

PREFACE

Many scholars have studied trade and commerce of Western India in the 17th century in great details. But very little light has been thrown on the commercial activities in Western India during the 18th century. Therefore, an attempt has been made here to give an account of the commercial activities in Western India in the 18th century. The study of Pamela Nightingale entitled 'Trade and Empire in Western India : 1784-1806' throws light on the commercial activities in Western India during the last two decades of the 18th century only. Another work throwing light on commerce of Western India is 'Bombay in the Mid-18th Century' by Holden Furber. However, there is only one Chapter dealing with this aspect and there the author mainly discusses the country trade of Bombay and Surat. Thus, much remains to be known about trade and commerce in Western India in the 18th century. Other work throwing some light on this subject is 'The Cambridge Economic History of India', Volume I and II. Information in these two Volumes on this subject is very meagre. It was, therefore, considered worthwhile to study the commercial activities in Western India in the 18th century in some detail. This has been done with the help of unpublished sources, published correspondence and numerous other secondary works.

Western India comprises roughly the long narrow coastal area from the Rann of Kutch to North Kanara, the wide flat Gujarat plains and the Deccan Plateaus.¹ Here, for the sake of convenient handling of the materials, concept of Western India has

1. Dharma Kumar : The Cambridge Economic History of India, Vol.II, p.177.

been limited to the area covered by present States of Gujarat, Maharashtra and district of North Canara of Karnataka State.

Trade and commerce in Western India has been studied from various points of view such as export and import pattern, the participation of the European Companies in Trade, Indian merchants, banking, ship-building, taxes, etc. It must be noted that published records are not sufficient enough to throw necessary light on the commercial activities in Western India during the 18th century. They provide very little information as far as the statistical aspect of commerce is concerned. Hence, a researcher working on this subject faces certain difficulties while discussing the volume of trade and the changes occurring in seaborne and inland trade during the 18th century.

However, it does not mean that the sources do not say absolutely nothing about statistical account of the trade. The sources do provide some information in this regard and that has been utilized fully to discuss and analyse the volume of trade, prices of the commodities, etc. Here the records of the foreign merchants as well as the records in Marathi language have been utilized for preparing this Dissertation. The records in English, especially the correspondence of the English East India Company is useful in this regard. Letters of the English factory at Surat and Bombay throw light on the commercial activities in Western India during the 18th century. These records are particularly useful to understand the commerce in Gujarat and Bombay. The records in

Marathi throw light on trade and commerce in the area of Maharashtra under the Peshwas.

While preparing this Dissertation, certain records have been found most useful as sources. These sources can be classified into three categories such as:

- i) Records of the English East India Company;
- ii) Travel Accounts;
- iii) Marathi Sources.

Records of the English East India Company. There are numerous unpublished letters written by the servants of the English East India Company from various factories such as Surat, Karwar, Bankot, etc. The correspondence maintained between various factories and Bombay grew in volumes during the years. The correspondence was of a variety of nature, both commercial and diplomatic, giving details of commercial transactions, particularly of the English East India Company. This correspondence occasionally throws light on the commerce of other European merchants also, as such the Dutch, the French, etc. The unpublished records of Karwar factory and Bankot factory have been made use of for preparing this Dissertation. Some of these records were published by the Archives Department of Bombay Government. G.W. Forrest edited and published some records under the title 'Selection from the Letters, Despatches and other State Papers Preserved in the Bombay Secretariat'. The letters are published in two series, i.e. the Home Series and Maratha Series. Letters published in Home Series, Vols. I and II, were particu-

larly useful to understand the commercial activities in Western India. These are selections from the Surat letters upto 1700, Bombay letters from 1677 to 1742, Surat Diaries 1660-1781, and Bombay Diaries 1722-1788. All these are selections from Company's manuscript records in the Bombay Secretariat. Another compilation by Forrest entitled 'Maratha Series' Vol.I, throws light especially on the political relations between the Marathas and the English.

Travel Accounts and Contemporary Writers. Travel Accounts of Alexander Hamilton (1688-1723), account of Forbes, who visited India in the second half of the 18th century and account of Milburn are also found to be useful to understand commerce in Western India in the 18th century.

Marathi Sources. There are numerous Marathi sources, both published and unpublished, regarding the history of Maharashtra of the 18th century. Marathi documents published under title 'Selections from the Satara Raja's and Peshwa's Diaries', Vols.I to IX were found most useful for understanding economic conditions in Maharashtra in the 18th century.

Besides all the above mentioned sources, several volumes of "Gazetteers of Bombay Presidency" and Gazetteers of Gujarat and Maharashtra States were made use of while preparing this work. The works of modern historians such as K.N.Chaudhuri, Pamela Nightingale and K.N.Chitnis were also found useful in understanding several aspects of Indian and foreign trade of Western India in the 18th century.

I must mention my gratitude to the persons who helped me while preparing this Dissertation in many ways. I profusely thank Dr.M.A.Lohar, my research-guide, who guided me at every stage while preparing this Dissertation. I also thank the Librarians of Shivaji University; Rajaram College, Kolhapur; Poona University, Pune; Bombay University and the Department of Archives, Maharashtra State, for providing me the necessary sources and books in their libraries.

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