

## **Unraveling the Threads of Prosperity: An Analysis of Textile Centres in Gujarat(17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century)**

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**Abstract:** *This paper attempts to explore Gujarat, a region in western India, which assumed a pivotal role regarding textile production. The region's textile industry was characterized by producing high-quality fabrics, including cotton, silk, and other textile stuffs. These fabrics were in high demand domestically and internationally and were easily available in the Gujarat region. This paper explores various aspects that helped the region's textile industry expand and flourish. It also attempts to deconstruct and understand the highlights of various textile centres, variegated textile production, and the trade of these textile products, which in turn helped these regions to rise to fame because of their textile, dyeing, or weaving industries in their regions.*

**Keywords:** *Cotton, Gujarat, Dyeing, Industries, Textile Silk, Weaving etc.*

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### **Introduction**

The various regions of Gujarat, Coromandel, and Bengal are abundant in natural resources and fertile areas that are ideal for an agricultural-based industrial economy. The province of Gujarat made its way to become one of the chief regions of textile production and its trading world in medieval times. The Gujarat region consists of numerous industrial hubs such as Ahmedabad and Baroda, along with Jambusar, Nadiad, Dholka, Dabhoi, Sarkhej, Navsari, Palanpur, Vadhvan, Bhuj, Junagadh, and Gandevi, among others, for textile production. In this paper, we

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explore the main reasons and conditions behind the rise of textile production centres in Gujarat. Some of the factors that accelerated this growth are briefly given below-

## **Well-developed Trade Networks and strategic location of the Gujarat region**

Gujarat's strategic location on the Arabian Sea made it an ideal hub for maritime trade. Gujarat's closeness to key sea ports such as Gogha, Cambay, Broach, and Surat played a significant role in boosting its trade and manufacturing activities. The continued substitution on the fall of one port by the rise of another throughout medieval Gujarat sustained its industrial cum commercial activity. The ports and industrial centres were efficiently connected by both roads and waterways. The region had strong connections with Rajasthan, Punjab, and Sind in the north, Malwa in the west<sup>1</sup>, and the Deccan region in the south. In terms of overseas trade, Surat held an undisputed position as the leading maritime hub of Gujarat and the largest oceanic gateway in western India. Nevertheless, areas like the Gulf of Kutch also sustained direct trade relations with regions such as the Persian Gulf, East Africa, and the Malabar Coast. The region's proximity to the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and the Southeast facilitated the export of textiles to these regions, contributing to the flourishing of the textile industry in Gujarat. The flow of many rivers through Gujarat has an immense role in the development of the region, the array of good connectivity of coastal land with the hinterlands of the region and beyond, which at large facilitated the passing of various raw materials. For example, Narmada (Rewa) cuts across Malwa, and Gujarat falls into the sea, making the trade connection of Malwa with Gujarat immensely easy. Other rivers such as Tapti, Mahi, and Sabarmati facilitate trade connections of the region.

Even the region was suitable for textile processing, as the citrus properties of the water and the stringent content found in the soil of the region<sup>2</sup> helped textile products retain their lustre, colour, and overall fame in the indigenous and overseas worlds.

## **Population Dynamics**

The land and its people have been associated with various trading merchandise, production, and procurement processes since ancient times. To meet the demand for textiles

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trading stuff, the inner population's demand, and demand from the outer world, Gujarat has some important production centres that have played an immense role in intra-Asian and Euro-Asian trade. These trade links made the population dynamics of Gujarat's land, providing a unique space for intermingling and sustaining various traditions, cultures, practices, etc. Gujarat was known for its production of various unique types of textiles to be provided for the Asian trade and the European trade, according to the taste and choice of their importers (subjective role). The surging appetite for textiles by European trading powers likely played a key role in transforming Gujarat's towns into centres of manufacturing.

In the earliest times of the Christian Era, the Gujjar tribe/ caste people came from the Northwest region<sup>3</sup> to the land of today's Ahmedabad region, from which the state got its name. The coming of various merchant communities like Arabs, Habshis<sup>4</sup>, Armenian, Afghanis, Bohras and Chalebis, Sindhis, Kashmiris, and Deccani Brahmans, at last Portuguese, English, French, Dutch, and their settlement on that land provided an inextricable socio-economic and cultural exchange space and creation of a great leap in diversity in the socio-economic and artistic arena. The presence of Jethvas, Cavadas, Ahirs, Valas, Rabaris, Mers, Bhils, and Kolis tribes in that region from the seventh century<sup>5</sup> onwards also lies a string in making cultural diversity. Each community has its own choice of textile, embroidery and artistic design, hence, the coming and settlement of various communities to Gujarat made the whole population at large to be receptive and adaptive in the socio-economic and cultural space, which makes the 'textile' one of the key objects to become subjective at this interplay.

## Availability of Raw Materials and Technological Innovation

Gujarat was fortunate to have an amalgamation of availability of raw materials for textile, easy access to dyes, and cheap availability of labour. The climatic conditions and soil properties of the Gujarat region were suitable for the production of textile crops such as cotton, silk, and indigo. Cotton was grown in the valley of the Sabarmati River and the black soil of Cambay.<sup>6</sup> Abd Allah Wassaf in 1300 A.D mentioned the availability of cotton productivity while describing the Gujarat region in the following lines- '... and the strength of the soil is so great that the cotton plants spread their branches like willows and plane trees, and yield produce for several years successively'.<sup>7</sup> Silk was brought from the outer regions of

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the Mughal Empire to Gujarat, particularly to Ahmadabad and Surat, where it was woven into textiles.<sup>8</sup> The production of Indigo was very crucial due to its uses in the dyeing process. Though the region has Jambusar, Dholka, Broach, Baroda, and Nadiad, where indigo of inferior quality, not sufficient to meet its merchants' best Indigo demand<sup>9</sup>, however, the closeness to Sarkhej, a village near Ahmadabad known for indigo production, ensured easy access to indigo dye. Abul Fazl mentioned the indigo of Sarkhej as "indigo of good quality is here grown and exported to Turkey and other countries".<sup>10</sup> Even the lac market at Ahmadabad made easy access to the natural dyeing materials for dyeing textile stuffs, which may reduce the process cost and simplify.<sup>11</sup> The adoption of new weaving technology also helped to diversify the textile production, and the Gujarat region was no exception to it, as we can infer from one example, the adoption of the ikat technology.

## Skilled and cheap labour force

For the success of any textile industry, the role of the availability of skilled and cheap labour forces is indisputable. Gujarat is no exception. The land of Gujarat, in this aspect, especially the availability of labour, was not insufficient, as we can infer the same, as Italian traveller Della Valle noticed the availability of cheap labour in Surat that a man of lower income can also have several servants to serve.<sup>12</sup> There are several *parganas* in the case of Surat, where textile producers worked.<sup>13</sup> The *pargana* of Parchol was a weaving centre, and weavers worked there. In the Kasba of Navsari, mostly the Parsi community resided, who worked as manufacturers and dyers of textiles. There were 200,000 weavers in Surat who worked on the silk of Bengal and China, and cotton, wool, produced abundantly in the environs of Surat.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the political upheaval by the Marathas in the region gave the migration of weavers from Ahmadabad to Surat gave the Middleman a great opportunity to subdue the weavers at a lower wage, though it should be remembered that this was not always the case.

## Entrepreneurial Spirit

The availability of commercial capital from the chief merchants of the region and their acumen in trade handling with the stakeholders made the Gujarat region suited to the rise of

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the textile industry there. Tom Pires (a Portuguese), while describing the trade, mentioned that ‘...and there is no trading place where you do not see Gujarat merchants.’<sup>15</sup> This generally underscores the trading capacity and connection of Gujarati merchants with the trading world. Also, the presence of doyens of commercial capital holders or merchants might have worked for the development of the textile industry in the region. They invested their commercial capital in the production, procurement, and trading of textiles, with the intent of having a return on investment. They also provide a ground to peddlers, middlemen, craftspersons, labour, as well as all buyers, a suitable foreground to be associated with this business.

## Imperial Patronage

Crystallization of political authority with the Solankis in the Gujarat region, then the coming of the Muzaffarid dynasty, and at last the amalgamation in the Mughal Empire brought to this region stability and security, which facilitated trade and commerce. In the seventeenth century, the textile industry surpassed agriculture as the second-largest sector of the domestic economy with the backing of the Mughal imperial court and local elites.<sup>16</sup> Mughals provided patronage to the textile industry, encouraging the production of high-quality textiles.<sup>17</sup>

## Centres of Textile Production in 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century Gujarat

Several towns rose to prominence in textile production in Gujarat. These towns either had cheap labour or easy availability of raw materials, better connectivity to outer ports, or very fertile soil, or a sufficient cultivating class that made them ideal for being a textile centre. The tradition of textile making in Gujarat was of ancient practice. Many places in Gujarat are known for this. Here we have taken into account those places, towns, which are known for their intricate association in the production of various textile stuffs.

### Ahmadabad

The city, known as the ‘Manchester City’ of India, has a great history as a textile production centre. Amin Ahmad I Razi in *Haft Iqlim* in 1002 A.H. called Ahmadabad as ‘Bride of the Kingdom’. Ahmadabad was reputed to be as large as London and its suburbs.<sup>18</sup> Its population was estimated between 100000 to 200000 in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> With the suitable climate and sufficient cultivating class, Ahmadabad was ideally suited for weaving the cloth, which helps

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in turn to become a centre for manufacturing cloth in Gujarat. Varieties of cloth woven among them mentioned in *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* are Qatni Mashru (half cotton, half silk), bafta, chicken makhmal, silk, brocaded pashmina (woolen stuff).<sup>20</sup> Mandelsho, who visited the city in 1638 A. D, says, ‘There is scarce any nation in the world or any commodity in Asia but may be seen in this city.’<sup>21</sup> He adds cloth of fine texture exported by land and sea, yielding a profitable trade, and the art of weaving golden and silken threads into brocade, velvet, gauze, needlework, and embroidery, varying in texture and dye, is unequalled in India. The fame of Gujarat has spread to distant countries such as Iran, Turan, Turkey, and Syria. The art of weaving and cleaning, in its supreme excellence, was confined to Ahmadabad; even in slightly distant cities, these crafts were inferior.<sup>22</sup> It is reported that even for dyeing, the Englishmen sent textiles from northern India to Ahmadabad.<sup>23</sup> Ahmadabad was known for quilts,<sup>24</sup> as one can infer from the fact that an agent of the English Factories mentioned in February 1619 that they could not procure quilts this year from Ahmedabad. This city was also known for chintz hangings.<sup>25</sup>

Ahmadabad was famous for its *makhmal* (velvet), *kimkhwab* (flowered silk), *zarbaft* (silk brocades with gold and silver thread), gold and silver embroidery, carpets with gold and silver thread, chintz, calico, and cotton and silk cloths.<sup>26</sup> Ahmadabadi silk stuff was characterized by extraordinary silkiness and beautiful texture, sometimes ornamented with embroidery work, and these were remarkable for the sheen of their colour and lustrous print<sup>27</sup> and it was due to the availability of Brackish water in and around Ahmadabad in where fabrics were washed, treatment given by the tools made of the khirini wood<sup>28</sup> elevated the silk fabrics to become famous at that time. Ahmadabad and Broach were known to provide Indigo and linen commodities to trading companies.<sup>29</sup> Ahmadabad was also known to provide the pattern of proper carnation color, as dye used at Surat, Broach, was of inferior quality and was not the first preference by the English Company for dyes.<sup>30</sup> Ahmadabad played a role in the right provision of indigo to the company’s home of good quality and packaging and ensuring weight, and providing calico, baftas, and dimittees.<sup>31</sup> Shatranji- a coarse carpet of stripped cotton was produced at Ahmadabad as it was used to cover the Indigo bale.<sup>32</sup> The city of Mahmudabad, situated nearby (12 kos/36 kms.) from Ahmadabad<sup>33</sup>, produced so much yarn that it could supply the needs of the whole of Gujarat.<sup>34</sup> This city was also known for its printed cloth<sup>35</sup> and cotton yarn, and cotton stuffs.<sup>36</sup>

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## Broach

Broach was famous for its fine quality *baftas*, *calicos*, *chintz*, and silk products. The quality of the textile of Broach was finer than any textile made in the province of Gujarat. Broach was also famous for its dying and primarily for the bleaching industry, so many merchants in different parts of the country sent their textile products to Broach for further processing. Broach was not only a convenient halting-place on the Surat-Ahmadabad road, but an important centre for the purchase of calicoes, which were sent there from the surrounding districts in large quantities to be washed and bleached.<sup>37</sup> Cloth produced at Ankleshwar, situated at six miles south of Broach, brought to Broach for whitening there for what tolls that have been exacted.<sup>38</sup> Here at Broach, textiles came from Ahmadabad for bleaching<sup>39</sup>. Baroda also sent Baftas to Broach for bleaching.<sup>40</sup> And even samanaes produced from Samana town, one hundred eighty courses from Agra, are better cheap, good but these are whitened at Broach and for that purpose, there were always two merchants remained to make provisions throughout the year.<sup>41</sup> *Baftas*<sup>42</sup> made at Broach is known for its finer quality as it was made at best hand, as Mr. Martins of the English Company argued.<sup>43</sup> *Baftas* were the chief textile goods of Broach, which was preferred more than *Calicoes* as *baftas* are more suitable for lining dyed.<sup>44</sup> Here at Broach, *baftas* are of a narrow type, whereas Baroda produces broad baftas. Broach was internally linked with Surat as *Baftas* of Broach are sent to Surat for use in quilts.<sup>45</sup> Between April and June 1619, Broach became the chief place to provide narrow baftas to English companies as factors prohibited from trading at Surat, Nauseri, and Baroda, where baftas could be procured.<sup>46</sup> In Broach, baftas are produced of various kinds, *canেকেens* and *trycandees*.<sup>47</sup> The popularity of *baftas* of Broach was such that merchants of Dabhol came to Broach to have textiles, especially *Baftas* of Broach, but English company traders tried to block them by increasing the rates of baftas, as to English it was very beneficial trade.<sup>48</sup> When the English were at war with the Dutch in the south around August 1619 till the end of the year, which largely affected the trade provisions, it was only the baftas, colored cloths, and *dhotties* of Broach on which English factors concentrated to sustain their trade to a large extent.<sup>49</sup> These baftas (broad and narrow) may have been used for tablecloths, table napkins.<sup>50</sup> Broach was also known for making provision of *Sussies* (a kind of silk cloth) and *Erramees* (*ehram*), which was a cotton dress generally assumed by pilgrims on entering at Mecca.<sup>51</sup>

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## Baroda

Baroda was known for the production of broad *baftas and cotton stuffs*,<sup>52</sup> which were largely preferred by the outside world. Foreign trading companies, especially the English trading company, made advance grants of money to make broadcloths at Baroda.<sup>53</sup> Several small industries have flourished throughout Baroda. Weaving had a traditional distinction and was undertaken by skilled workers in a domestic setting. *Dhoti* woven by *dheds* and fine dhoti, sarees, and baftas made in *Navsari* and *Gandevi* were in great demand at foreign trading companies in Surat in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries for exports to Europe.<sup>54</sup> Although the industry died out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Parsi women still manufactured *kasti* worn by both sexes and are still skilled in making ornamental borders for sarees. Gold, silver, and silk embroidery is carried out in Baroda, Navsari, and other locations, known for their exceptional patterns and high-quality craftsmanship.<sup>55</sup> *Padra*, *Sankheda*, *Petland*, and *Dabhoi* in Baroda, *Kathore* in Navsari; *Nandol*, *Visnagar*, and *Vadnagar* in Khadi districts; *Damnagar* in Amreli district – dyeing and calico printing are old practices.<sup>56</sup>

## Bhuj

Located in the Kutch district of Gujarat, Bhuj was known for the production of coarse cloth,<sup>57</sup> which was highly prized for its durability and versatility. The coarse cloth produced in Bhuj was used for various purposes, including the manufacture of sails, tents, and other durable goods.

## Cambay

The port city of Cambay had an important role in the trade dynamics with the outer world. To describe its importance, a 16th-century Portuguese writer claimed that ‘if in any land it can be said, gold and silver flow, it is Cambay’.<sup>58</sup> A German traveller, Cabral called Cambay as Cairo of India<sup>59</sup>. Cambay is known for providing some textiles stuff to the outer world. To mention Cambay provided to Bantam such as brawl<sup>60</sup>, tapseeles thread, silk, cotton, pattolas or tapchindie (may be print chintz) of cotton, pattolas of silk.<sup>61</sup> Around twenty varieties of cotton fabrics were exported from Cambay to other countries.<sup>62</sup> Cambay was also known for its quilts,

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cubbered cloths of pangeeree<sup>63</sup> and striped calicoes for curtains, etc.<sup>64</sup> Apart from quilts, Cambay was famous for carpets, canvas.<sup>65</sup> Quilts of Cambay had demand in Sumatra, Indonesia, for which company agents employed tailors to work upon them, lining with red gagaci (*gajiya* in Gujarati a cotton or silk cloth used for lining or a measure of varying lengths).<sup>66</sup> Cambay was also known for the production of Coria chawder (which literary means plain, unbleached and also called as lungees, cannekies (textile made out of baftas), and champall chawder.<sup>67</sup> Cambay was known for Indigo production, as it was mentioned by Athanasius Nikitin in the fifteenth century.<sup>68</sup> Cambay, among its exported goods sent to East African ports (Mombasa, Malindi, Mogadishu, and Kilwa), includes textiles, cotton cloths (white, blue, and spotted), silks, etc.<sup>69</sup> Cambay cloths were sent during the seventeenth century to Patani (Thailand) and Mochian in Asia.<sup>70</sup>

## Dholka

This city was situated twenty-two miles southwest of Ahmadabad,<sup>71</sup> known for the production of Indigo, *dutties/dhoti*<sup>72</sup> and calico.<sup>73</sup> As Dholka was known for Indigo production, it attracted merchants, traders and artisans and craft person related to the textile field. Dholka's Calico production, a type of cotton fabric, was known for its bright colours, intricate designs and exceptional quality, making them highly sought after by textile traders and merchants.

## Dabhoi

Dabhoi now situated in modern Baroda district, known for production of turbans.<sup>74</sup> This town was also famous for cotton cloths.<sup>75</sup>

## Gandhavi

This place was well known for the production of dhoti, sari<sup>76</sup>, and baftas.<sup>77</sup> Weavers also resided there, as in the second half of the eighteenth century, Dr Hove, an English traveller, visited Gandhavi to learn the art from Parsi weavers.<sup>78</sup>

## Jambusar

Jambusar was a village located twenty-two miles from Broach, positioned along the route between Broach and Cambay. Jambusar was known for its production of indigo.<sup>79</sup>

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## Nawanagar

Situated on the coast of Kutch, Nawanagar is famous for its Turban cloth, which is woven and dyed.<sup>80</sup>

## Pattan

Situated in the khadi district of Gujarat, the city of Pattan, which was the former capital of Gujarat was renowned for its weaving industry though in later times its trade transferred to Ahmadabad.<sup>81</sup> Pattan's 'Patola' was in great demand as it was worn by high-caste Hindu women on marriage occasion.<sup>82</sup> Pattan was also known for the production of other silk stuff: Qatani, cotton-silk mix weave, and do-pattas.<sup>83</sup>

## Porbandar

Porbandar is situated on the coastline of Gujarat, and Mangrol town in Junagadh was also known for its production of Coarse calico and chintz.<sup>84</sup>

## Sarkhej

This place is situated near Ahmadabad, and was known for producing baftas, as English agents stated – they have acquired together over 20,000 baftas and plan to keep purchasing these till the end of September, 1621. Besides this, Sarkhej was also known for producing Indigo for Surat<sup>85</sup> and was exported to Turkey and other countries.<sup>86</sup> Sarkhej also produced linens, as is evident from the correspondence of English agents to the Surat Council that our linens and light goods must follow after, as fast as they can be made ready.<sup>87</sup>

## Sankhera/ Sankheda

This place is situated about twenty miles southwest of Baroda and is known for the production of *Gumlac*, which is generally used in the dyeing process.<sup>88</sup> The traditional industries of this area include dyeing and calico printing in shades of red, indigo, and black.<sup>89</sup>

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## Surat

Surat was also known for quilts and *Cuttaine*<sup>90</sup> (Hindi- *Qutni* made of cotton), and its production was made easy and cheap as Surat provided plentiful tailors at cheap rates.<sup>91</sup> Surat forged an identity for the production of narrow bafta<sup>92</sup> and silk.<sup>93</sup> *Sobay*, a town near Surat, became famous for calico.<sup>94</sup> Being a major manufacturing centre for textiles, Surat was also known for *zari* embroidery and aari *khatla* work done using a long needle on fabric stretched over a *charpoi* cot-like frame called *khatla*.<sup>95</sup> Silk threads were imported into Gujarat, with most being sent to Ahmadabad and Surat, where they are woven into textiles. Surat was also known for the making of carpets woven with silk, gold, and silver thread, as it got special mentions by seventeenth-century traveller Tavernier.<sup>96</sup>

Table representing the textile centres of Gujarat with their produced textiles:

| Name of the place | Textile(s) Produced                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Source(s)                                                                         |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ahmadabad         | Qatni <i>Qatni Mashru</i> (mix of cotton and silk, bafta, <i>chiken makhmal</i> , silk, brocaded pashmina (woolen stuff), weaving golden and silken threads into brocade, velvet, gauze, needlework, and embroidery, varying in texture and dye. quilts, chintz hangings. <i>makhmal</i> (velvet), <i>kimkhwab</i> (flowered silk), <i>zarbaft</i> (silk brocades with gold and silver thread), gold and silver embroidery, carpets with gold and silver thread, chintz, calico, cotton and silk cloth. | Mirat-i-Ahmadi (Supplement), Mandelslo, The English Factories in India (1618-21). |
| Mahmudabad        | Cotton yarn and printed cloth                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Thevenot and Careri                                                               |

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|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Broach    | <i>baftas, calicos, chintz, and silk products, dying and bleaching industry</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | English Factories in India (1618-21; 1622-23)                                                                             |
| Bhuj      | Coarse cloth                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | An Atlas of the Mughal Empire                                                                                             |
| Cambay    | Brawl (blue and white striped cloth), tapseeles thread, silk, cotton, <i>pattolas</i> or <i>tapchindie</i> (may be print chintz) of cotton, pattolas of silk, cubbered cloth of Panjani or sizing, quilts, canvas, carpets, striped calicoes for curtain, coria <i>chawdar, cannekies</i> (textile made out of baftas), and <i>champall chawder</i> | English Factories in India (1618-21, 1646-50), Tom Pires, Duarte Barbosa, Letter Received by East India Company (1613-15) |
| Dholka    | Indigo, <i>dutties/dhoti</i> , and calico                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | English factories in India (1618-21), An Atlas of the Mughal Empire.                                                      |
| Dhaboi    | Turbans, cotton cloths                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Gazetteer of the Baroda State, English Factories in India (1622-23)                                                       |
| Gandhavi  | <i>Dhoti</i> , saree, and baftas                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | English Factories in India (1622-23, 1634-36, 1637-41), Gazetteer of the Baroda State                                     |
| Jambusar  | Indigo                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Mandelslo                                                                                                                 |
| Nawanagar | Turban cloth (woven and dyed)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | An Atlas of the Mughal Empire, Mirat-i-Ahmadi (Supplement).                                                               |
| Pattan    | Patola, Qatani, do-pattas                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Mandelslo, An Atlas of the Mughal Empire, Gazetteer of the Baroda State.                                                  |
| Porbander | Coarse calico, chintz                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | An Atlas of the Mughal Empire                                                                                             |
| Sarkhej   | Indigo, Baftas, Linens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Ain-i-Akbari, English Factories in India (1618-21)                                                                        |
| Sankheda/ | Gumlac, dyeing, and Calico printing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | English Factories in India (1618-                                                                                         |

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|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sankhera |                                                                                                                          | 21), Gazetteer of the Baroda State.                              |
| Surat    | Quilts, Qutni, Narrow Bafta, silk, Zari Embroidery, Aari Khatla work, carpets woven with silk, gold, and silver threads. | English Factories in India (1618-21;1642-45; 1668-69), Tavernier |
| Sobay    | Calico                                                                                                                   | English Factories in India (1622-23)                             |

## Conclusion

Gujarat region, being situated on the western coastline of India, emerged as one of the key regions of textile production centres, which had played an important role in the formation of the economy, culture of the region. Various small ports (*Bara*) were connected to the region and formed a nexus to the coastal and the hinterland of the region. The availability of textiles' raw material, cheap and abundant labour force, availability of commercial capital, easy connectivity to other trade centres, influx of trade, and trade opportunities with the coming of various foreign traders and their demands made the Gujarat region one of the key hubs of the medieval economy.

## Notes and References

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<sup>1</sup> Samira Sheikh, state and society in Gujarat, c. 1200-1500: The Making of a Region, Ph.D. Thesis, Faculty of Modern History, Oxford University, 2003, p.32.

<sup>2</sup> Tavernier, Travels in India, vol. II, trans. by V. Ball, Macmillan Co., London and New York, 1889, p.6; Hamida khatoon Naqvi, Some Varieties of Indian silken stuffs in Persian Sources, c. 1200-1700, Indian Journal of History of Science, 18 (1), 1983, p.117

<sup>3</sup> James McNabb Campbell, ed., Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, vol.1, part 1: History of Gujarat (Bombay: 1896; reprint, History of Gujarat (Ancient, Medieval, Modern), Vintage Books, Gurgaon, 1986, p.2; Cf. Samira Sheikh, op. cit., pp. 25-27

<sup>4</sup> Africans and their descendants in India generally referred as Habsis or sidis in South Asia. For details see, Omar H. Ali, "Habshis and Sidis in India." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*. 22 May. 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.892>.

<sup>5</sup> H. Wilberforce Bell, History of Kathiawad from Earliest Times (1916), p.48, Cf. Samira Sheikh, State and Society, p.36.

<sup>6</sup> Samira Sheikh, State and Society, p.28.

<sup>7</sup> Taziyat al Amsar, trans. in H. M Elliot and John Dowson, The History of India as told by its own Historians, vol. III, 1969; rept. Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, p. 32. Cf. in Samira sheikh, State and Society., p. 29.

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<sup>8</sup> Tavenier, Travels in India, II, p.3

<sup>9</sup> Ghulam Ahmad Nadri, Indigo Production and its organization in Sarkhej during Seventeenth Century, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 1994, vol.55, p.337.

<sup>10</sup> Abul Fazl, Ain I Akbari. II, second Edition, trans. H S Jarrett, annotated by Jadunath Sarkar, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1949, p. 248.

<sup>11</sup> Hamida khatoon Naqvi, some varieties of Indian silken stuffs in Persian sources c. 1200-1700, pp.117-118.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Grey, Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India, 2vols., Hakluyt Society, London, 1891, vols ii, p. 42. Cf. Nishat Manzar, Urban wage earners in seventeenth century India: Artisans, Labourers, Service providers and Entertainers, Manohar Publishers, Delhi, 2021, P.20.

<sup>13</sup> C. G Patil, Trade and Commerce in Western India in 18<sup>th</sup> century, M. Phil, dissertation, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, 1988, pp. 34-37

<sup>14</sup> C. G Patil, Trade and Commerce in Western India in 18<sup>th</sup> century, M.Phil. dissertation, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, 1988, pp. 37-38

<sup>15</sup> Tom Pires, The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires: An Account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan, written in Malacca and India in 1512-1515, The Hakluyt Society, 1944, p.45

<sup>16</sup> Sylvia Houghteling, The Art cloth in Mughal India, Princeton University Press, 2022, p.11

<sup>17</sup> Abul Fazl, in *Ain I Akbari* listed three among the fifteen valuable textiles, coming from the Gujarat region. Abul Fazl, *Ain-I- Akbari* (Persian), p. 105. Cf. Sylvia Houghteling, The Art Cloth in Mughal India, p.33.

<sup>18</sup> Irfan Habib and Tapan Ray Chaudhry, Cambridge Economic History of India, vol. I, Cambridge university press, 1982, p.171

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Mirat I Ahmadi (Supplement), Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1928, p.7. Ali Muhammad khan writes ‘*Aqamsha Zarbafi*’ for woollen stuff and for silk ‘*Abreshambafi*’,

<sup>21</sup> Mandelslo’s Travels in India, p.37, Cf. M. S Commissariat, A History of Gujarat, vol. ii, Bombay, 1938, p.299; see also in Mirat I Ahmadi (Supplement), Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1928, P.1.

<sup>22</sup> Mirat I Ahmadi (Supplement), p. 7

<sup>23</sup> William Foster, The English Factories in India hereafter EFI (1642-45), Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1913, p.7.

<sup>24</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-21, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1906, P.51. Ahmadabad made generally ready cotton quilts see also p. 282.

<sup>25</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-21, P.75.

<sup>26</sup> Irfan Habib, An Atlas of the Mughal Empire, p. 26 (sheet No. 8 A).

<sup>27</sup> Mirat -i- Ahmadi, Supplement, p.7.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-21, P.126.

<sup>30</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-21, P.85.

<sup>31</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-21, P.249-50. In EFI records, the meaning of Dimity is not clear, whereas oxford English dictionary explains ‘Dimity’ to a hardwearing cotton fabric woven with striped or checks.

<sup>32</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-21, P.354.

<sup>33</sup> Abul Fazl, Ain I Akbari, vol.2, Eng. trans. H S Jarrett, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949, p.248.

<sup>34</sup> Thevenot and Careri, Indian travels of Thevenot and Careri, Ed. Surendranath Sen, The National Archives of India, New Delhi, 1949, p. 46.

<sup>35</sup> William Foster, The English Factories in India (1646-50), pp.161,167.

<sup>36</sup> Irfan Habib, An Atlas of the Mughal Empire, p. 26 (sheet No. 8 A).

<sup>37</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-21, p. XX-XXI of Introduction.

<sup>38</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-21, P. 113.

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<sup>39</sup> William Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-23*, pp. 50, 72. Cf. Surendra Gopal, *Form of Textile Production in Gujarat in the XVII Century*, proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 1965, Vol.27, p. 220.

<sup>40</sup> Ed William Foster, *The English Factories in India 1622-23* pp. 118. See also Surendra Gopal, *Form of Textile.*, p. 220.

<sup>41</sup> William Foster, *EFI 1618-21*, P. 168.

<sup>42</sup> In Persian 'bafta' refer 'woven', a generic term for plain calico of Gujarat, varying in quality from coarse to fine- the latter was costing double the former. Baftas were sent to Europe were usually white, but for Asian Market they are dyed red, blue and black. John Irwin and P.R. Schwartz, *Studies in Indo-European Textile History*, Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmadabad, 1966, p.59.

<sup>43</sup> William Foster, *EFI 1618-21*, P.7

<sup>44</sup> William Foster, *EFI 1618-21*, P.85

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> William Foster, *EFI 1618-21*, P. 93.

<sup>47</sup> Canekeen ' is said to be from the Mahratti khandaki (Sanskrit khandaka, ' a piece or fragment ') through the Port, canequim; and in 'trycandee ' we may perhaps trace the Sanskrit and Mahratti trikndda, meaning ' three sections '. The former was made from baftas and the latter from dhotis and that their names were due to 'their shortnes and dying ' respectively.

<sup>48</sup> William Foster, *EFI 1618-21*, P.111.

<sup>49</sup> William Foster, *EFI 1618-21*, PP. 117, 144, 148, 167.

<sup>50</sup> William Foster, *EFI 1618-21*, P. 179.

<sup>51</sup> William Foster, *EFI 1618-21*, P.338.

<sup>52</sup> Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, p. 26, (Notes- sheet No. 8 A). here also mentioned Navnagar, Porbandar, Baroda, Mangrol, Bulsar in Gujarat and Mahmudabad, Baglana (Maratha), and Nandarbar were the centres where cotton stuffs were woven.

<sup>53</sup> William Foster, *EFI 1618-21*, P. 87.

<sup>54</sup> Rao Bahadur G.H. Desai & A. B Clarke, *Gazetteer of the Baroda state*. Vol.1, SSDN Publishers & Distributors, 1923, reprint in 2014, p. 401.

<sup>55</sup> Rao Bahadur, *opcit*, p. 402.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, p. 26 (sheet 8 A); Ghulam Ahmad Nadri, *Exploring the Gulf of Kutch: The Regional Economy and Trade in the Eighteenth Century*, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2008, Vol. 51, No. 3, p. 468.

<sup>58</sup> J. Wicki, ed., 'Duas Releos Sobre a Situacao da India portuca nos Anos 1568 e 1569, studies viii (1961), p.177. this is quoted by M.N Pearson, *Banyas and Brahmin in Coastal Western India*, Delhi, 1981, p. 105.

<sup>59</sup> Aijaz Bano, *Socio-political condition of Gujarat during the 15<sup>th</sup> century*, unpublished thesis, Dept. of history, AMU, 1988, p.30.

<sup>60</sup> William Foster, *EFI 1618-21*, P. 93. Oxford English Dictionary defines as a blue and white stripped cloth manufactured in India; Brawl possibly derived from 'Biral' in hind which means 'open in texture and fine.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* see also p. 111; *EFI 1646-50*, p. 161.

<sup>62</sup> Tom Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires: An Account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan*, written in Malacca and India in 1512-1515, The Hakluyt Society, 1944, p.44.

<sup>63</sup> P.B Joshi explains this – a kind of cloth made by the process of panjani or sizing.

<sup>64</sup> William Foster, *EFI 1618-21*, P. 178.

<sup>65</sup> William Foster, *Letter Received by East India Company From its Servants in the East 1615*, Vol. III, Sampson Low, Marston and Company, London, 1899, p. 32.

<sup>66</sup> William Foster, *EFI 1618-21*, PP. 293-94.

<sup>67</sup> William Foster, *EFI 1618-21*, PP. 351-52.

<sup>68</sup> Sir George Watt, *The Commercial Products of India*, New Delhi, 1966, p. 664.

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<sup>69</sup> Duarte Barbosa, *Book of Barbosa: An Account of The Countries Bordering to The Indian Ocean and Their Inhabitants*, vol. I, pp. 7-8, 20-23, 31.

<sup>70</sup> William Foster, Letter Received by East India Company from its servants in the East 1613-15, vol. II, Sampson Low, Marston and Company, London, 1897, p.5.

<sup>71</sup> William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1618-21)*, thereafter EFI 1618-21, the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1906. P.28.

<sup>72</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-21, P.46. Dotted was very coarse and strong cloth from which dhotis are apparently made. Mr. Crooke says at present time a coarse cotton cloth woven by Dhed community in Surat as Dhoti. see also, John Irwin and P.R. Schwartz, *Studies in Indo-European Textile History*, Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmadabad, 1966, p.64; whereas in common Hindi parlance dhoti refers to lion-cloth, which Yusuf Ali stated 'the dhoti, a piece of cloth usually worn by Hindu men, indeed universally worn by them, except those who have adopted Musalman and European Styles of dress'. A. Yusuf Ali, *A Monograph on Silk Fabrics, The N-W. Provinces and Oudh Govt. Press*, 1900, Reprint. Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmadabad, 1974, p.74.

<sup>73</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-1620, pp. 62, 64, 76. See also, Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, p.26 (sheet No. 8 A).

<sup>74</sup> Rao Bahadur, op. cit., p. 401.

<sup>75</sup> EFI 1622-23, pp. 99-100.

<sup>76</sup> A. Yusuf Ali mentions, 'Sari, probably so called because it covers the entire body (sara badan); the gender on account of its invariable association with feminine garments'. A. Yusuf Ali, op. cit., p.71.

<sup>77</sup> Rao Bahadur, op. cit., P. 401. See also EFI, 1622-23, P.310; EFI, 1634-36, P. 136; EFI, 1637-41, P. 277.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> M.S Commissariat, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India*, Oxford, 1931, p.15.

<sup>80</sup> Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, p. 26 (sheet No. 8 A), See also Mirat (supplement), p. 244.

<sup>81</sup> M.S Commissariat, *Mandelslo's Travels in western India*, Oxford, 1931, p. 15.

<sup>82</sup> Rao Bahadur, op. cit. P. 402, see also Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, p. 26 (sheet No. 8 A).

<sup>83</sup> Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, p. 26 (sheet No. 8 A); According to Chandramani Singh Dupatta was 'A piece of material usually three meters long and one and half meter wide, women wear it with Ghaghara, kurti and kanchali. It covers head and right shoulder and taken across the skirt is tucked into the waist or sometimes is left hanging in the front'. Chandramani Singh, p.162. Whereas, A. Yusuf Ali mentions that it is 'literally a cloth in two widths: formerly these pieces were woven narrow, and were joined alongside of one another to produce the proper width; now however, the dupatta is all woven in one piece...it was worn either round the head or over the shoulders and used by both men and women, Hindu and Muhammadan. A. Yusuf Ali, op. cit., p.71.

<sup>84</sup> Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, p. 26 (sheet No. 8 A).

<sup>85</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-21, P. 278.

<sup>86</sup> Abul Fazl, *Ain-i- Akbari*, tr. Blochmann and Jarrett, vol. II, Low Price Pub., Delhi, 2011, p. 115.

<sup>87</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-21, P. 343.

<sup>88</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-21, P. 308.

<sup>89</sup> Rao Bahadur, op. cit., p. 402.

<sup>90</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-21, P. 10. Here Ufflet defines Cuttane as 'a kind of satten, half cotton, half silk.

<sup>91</sup> William Foster, EFI 1618-21, P. 10.

<sup>92</sup> EFI, 1642-45, P. 204.

<sup>93</sup> EFI 1668-69, P.194; Tavernier, *Travels in India* (Ed) W. Crooke, vols., 2, London, 1928, rptd. 1977, II, P.3.

<sup>94</sup> EFI, 1622-23, pp. 99-100.

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<sup>95</sup>Anil Mulchandi, the Hidden Treasures of Gujarat.

[https://www.gujarattourism.com/content/dam/gujrattourism/images/articles/handicrafts\\_5\(1\).pdf](https://www.gujarattourism.com/content/dam/gujrattourism/images/articles/handicrafts_5(1).pdf),

accessed on 15 May 2024.

<sup>96</sup> Tavernier, vol.II, p.3.