of Malik Gopi serves as a fine example, where he established his cordial relations with the Portuguese to enhance his position as a merchant. On the other hand merchants and nobles like Khwaja Safar and Malik Ayaz being foreigners adapted themselves to the Gujarati scenario for the sake of mercantile activities. The material interest gained by the commercial operations made the foreigners to settle in Gujarat. This gave the Gujarati society a composite nature which led to it being labelled Mleccha country.

Another important result of trade was the increase or acceleration in production. The external trade increased the demand for more goods, for which production had to speeded up. Even though some of the commodities did not find a good market they were produced due to their importance and need elsewhere. It may be generalized that the trade conducted by the Gujarati

merchants during the sixteenth century was not a peddling trade but long - distance one. The involvement of the Portuguese and the introduction of cartaz system by them gave a certain impetus to external trade. The cartaz was priced only at one tanga per ship and the merchants could afford to pay it. The Gujarati merchants became comprador agents for the European merchants, apart from serving as links between the cultivators and European countries.

Urbanization in Gujarat owes a great deal to trade. This effect could especially be seen in the coastal areas. Diu serves as a fine example for urban growth in Gujarat during the sixteenth century. It had long - distance trade with the ports of South - East Asia, West East and the African Coast. This trade brought more people into Diu. they were both merchants and people from different walks of life, but connected with trade. Finance was channelled into trade, and due to this, more and more money was brought into circulation. The neighboring people and areas had to attune their activities to the urban needs in Diu. The requirements in Diu grew by leaps and bounds and their needs had to be met by others. For example, the cultivators had to meet the growing needs of the urban population. The intra - coastal trade and the domestic trade conducted in Gujarat served the largest perspective of international trade.

To a certain extent the agrarian economy in Gujarat underwent minor influence. Surplus products were collected from the cultivators, artisans and craftsmen. For example, cotton and

indigo were produced in large quantities because they had market outside India. Thus encouragement was given to cultivate cash crops and newer crops due to the expansion of trade commerce. The exportation of some of the agricultural products gave the State and the peasants a new incentive to produce more. Thus as a result the economy of Gujarat grew by leaps and bounds as a result of the maritime trade it conducted during the sixteenth century.