

Portuguese in North Konkan: Rise and Fall



Portuguese in North Konkan: Rise and Fall

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled, “Portuguese in North Konkan: Rise and Fall” is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Master of Arts in History at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University under the Supervision of Dr. Seema S. Risbud and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will be not be responsible for the correctness of observations other findings given in the dissertation.

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COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation report "The Portuguese in North Konkan: Rise and Fall" is a bonafide work carried out by Ms. Triveni Namdev Naik Tari under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in the discipline History at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University.

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PREFACE

During the early 16th century, Portuguese wanted to monopolize the spice trade. Their arrival in North Konkan was seen as establishing maritime trade, marked by the establishment of trading outposts and fortified settlements along the coastline.

The zenith of Portuguese influence in North Konkan came with the capture of key ports like Bassein and Chaul. These acquisitions enabled the Portuguese to exercise considerable control over trade routes and assert dominance in these regions.

However, the Portuguese supremacy was not unchallenged. Rival Maratha power and European powers, most notably the British, began attacking on Portuguese-held territories in the late 17th century, which led to Portuguese struggle for dominance in the Indian Ocean.

The dissertation will highlight reasons for establishment of the Portuguese hegemony in North Konkan. It will study the impact of coastal trade on North Konkan's economy and important trading ports in North Konkan. Lastly, it will include the reasons behind the decline and fall of Portuguese power from North Konkan.

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I am greatly indebted to the staff and authorities of institutions like Goa Archives, Goa University Library, Central Library, Xavier Center of Historical Research, Dr. Francisco Luis Gomes District Library, for providing me with valuable material related to my topic,

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I sincerely thank my parents, sisters and friends for their guidance, help, support and encouragement.

Last, I thank the Almighty for bestowing my good health to carry out my work.

GLOSSARY

Arrack – A type of liquor

Bazaar – A market

Calamo aromatico – a medicinal herb

Cartaz – The Sailing permit

Ilha de Boa Vida – the Island of good life

Kim- kinvam – the fermented juice of the coastal palm trees

Koh- kund – mountain or a ditch at the foot of the mountain

Kon – the top of the mountain

Konku – uneven ground

Renda de Cambay, Ormuz e outra costa – the duty on goods from Cambay, Hormuz and other regions

Renda da Praia – income from the beach

Vas – to dwell

Kong – name of the tribe

CONTENTS

Chapter	Particulars	Page No.
	Declaration	
	Certificate	
	Preface	i
	Acknowledgement	ii
	Glossary	iii
	Abstract	iv
1	Introduction	1 To 13
2	Portuguese in North Konkan: Chaul, Bassein and Bombay	15 To 31
	2.1. Portuguese Presence in Chaul	17 To 23
	2.2. Korlai	23
	2.3. Dabhol	23 To 25
	2.4. Portuguese Presence in Bassein	26 To 30
	2.5. Portuguese Presence in Bombay	30 To 31
3	Port Economy of Chaul and Bassein	32 to 42

	3.1. Economy of Chaul	32 To 36
	3.1.1. Decline in Chaul's Trade	37
	3.2. Economy of Bassein	38 To 42
4	Portuguese Forts: Chaul, Bassein and Korlai	43 To 51
	4.1. Bassein Fort	43 To 46
	4.1.1. Marathas Attack on Bassein Fort	46 To 49
	4.2. Chaul Fort	49 To 51
	4.3. Korlai Fort	51
5	Portuguese Decline in North Konkan	52 To 65
	5.1. Portuguese Decline in Bombay	53
	5.1.1. English Interest in Bombay	53 To 54
	5.1.2. Cession of Bombay	54 To 57
	5.2. Portuguese Decline in Chaul	58
	5.2.1. Nizam and Portuguese	58 To 60
	5.2.2. Portuguese and Marathas	60 To 61
	5.3. Portuguese Decline in Bassein	62 To 66

6	Conclusion	67 To 69
	References	70 To 74
	Appendix I: Portuguese Document	75
	Appendix II: Portuguese Forts	76-77

FIGURES		
Figure No.	Description	Page No.
1.1	Map showing geographical area surveyed	14

ABSTRACT

Portuguese established their hegemony over important port towns in Indian Ocean. They claimed that they were the lord of the sea by introducing Cartazes. Their dominance was felt on the Konkan Coast in the early 16th century. They were in control of important coastal regions such as Daman, Diu, Bombay, Chaul, Bassein, Korlai, Goa, Kochin and others. These strongholds held strategic importance in the maritime trade of the Portuguese in India. Functioning as naval strongholds, they provided essential naval bases for the safe anchorage of ships. However, the rise of indigenous local power of Marathas and their interest in Konkan challenged Portuguese supremacy in Konkan. Political ambition of Marathas to extend Maratha Samrajya in North India was realised by Chatrapati Shahu and Peshwa Bajirao I. At the same time, they were also aiming to take control of North Konkan. Thus began the battle for power between the two. The Marathas captured strongholds like Bassein, leading to a 1740 agreement that saw the Portuguese retain Goa and Daman but cede Chaul. The dissertation scripts in detail the tug of war between Maratha Portuguese in North Konkan. This Conflict eventually led to the downfall of Portuguese in North Konkan. Portuguese were thus left with Goa, Daman and Diu which later they surrendered on 19 December 1961.

Keywords: Portuguese, North Konkan, Chaul, Bassein, Bombay, Maratha.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Portuguese under Vasco da Gama arrived at Calicut on the Malabar coast on 20th May 1498, the Portuguese were of among the first Europeans to arrive in India as traders. The permission to trade was given by the Zamorin who provided them every possible assistance. Through their diplomatic negotiations the Portuguese were able to establish trade and spice monopoly. During the 16th century, the Portuguese established a significant hold and could control strategic locations on the western coast of Maharashtra, India.

The Portuguese wanted to establish their dominance in North Konkan mainly due to its strategic location and presence of Ports on the coast to benefit their commercial activities. The North Konkan coast, located on the Western side of India, offered valuable access to trade routes. Portuguese established control over key ports in the region to facilitate maritime trade and secure their dominance in the spice trade.

In March 1508, the Battle of Chaul unfolded near the port of Chaul marking a significant event in Portugal's early maritime ventures in Asia. The Portuguese, led by Commander Lourenco de Almeida, faced a formidable Islamic fleet commanded by Mir Hussein and armed by Malik Ayaz of Diu. In this encounter, the Portuguese suffered their first naval defeat in Asia.

This setback intensified the struggle for control of the Indian seas between the Portuguese and the established Muslim mercantile powers backed by the Ottoman Empire. Seeking retaliation, Francisco de Almeida, led the Portuguese fleet at Diu to a decisive victory on February 3, 1509.

The port town of Chaul was under the jurisdiction of Nizamshah of Ahmadnagar. The treaty was signed between them according to it, the Portuguese had obtained permission to start the factory at Lower Chaul.

In 1509, the Portuguese first visited Bombay during their journey from Dabhol to Diu, aiming to secure provisions for their fleet. Between 1521- 1524, the Portuguese actively patrolled Bombay, searching for Muslim merchant ships. In 1531, while on the way to capture Diu, the Portuguese fleet, commanded by Nuno da Cunha, halted in Bombay, where a grand military review took place. Subsequently, from 1531- 1533 the north coast and areas like Bassein, Bombay, Mahim and Bandra were compelled to pay tribute. Finally, in 1534, Bombay officially became a Portuguese possession, remaining under their control until 1661.

Afonso de Albuquerque played a crucial role in expanding Portuguese influence in Goa. In 1510, he captured Tiswadi from the hold of Bijapur. Goa was made as the headquarters of the Estado da India. The *Estado da India* refers to the State of India, historically associated with Portuguese India. It was a significant colonial territory for Portugal from the 16th to 20th centuries.

In the 16th century, the local chiefs in the Bassein region willingly became vassals of the Portuguese. Seeking an alliance, the weakened Gujarati Sultan Bahadur Shah offered the Portuguese control over Bassein and permitted the construction of the Diu fortress in 1534. By 1539, Bassein had its own Portuguese fort.

Chaul and Bassein emerged as crucial trading ports under Portuguese rule. These ports played a major role in facilitating trade and maritime activities. Chaul was an important trading port due to its central location on the sea route between Gujarat and Malabar coast. From the port of Chaul one could travel to the ports of Red Sea. Horse trade was very prominent in Chaul, horses

from Arabia and Persia were brought to Chaul and were then sent to the interior parts of Deccan.¹ It served as a significant trade center and a base for Portuguese navy operations.

Another key port was Bassein, strategically located for its proximity to Bombay and its role in the spice trade. The Portuguese strategically utilized these ports to control trade routes, enhance their economic interests and establish a strong presence in the North Konkan region. Horse trade was concentrated in Goa, since the increase in trade flow Goa became an important center of trade.

To maintain their hold in North Konkan region and in order to gain territories, they had conflicts with Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar, Bahadur Shah of Gujarat and the Marathas. They faced major resistance from the Marathas.

In 1737, the Maratha offensive, marked by diplomatic negotiations and military actions, saw significant successes, ultimately gaining the upper hand. By 1739, the Marathas captured key Strongholds, including Bassein, and continued to exert pressure on Goa. The culmination of these events led to a 1740 agreement wherein the Portuguese retained Goa and Daman but ceded Chaul to the Marathas.²

The Portuguese influence in the region declined, as other European powers, particularly the British and the Dutch established their presence and gradually Portuguese power was declined in India.

¹ Gerson Da Cunha, *Notes on the History and Antiquities of Chaul and Bassein* (Bombay: Thacker, Vining & co, 1876), 12- 22.

² Alice Faria, *Portuguese Heritage Around the World: Architecture and Urbanism* (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2011), 87- 98.

Aims and Objectives

The research aims to study the factors contributing to the rise of Portuguese hegemony in the North Konkan region. The North Konkan region, situated on the western coast of India, played a crucial role in terms of Portuguese rule expansion. The study will try to find the significance of the North Konkan region. The research will analyze how Portuguese colonial rule was established in North Konkan. What was the interest of Portuguese in the Konkan region and the dynamics of Portuguese dominance in North Konkan, with a focus on the political aspects of their presence in the region. The study seeks to find out how political and economic policies implemented by the Portuguese initially led to their dominance in North Konkan. The role played by the Marathas in challenging and ultimately replacing Portuguese authority and the impact of English presence on the western coast in contributing to the downfall of Portugal in Konkan.

The research aims to analyze the political conflicts between the Portuguese and Marathas, as well as their subsequent subordination to the English and reasons behind it, as to why Portuguese accepted English supremacy and how these factors culminated in the limited territorial control of Goa, Daman and Diu by the Portuguese. The study will try to find out as to why the Portuguese lost in North Konkan and at the same time could maintain their hold over Goa, Daman and Diu.

Identification of Research Problem

Although political and economic policies of the Portuguese led to their dominance in North Konkan. In due course of time powers such as Marathas and English also entered in Political scenario. They played a major role in having a hold over North Konkan. This impacted Portuguese position in North Konkan. Marathas took initiative to build and organize Navy. This also posed a

great challenge to Portuguese claim that they were the Lord of Sea. An analysis will be done as to how Marathas challenged the Portuguese supremacy in the Arabian Sea.

They established ports for trading purposes, to find out the importance of these ports such as Chaul and Bassein in their political and commercial career. To find out how they maintained their rule, whether there were political alliances with local rulers, and what were the reasons for their decline in North Konkan.

Literature Review

In the book *History of the Konkan* by Alexander Kyd Nairne gives the description of the Konkan region. The book is divided into sections. The first section gives the brief description of Konkan region by early travelers who visited the Konkan region. In the second section the author given antiquarian account of the Konkan region. One section is about Musalmans rule in the Konkan. The section four provides the information related to the research topic i.e. the Portuguese rule in the sixteenth century, here it deals with Portuguese presence in the Konkan region. From section six the author gives detailed account of the Maratha and English rule in the Konkan.³

The work *the Portuguese in India and Other Studies, 1500- 1700* of A.R. Disney is compilation of articles. The articles and papers are presented in a sequence of chapters, focusing particularly on the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Eight of the articles which are compiled into eight chapters were first published in the early 2000s, four in the 1990s, six in the 1980s and the remaining one in 1977. The collection is in four parts, the first of which is entitled The Portuguese in India. The second chapter describes characteristic features of the Portuguese

³ Alexander Kyd Nairne, *History of the Konkan* (New Delhi: Asian Educational services, 2008),43- 52.

empire in India during approximately the period 1550- 1650. It mentions about cession of Bassein to the Portuguese by Sultan Bahadur of Gujarat in 1534.⁴

The work *Medieval Maratha Country* of A.R. Kulkarni is a collection of fourteen research articles which were compiled by A.R. Kulkarni. It contains the variety of articles dealing with political, cultural, architectural, maritime and economic activities of the Marathas in medieval times. A part of the economic activity of the medieval Maharashtra is covered in the article, Business and the Marathas. The articles on women and purification deal with the cultural aspects of medieval Maratha society. The remaining articles are mainly political in nature which are useful in understanding Shivaji's Swaraj and his relations with the English and the Portuguese. It gives a historical background of Portuguese rule in North Konkan which is mentioned in Medieval Chaul. It gives the political history of Chaul region. Mentions about European account on Chaul, socio-religious life of Chaul.⁵

The book entitled *the Portuguese in India Being a History of the Rise and decline of their Eastern Empire* by Frederick Charles Danvers focuses on the arrival of Portuguese in India and its conquests in the region of Goa. The specific area which is relevant for this study is the siege of Chaul, the erection of a Fortress at Chaul and capture of Bassein.⁶

In the work *Notes on the History and Antiquities of Chaul and Bassein* of J. Gerson Da Cunha gives historical account on Chaul and Bassein. The book is divided into two parts, first is

⁴ A. R Disney, *The Portuguese in India and other Studies 1500-1700* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2008), 148- 162.

⁵ A.R Kulkarni, *Medieval Maratha Country* (New Delhi: Books Publishers, 1996), 161- 178.

⁶ Frederick Charles Danvers, *The Portuguese in India: Being A History of the Rise and Decline of their Eastern Empire* (London: W.H. Allen & Co, 1984).

about Chaul followed by Bassein. It gives information on the Geographical position of Chaul and Bassein, various accounts of the origin of the Chaul are given, such as a place abounding in champa trees, followed by designation of Chaul and Bassein by Greek writers, history of Chaul and Bassein under Puranic period, Hindu Authentic period, Mohamedan period, and Portuguese period. Under Portuguese period the Conquest of Bassein by Nuno Da Cunha is an important event which is mentioned in the book, it also mentions about decline and fall under Portuguese period.⁷

The *Origin of Bombay* by J. Gerson Da Cunha focuses on the Bombay under Hindu period, Mohamedan Period and Portuguese period. Chapter IV of this book entirely deals with the Portuguese rule in Bombay. The Author mentions about the discovery of the maritime way to India which was the beginning of commerce, of navigation, and of modern civilization. Travel accounts such as Joao de Barros in his *Decadas* describes the Bombay region. Gaspar Correa, in his work *Lendas da India* refers to Bombay. It gives information on the Portuguese governors such as Nuno Da Cunha who made an advancement to Bassein.⁸

K.S Mathew in his work entitled *Portuguese and Sultanate of Gujarat* throw light on the nobility of Gujarat, a few important Portuguese documents of the sixteenth century related to the history of the Sultanate. Document No.6 entitled Surrender of Bassein and its Revenue which is important for this research, here it mentions about attack on Bassein and its possession in 1534 also, the treaty which was concluded on 23rd December 1533. In the end it gives the original text

⁷Gerson Da Cunha, *Notes on the History and Antiquities of Chaul and Bassein* (Bombay: Thacker, vining & co 1876).

⁸ Gerson Da Cunha, *The Origin of Bombay* (London: Society's library, 1900), 68-152.

in Portuguese which include the treaty followed by the statement of income from Bassein from 1535 to 1543.⁹

The work *History of Bombay* by M. D. David covers the period from 1661-1708. He has adopted an analytical approach to the study. It was the thesis of the author which was converted into book in 1973. The author mentions about the transformation of Bombay into the British headquarters in Western India. In the introductory chapter he mentions about the importance of the West Coast and the Bombay region. He gives the evidence of the Periplus of Erythraean sea and the works of Strabo and Pliny. From periplus it is known that the main ports were Sopara, thana and Kalyan. The author gives the early history of Bombay which include Hindu period and Portuguese period from 1534- 1661. Then it gives the description of cession of Bombay to English, which include marriage treaty, reasons for cession, arrangement for the cession and delay of cession.¹⁰

The work *The Portuguese and the Marathas* of P.R. Kakodkar is the translation of fourteen articles published by Pandurang Pissurlekar in Portuguese e Marathas, the work contains valuable information on the Maratha attack on the Province of North under the possession of the Portuguese. It deals extensively on how Bassein was lost.¹¹

The work *Bassein the Portuguese Interlude* by Teresa Albuquerque focuses on the lesser-known period of Portuguese influence in region of Bassein. It gives comprehensive history of

⁹ K.S. Mathew, *Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth Century* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1983), 175-200.

¹⁰ M.D David, *History of Bombay 1661-1708* (Bombay: University of Bombay, 1973).

¹¹ P.R. Kakodkar, trans., *The Portuguese and the Marathas* (Bombay: State Board for Literature and Culture, 1975), 165- 353.

Bassein. The author has managed to compile valuable data on the political, economic and religious history of the Corte de Norte of Portuguese India. The book starts from the conquest and building of Bassein in the 16th century to its fall in the 18th century. It evaluates the importance of the city for Portuguese and Indian trade. The first chapter gives information about its etymology and how this word got corrupted over the period of time. The author supports her statements by giving the evidences of travel accounts who visited the Bassein. It focuses on the cession of Bassein to Portuguese. It also discusses about how Bombay ceded to British.¹²

The work *Ancient Port at Chaul: Semulla of the Periplus of the Erythraean sea* of Vishwas Gogle focuses on the port of Chaul, particularly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when Portuguese traders engaged in direct trade with the Persian Gulf and East Africa. It gives etymology of Chaul and information on Chaul's strategic central location along the west coast of India, with its connections to the hinterland through Sahyadri mountain passes, contributed to its status as a prominent port.¹³

The article entitled *Portuguese Settlement of the Chaul/Korlai area and the Formation of Korlai Creole Portuguese* by J. Clancy Clements gives a perspective on the social and historical developments surrounding the formation of Korlai Creole Portuguese. It gives a brief overview of the socio-historical background. He gives a brief information on the Portuguese arrival in India. Followed by the Portuguese settlement in Chaul, here author mentions about battle of Chaul .¹⁴

¹² Teresa Albuquerque, *Bassein: The Portuguese interlude* (Mumbai: Wenden offset, 2004), 9- 17.

¹³ Vishwas Gogle, "Ancient Port of Chaul: Semulla. of the Periplus of Erythraean Sea," *Economic and Political weekly* 49, no. 4 (2014): 39-42.

¹⁴ Clancy Clements, "Portuguese Settlement of the Chaul/ Korlai area and the Formation of Korlai Creole Portuguese," *Journal of language Contact* 8 (2015): 13-35.

The work entitled *Medieval Chaul under the Nizam Shahs: An Historic and Archaeological evidence* by Pushkar Sohoni focuses on Chaul, it gives the historical background of Chaul. It also mentions about historical sources which mentions about Chaul. It discusses about battles for the control of Chaul in the beginning and ending of the sixteenth century. Then the rest of the article gives information regarding historical architectures which were found in Chaul.¹⁵

Radhika Seshan's article *the Port city of Chaul* is about how Chaul functioned as a gateway for trade and its commercial routes. Etymology of Chaul is mentioned. She states the town's development by relating it to the trade networks. She states that the specific port of Chaul was not the reason of conflict among South Asian powers, the coast and the trade of the region was contested among different powers, particularly by Bijapur and Ahmednagar, for the entire coast was dotted with ports which were important in the overseas trade of the Arabian Sea. The Author gave the description of Konkan's political history, Chaul under Portuguese rule, importance of Chaul's strategic location.¹⁶

Research Design and Methodology

A scrutiny of Primary and Secondary source material related to Portuguese domination in North Konkan will be done. The textual analysis of the literary sources will be done, this includes books, letters, articles, observation of foreign travelers (Portuguese, Dutch, English and French etc.) and other literary sources. The major Sources for the study are secondary sources.

¹⁵ Pushkar Sohoni, "Medieval Chaul Under the Nizam Shahs an Archaeological and Historical Investigation," *Indian Institute of Science Education and Research*, (2014): 53- 75.

¹⁶ Radhika Seshan, "The Port City of Chaul," *Journal of Indian Ocean World Studies*, 3 (2019): 38-52.

An analysis of archival documents will be done. There are documents in Goa Archives such as treaties between the Portuguese and Peshwa, an attempt will be made to document and study this. An attempt will be made to collect and analyze letters, policies and orders of Portuguese officers.

Archives of Goa provides the Primary sources such as policies, orders, treaties between Maratha – Portuguese, Dutch – Portuguese and English - Portuguese. Pissurlecar collection is available in the Goa University library, Pandurang Pissurlecar's writing serves as a primary source in the research work.

The researcher has consulted Krishnadas Shama State Central Library, Panaji, Goa University Library, Archives of Goa, The Xavier Centre of Historical Research, Porvorim, District Library, Navelim. Besides this above-mentioned repository, the researcher will also try to find out personal archives if any based on the subject.

The expected outcome would be a comprehensive understanding of the impact of Portuguese rule in upper Konkan.

Scheme of Chapters

The first chapter give thorough introduction, the aims and objectives of the study, identification of research problem, literature review, methodology followed by scope and relevance of the study.

The second chapter deals with Portuguese arrival in India. Vasco Da Gama's first voyage to India, establishment of trading ports, development of Portuguese naval fleet, military campaigns and conquest along Konkan coast, will be discussed. It analyzes the Portuguese motives for

expansion in the region and key events leading to their establishment of power in the North Konkan, their hold over Chaul, Bassein and Bombay will be analyzed.

The chapter three provides a thorough examination the Portuguese trade policies and impact on local economy, study of important ports such as Chaul and Bassein and their role in trade and will be discussed.

The chapter four will analyze construction of forts and fortifications of Chaul, Bassein and Korlai, analysis of the strategic locations chosen for these fortresses and their role in defense will be discussed. And also, the conflicts which took place in these forts will be discussed.

The fifth chapter provides the factors leading to the decline of Portuguese power and the impact of Portuguese rule Konkan.

The sixth chapter is about conclusion which include the overview of the research topic.

Scope and Relevance of the Study

The research focuses on the Portuguese hold in the North Konkan region. The study seeks to find the techniques used by Portuguese to establish and sustain their influence over the North Konkan region. The study aims to provide analysis of the strategic approaches implemented by the Portuguese; an enquiry will be made in political aspect of their rule. The research focuses on documenting Portuguese policies regarding North Konkan region and challenges faced by them while administering Chaul and Bassein. It will evaluate the diplomatic engagements and conflicts between the Portuguese and local rulers. The research will contribute to understanding of the dynamics that shaped the North Konkan region during the Portuguese period.

The Portuguese rule in North Konkan is very important part of both the region and the colonial expansion of European powers in North Konkan. This study provides the understanding of colonialism and trade relations of North Konkan. This study provides new perspectives on the Portuguese rule in North Konkan.



Map of Konkan (Source: A R Kulkarni, STVDIA Journal, Lisbon, 1989, p.165)

Fig 1.1: Map of Konkan

CHAPTER 2: PORTUGUESE IN NORTH KONKAN: CHAUL, BASSEIN AND BOMBAY

The Konkan region lies between the western Ghats and Arabian sea. It holds significant strategic importance due to its coastal ports, such as Bassein, Chaul, and Dabhol, which played an important role in international trade during the 16th and 17th centuries. Ports like Chaul and Bassein were strategically positioned at the mouths of navigable rivers, creeks, or inlets, facilitating maritime activities and here shipbuilding also took place. The connectivity of these ports to the hinterland through ghat routes further enhanced their commercial significance.

In the early 16th century, Gujarat extended its dominion over the Konkan coast. In 1495, Mahmud Begada of Gujarat divided the Konkan into five districts, with Thana as the principal one. Mahmud Begada directed his attention towards Bassein and Bombay, establishing a garrison at Nagothna and dispatching an army to Chaul. Historical records, such as *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, indicate that during this period, Daman, Bassein, and Bombay was a part of the kingdom of Gujarat.¹ Notable ports contributing revenue to the Gujarat kings included Agasi, Danda, Bassein, Bhivandi, Kalyan, Bombay, and Panvel.

Over time, changes in shipping and navigation, including the evolution of larger ships in the seventeenth century, influenced the rise and decline of various Konkan ports. The importance of specific creeks like Danda Rajapur and Chaul Revadanda on the North Konkan coast added to the region's maritime significance.

¹ J Campbell, *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol I. (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1896), 151-152.

The North Konkan Region was characterized by distinct areas with specialized products. Bassein was known for its diverse produce, including rice, sugarcane, fruits, almonds, saffron, salt, toddy, oil, fish, teak, milk, and beads. Meanwhile, Chaul's specialties, such as silk, coconut, henna, wheat, vegetables, millets, rice, sesame, oil of sesame, sandalwood, lacquer, *Calamo aromatico* (a medicinal herb), ginger, pepper, and cardamom. These unique product offerings in each region contributed to their economic importance and trade relations.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Portuguese, Dutch and English were the major foreign powers in the North Konkan ports, these powers mainly competed for trade.

In 1498, Vasco da Gama led an expedition to Calicut, mainly to find sea route to India. The Portuguese monarch, D. Manuel, sought to establish a direct sea route to India primarily for commercial reasons. The Portuguese aimed to dominate the spice trade with Europe. They built forts in Cochin and Cannanore. The first Portuguese Viceroy, Francisco de Almeida (1505 AD), had limited success in advancing Portuguese interests in India. However, Affonso de Albuquerque played crucial role, occupying several port cities in India.

In the 16th century, the Portuguese established their strong presence along the western coast of Maharashtra. The Portuguese were the first to establish in Chaul, Bassein and Bombay along the North Konkan coast.

By the close of the 15th century, as the coastal territories stretching from Goa to Bassein came under the sway of Bijapur and Gujarat, on the other hand the Portuguese navigated around the Cape of Good Hope, making their presence felt on the Calicut coast. In the initial decades of the 16th century, the Portuguese encountered resistance from the powerful Sultans of Gujarat, who

held sway over the region extending up to Mahim in Thana district. Subsequently, the Portuguese engaged in conflict with the Sultans of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur.

Chapter 2.1: Portuguese presence in Chaul

In the year 1510, Portuguese seized Goa from the Adilshah of Bijapur. Subsequently, in 1514, Portuguese appeared in the region of Chaul which was located in North Konkan region of Maharashtra, it possesses a strategic position along the river Kundalika to the south, tributaries of the Kundalika river to the east, and the Arabian Sea to the west. Positioned at the modern Alibaug taluka of Raigad district, this town developed at the foothill northeast of the port.

In ancient times, the town of Chaul had various names across different historical accounts. Referred to as Champavati in ancient records, the anonymous traveler in the Periplus of Erythraean Sea identified it as Simylla, while the Arabs recognized it as Saimur. In European travelogues, Chaul was documented as cevul or chivil.¹

Chaul held prominence as a busy and renowned trading center across Asia, primarily attributed to its strategic position along the sea route connecting Gujarat and the Malabar coast. Its geographical advantage extended to facilitating convenient sailing routes to the ports of the Red Sea. This central location made Chaul a vital transitory trading hub where merchants from diverse parts of Asia engage in commerce with various commodities. Notably, spices of different varieties such as pepper, cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon and others, coconuts, drugs, palm-sugar, wax, and emery were among the goods transported to Chaul from the ports along the Malabar coast.

¹ Gerson Da Cunha, *Notes on the History and Antiquities of Chaul and Bassein*. (Bombay: Thacker, Vining & co, 1876),7-9.

Chaul played an important role in historical trade, serving as a center point for the transportation of horses from Arabia and Persia. Cotton goods like *beirames* and *beatilhas* were transported to Diu from Dabhol and Chaul.² Muslim merchants from Chaul and Dabhol would gather textiles.

The port also witnessed the flow of various textiles from Gujarat. In return, the Deccan region contributed grains such as rice, millet and fine muslin, which were transported to the ports along the Malabar coast.

Additionally, Chaul served as a significant point for the export of spices, textiles, and various merchandise to Hormuz, Aden, and Jedda. This maritime center attracted merchants, with some establishing permanent settlements while others visited the town specifically for trade between December and March.³

Ship-building thrived as a prevalent craft in Chaul, with carpenters facing limited demand, resulting in inexpensive labor within the town. Building a ship in Chaul required less time and expenditure compared to the Malabar coast, prompting the Portuguese to favor ship construction in this area. Textile industry also flourished, with cotton sourced from the Deccan and silk from Persia and China.

The people of Chaul were from diverse ethnic groups. According to Masudi, a tenth-century traveler, the town housed around ten thousand Arabs originating from Siraf, Oman, Baghdad, and Basra.⁴ Arabs played a significant role in overseeing trade between India and the

² K. S Mathew, *Portuguese and the Sultanate of Gujarat (1500-73)*, (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1986), 56.

³ A.B. Rajeshirke, *Society and economy of the Portuguese Chaul in the Sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*". PhD Thesis (Maharaja Sayajirao University, 1989), 8.

⁴ A.B. Rajeshirke, *Society and Economy*, 10.

Red Sea through Chaul. Additionally, the community comprised Parsis, Jews, Armenians, Chinese, Jains, and Hindus.

In 1490, Ahmad Nizamshah established an independent principality of the Nizamshahi of Ahmadnagar. During the expansion of his rule, which comprised 25 kingdoms, Chaul came under his dominion. It was under the governance of the Nizamshahi that the Portuguese arrived in the 16th century.

According to A.R. Kulkarni, *Mahikavatichi Bakhar*, which is composed by Keshavachrya and other between 1448 to 1678, gives some details about political history of Chaul up to the advent of the Portuguese.⁵

During Malik Ayaz's as a governor of Diu, Diu flourished as a vital entrepot, fostering trade connections with diverse trade hubs along the Malabar coast, including Bhatkal, Goa, Chaul, and Dabhol on the west coast of India. Diu became a center for the exchange of coconuts, arecanut, jaggery, emery, wax, and iron from the Malabar coast. Cotton and textiles from Chaul and Dabhol found their way to Diu, serving as commodities for re-export to Arabia and Persia.⁶

The Portuguese, asserting their maritime dominance, imposed rigorous constraints upon ships. The decline in ships, notably from Calicut in the south, resulted in an insufficient spices reaching Diu. This led to fatal blow to Diu's trade, causing severe financial setbacks for Malik Ayaz. Adding to the this, Affonso de Albuquerque seized a vessel of Malik Ayaz in the waters of the straits of Ormuz.

⁵ A.R. Kulkarni, *Medieval Chaul*, 104.

⁶ K. S. Mathew, *Portuguese and the Sultanate of Gujarat*, 28.

Not only Malik Ayaz but several others faced the impact of Portuguese efforts to change the route of Asian goods from the traditional Levantine paths to the one through the Cape of Good Hope. The Zamorin of Calicut voiced concerns about the disruption of trade, navigation, and revenue in his kingdom due to the strict measures imposed by the Portuguese, altering the established trade patterns.

In the early 16th century, spices from India found their way to Europe through a trade route passing through Beirut, Cairo, and Alexandria. These crucial centers were under the jurisdiction of the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, who derived a significant portion of their revenue through customs duties imposed on these valuable commodities. The Mamluk Sultan held sway over this lucrative trade, benefiting financially from their strategic control over the spice route.⁷ However, when the Portuguese sought to assert dominance over the trade and routes connecting India and the Red Sea, it significantly impacted the revenue of the Mamluk Sultan.

The Venetians and other European traders engaged in commerce with the Arabs in the Red Sea issued a warning to the Sultan. They expressed their intention to withdraw from trade unless concrete measures were taken. In 1502, the Venetians faced difficulties in obtaining an adequate supply of spices from Beirut and Alexandria, leading to their return to Venice in 1504.⁸

The Sultan, determined to oust the Portuguese from the Indian Ocean, forged a coalition with Indian rulers. Venetians aided the Sultan of Egypt by supplying artillery, carpenters, and caulkers.

⁷ R.S Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India 1497-1550* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1989), 115-116.

⁸ A.B. Rajeshirke, 59-62.

The Egyptian fleet, led by Mir Hussein, set sail from Cairo on February 15, 1507, reaching Diu on September 20th of the same year. On the Indian side, Malik Ayaz, Governor of Diu, commanded the fleet of Sultan Mahmud Shah Begada of Gujarat. The combined fleet arrived at Chaul in January 1509, challenging the Portuguese armada commanded by Dom Lourenco da Almeida.⁹

In this battle, the Portuguese suffered defeat, with heavy casualties – 140 soldiers lost, 124 wounded, and their commander, Dom Lourenco da Almeida, was killed.¹⁰ Malik Ayaz captured several Portuguese as prisoners. Malik Ayaz didn't treat the captives harshly, even consoling the grieving viceroy with letters of sympathy.¹¹ Meanwhile, he prepared for a possible confrontation with the viceroy and advised merchants to be ready for any developments.

Upon learning of the Portuguese defeat at Chaul, Dom Francisco da Almeida departed from Cannanore to Diu in February 1509 with nineteen ships and 1,200 soldiers to avenge his son's death. In February 1509, the viceroy arrived in Diu, where the Turks and men-at-arms under Malik Ayaz were alerted to the Portuguese forces. In a decisive turn of events, the Portuguese emerged victorious, defeating the combined fleet at Diu and compelling the Sultan of Gujarat to pay the stipulated war indemnity to the King of Portugal.

⁹ Gerson Da Cunha, *Notes on the History and Antiquities of Chaul and Bassein*. (Bombay: Thacker, Vining & co, 1876), 12- 22.

¹⁰ Mathew K.S, *History of the Portuguese Navigation in India (1497 – 1600)* (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1988), 207-208.

¹¹ R.S Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power*, 118.

During his journey to Cochin, Dom Francisco da Almeida also made the Ahmad Nizamshah of Ahmadnagar, a key power in the Afro-Asian alliance, into forming a friendly alliance with the Portuguese and releasing the Portuguese prisoners.¹²

The conflict between the Afro-Asian alliance and the Portuguese facilitated an agreement with Sultan Ahmad Nizamshah of Ahmadnagar, who governed the port town of Chaul. The Portuguese pressed Ahmad Nizamshah for a war indemnity of thirty thousand cruzados and an annual tribute of twelve thousand cruzados to the King of Portugal. Faced with the Sultan's reluctance due to heavy losses in the battle, both parties eventually reached a compromise and signed a treaty in 1509. As per the agreement, the Portuguese secured permission to establish a factory in Lower Chaul. In 1516 under the Governorship of Lopo Soares de Albergaria, established a large scale factory.¹³ Meanwhile, Malik Ayaz tried to prevent this by influencing the sultan. However, in 1521, the sultan of Ahmadnagar allowed the Portuguese to construct the fortress. Despite Malik Ayaz sending a fleet to discourage them, the Portuguese successfully proceeded with their fortifications in Chaul.

The Portuguese also promised protection to Sultan Ahmad Nizamshah or his son against potential attacks from neighboring powers. Additionally, the Sultan agreed to exempt Portuguese commodities from customs duties in Chaul.

With the treaty signed in 1509, the first Portuguese factory emerged beyond the Malabar coast. Primarily dedicated to acquiring textiles from Gujarat, it also played a crucial role in

¹² Frederick Charles Danvers, *The Portuguese in India: Being A History of the Rise and Decline of their Eastern Empire* (London: W.H. Allen & Co, 1984), 141.

¹³ Gerson Da Cunha, *Notes on the History and Antiquities*, 34.

provisioning rice, vegetables, wheat, wine, and other necessities to the naval armadas safeguarding the western coast of India.

The *feitor* or factor played a significant role as the leader of the factory, overseeing independent trade operations. Joao Fernandes, the initial factor at Chaul, was succeeded by Fernao Lemos, and their tenures typically lasted three years. Francisco Carnivell, serving from 1511 to 1513, exemplified the responsibilities of a factor, managing the sale of royal trade articles and acquiring goods for export. The factor's position was crucial in facilitating trade transactions, supported by roles such as writers, interpreters, and other officials within the factory. Carnivell later transferred to Goa.

Chapter 2.2: Korlai

Originally known as the Morro de Chaul or Hill of Chaul, it is situated on the western edge of the Kundalika river, directly across from Chaul. It had the ability to effectively control the river mouth. The Portuguese, after fortifying the Chaul feitoria in 1521, constructed an observation tower on the promontory, along with a defensive wall on the north end. However, the wall was later dismantled following objections from the Sultan of Ahmadnagar.¹⁴

The Korlai fort was constructed by the Portuguese to protect the Revdanda creek, the Korlai fort is situated on a small hill approximately 300 feet above the sea. Positioned at the southernmost extent of the empire's control, Korlai held significant importance as a strategic fortification.

¹⁴ Amita Kanekar, *Portuguese Sea Forts Goa with Chaul, Korlai and Vasai* (Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2015), 105-111.

Chapter 2.3: Dabhol

In the medieval period, it is often mentioned that Chaul and Dabhol were the prominent ports along the Konkan coast. Dabhol, in particular, gained significant importance in medieval times, and its commercial significance increased. The reason behind this was the import of horses from Arabia through the port of Dabhol.

Dabhol is in the Ratnagiri district of the Konkan region. It lies about two miles from the sea, along the banks of the Vashishti River, to the north of the mountainous terrain. Around 85 miles in the southeast direction of Mumbai, there is a port called Dabhol Bandar. The name Dabhol is derived from the ancient name Dalbhya, associated with the sage Dalbhya. In ancient times, the town was known as Dalbhavati, and over the years, it underwent a transformation to be called Dabhol.¹⁵ It served as a significant harbor, facilitating the export of goods such as cotton from places like Goa, Dabhol and Chaul to Persia.

In 1508, the Portuguese faced defeat in Chaul and Francisco de Almeida, to avenge the loss of his son, attacked on Dabhol on November 12, 1508. It was a three-day ruthless assault on Dabhol, causing widespread destruction of homes, buildings, and mosques. The Portuguese displayed extreme cruelty, indiscriminately killing men, women, children. Despite the terror, Dabhol eventually managed to repel the Portuguese forces.

¹⁵ Taluka Dapoli. *History of Dabhol Part 2 – Adilshahi and Portuguese Conflict (16th Century)*. <https://talukadapoli.com/history/dabhol-adilshahi-and-portuguese-conflict/>. (Accessed on 12 March 2024).

In 1510, following the devastation caused by Almeida, the Portuguese shifted their attention to Goa, capturing it from the Adil Shahi Sultanate. Almeida's aggression in Dabhol marked a turning point, leading to increased fortifications and defense measures in the city.

The international trade of Dabhol flourished, serving as a vital hub for ships carrying various goods from places like Mecca, Aden, Hormuz, Diu and the Malabar Coast. Barbosa, a Portuguese traveler in 1518, described Dabhol as a significant trading center with wealthy merchants, including Hindus, engaged in the export of copper and lead.

Despite the initial attack in 1508, Dabhol managed to recover and retain its importance as a thriving maritime and trade hub, as evident from Barbosa's observations. In the year 1520, Adil Shah proposed to the Portuguese that they provide protection to the horses which they were importing to Dabhol, and in return, establish friendly relations.¹⁶

The Portuguese rejected this proposal, and two years later, in 1522, they plundered Dabhol once again. Despite this, Dabhol eventually recovered, and by 1540, it had transformed into a significant city, attracting traders and buyers from across the world.

In the following years, the prosperity of the city continued. However, in 1547, the Portuguese once again attacked Dabhol, causing significant destruction. In 1548, a treaty was established between Bijapur and the Portuguese, designating Dabhol as a port where the Portuguese would control the passes and manage trade activities.

¹⁶ Taluka Dapoli. *History of Dabhol Part 2 – Adilshahi and Portuguese Conflict (16th Century)*. <https://talukadapoli.com/history/dabhol-adilshahi-and-portuguese-conflict/>. (Accessed on 12 March 2024).

To implement this, the Portuguese paid 2,000 gold cruzados annually to Adil Shah in 1554. Despite this agreement, the Portuguese attacked Dabhol again between 1554 and 1557.

Chapter 2.4: Portuguese presence in Bassein

The island of Bassein was surrounded by the Vaitarani River to the north, the Bassein strait to the south, a narrow channel to the east, and the Arabian Sea to the west. This location attracted Arab traders who frequented Bassein.¹⁷ Although no longer an island today, it has ceased to be a port, except for local craft. Locally called Vasai from the Sanskrit verb root *Vas*, meaning ‘to dwell,’ it became Basai during Muslim rule, Bacaim under Portuguese influence, and Bassein under English rule from 1818 onward.¹⁸

Bassein played a crucial role in timber trade, exporting large quantities to Mecca. The Portuguese were keenly interested in Bassein due to its significant location.

In 1509, the Portuguese, led by Dom Francisco de Almeida on his way to Diu, first set foot on the coast of Bassein¹⁹. They seized a Muslim ship in Bombay’s harbor, capturing twenty-four individuals from Gujarat. This act provided them with sheep and rice, supplemented by cattle from various locations, including the fort of Mahim. Fearing the Portuguese, who had gained hold in Dabhol, the local people sought refuge in the mountains. It wasn’t until 1526 that a trading post, or factory, was established in Bassein.

¹⁷ Teresa Albuquerque, *Bassein: The Portuguese interlude* (Mumbai: Wenden offset, 2004), 9- 17.

¹⁸ Neeta Khandpekar, *Konkan Coast a Socio Economic Study*, 38.

¹⁹ Gerson Da Cunha, 132.

In 1528, Lopo Vas de Sampaio engaged in a significant naval battle nearby, seizing seventy-three ships. Thirty-three of these were deemed serviceable, while the rest were set ablaze.²⁰ This event led to Bombay becoming tributary.

By 1533, Bassein was under the control of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, with Malik Tughan appointed as its commander. Nuno da Cunha, the governor of Portuguese India (1529-38) on his way to Bassein learned of defensive preparations against a potential Portuguese attack. Recognizing the hindrance posed by the formidable fort of Bassein to Portuguese naval movements, they decided to curb Bahadur Shah's growing influence.

Nuno da Cunha disembarked his soldiers along the Bassein coast, launching a fierce assault on the still-under-construction fort. Despite Malik Tughan's efforts, Nuno da Cunha's strategic brilliance prevailed, leading to a Portuguese victory with minimal casualties on their side.

Bahadur Shah, facing pressure from the Mughal Emperor Humayun in the north, decided to resolve issues with the Portuguese in the south around 1534.²¹ Seeking Portuguese assistance against the Mughal challenge, he sent Xacoes (Shah Khawjeh) to Nuno da Cunha with an offer to hand over Bassein and its surrounding areas. The Treaty of Bassein was then signed in 1534 aboard the galleon San Mateos.²²

According to the agreement, Bahadur Shah ceded the Island of Bassein, including lands like Agashi, Salsette, Karanja, Thana, Elephanta, and Bombay, along with its jurisdiction and revenues, to the King of Portugal. Under this treaty, Gujarat ships bound for the Red Sea had to obtain a *Cartaz* from the Portuguese Captain of the North at Bassein. Additionally, no warships

²⁰ Gerson Da Cunha, 132.

²¹ Gerson Da Cunha, 134.

²² Gerson Da Cunha, 135-136.

were to be built in Gujarat, and horses from Arabia and Ormuz had to pass through Bassein for the first three years after the completion of the Portuguese fortress, subject to duties. Bassein, thereafter, remained a prominent hub for Arab horse trade for an extended period.

After the signing of treaty, Nuno da Cunha established a new city, shaped like a somewhat oval decagon, it spanned about a mile and a half in circumference. A citadel replaced the old fort demolished in 1533, with Garcia de Sa appointed as its first Captain, later given to Governorship in 1548.

The Portuguese governed Bassein for approximately two hundred and ten years, witnessing its gradual ascent to a state of grandeur, earning the title ‘a *Corte do Norte*’ or ‘the Chief city of the North.’ Bassein comprised eight divisions, including Saibana or Bassein proper, the Kasaba of Thana, the Islands of Salsette, Karanja, and Sambayo (Belapur and Shahabaz), the Pargana of Asheri, and finally, the Islands of Bombay and Colaba.²³

The Portuguese decided to make Bassein their main northern capital and port in 1534, even though Bombay was already part of their territory. The choice of Bassein was influenced by the navigation needs and favorable geography of the sixteenth century. Back then, Bombay wasn’t ideal for navigation because ships were small. However, in the seventeenth century, as ships became larger and needed deeper anchorage, Bombay became more suitable for handling these bigger vessels.²⁴

²³ K.S. Mathew, *Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth Century* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1983), 175-177.

²⁴ Neeta Khandpekar, 39-41.

After the conquest of Daman in 1560, the entire coastline from Daman to Chaul in North Konkan became Portuguese territory. This area, known as the *Provincia do Norte*, was divided into three districts.²⁵ The General of the North, residing in Bassein, held authority over Bassein and all other northern places. Bassein, under Portuguese rule, gained significance, attracting noblemen who, pleased with the favorable climate, married and settled there. These nobles enjoyed substantial incomes from estates granted by the Portuguese king for their services to the State. Bassein emerged as the favored residence for many wealthy and influential individuals during this period.

The Portuguese in Bassein were busy with trade and making money. The Jesuits, a group within the Catholic Church, look after the minting of coins and took care of forts in places like Bassein, Diu, and Chaul—all to spread their religious teachings. In Bassein they owned a lot of property, making them one of the biggest landowners in the area.²⁶

The area near Bassein had quality timber perfect for building ships. Many ships loaded with this timber sailed to Mecca, where it was used to construct fleets. Concerned about this and wanting to strengthen their position, the Portuguese took control of Bassein.

A Frenchman named Laval acknowledged the excellent timber from Bassein, stating it was crucial for shipbuilding in Portuguese establishments. Vasai was like Biscay for Spain, providing timber essential for constructing vessels. Interestingly, Portuguese captains in Bassein were

²⁵ The *Provincia do Norte*, was divided into three districts. 1) Under Daman were placed the four areas of Sanjan, Dahanu, Tarapur and Kelve- Mahim. 2) Under Bassein there were eight divisions, viz., Saibana or Bassein proper, the Kasaba of Thana, the Island of Salsette, the Island of Karanja, the Island of Sambayo (Belapur and Shahabaz), the Pargana of Asheri and lastly the Islands of Bombay and Colaba. 3) The rest of the territory south of Karanja was placed under Chaul. Neeta Khandpekar, 41.

²⁶ Neeta Khandpekar, 43-44.

personally involved in the timber trade, charging high prices, which later contributed to the decline of the Portuguese presence in Bassein.

Bassein played a crucial role in international trade, especially with the Red Sea and Persian Gulf regions. Arabian horses were a common import to the port of Bassein, as specified in the terms of the earlier Bassein treaty. Ships departing from Gujarat had to obtain *Cartazes* from Portuguese officials in Bassein, and upon their return to India, all ships were to reach Vasai and fill the specified customs duties.

Chapter 2.5: Portuguese Presence in Bombay

In 1509, the Portuguese first came to Bombay while heading from Dabhol to Diu for supplies. In 1517, during Dom Soares de Albergaria's rule, they entered Mahim, defeated its chief, seized a merchant ship from the Red Sea, and took it to Chaul. Between 1521 and 1524, they frequented Bombay, seeking Muslim merchant's ships. In 1529, led by Lopo Vaz de Sampaio, they confronted the Gujarat fleet near Bombay and threatened Thana. When Lopo Vaz de Sampaio departed, he left Heitor da Silveira with 300 men. During Heitor's activities in 1529, he grew fond of Bombay's lush island, calling it "*Ilha de Boa Vida*," the island of good life.²⁷

In 1531, the Portuguese fleet, headed to capture Diu, made a stop at Bombay. Commander Nuno da Cunha hosted a military review on the island, marking the beginning of Portuguese dominance. From 1531 to 1533, the north coast and areas like Bassein Bombay, Mahim, and Bandra were brought under tribute. The success of the Portuguese alarmed Sultan Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, who sought a peace treaty with them due to threats from the Mughal ruler Humayun.

²⁷ M.D David, *History of Bombay 1661-1708* (Bombay: University of Bombay, 1973), 16-19.

The Treaty of Bassein, signed on December 23, 1534, transferred Bassein and its territories to the Portuguese, making it a crucial hub for vessels from Gujarat bound for the Red Sea.

In 1534, Bombay became a Portuguese territory under Bassein sought after for its income and nearness to Chaul. Bassein was a thriving port, handling ships carrying timber to Mecca. By 1534, it served as the northern capital for the Portuguese, with Bombay under its administrative control. Generals were rewarded with land, and in 1534, Maestro Diago leased Bombay Island. Later, in 1554, Garcia da Orta, a physician, received the island. Eventually, it passed through various tenants, the last being Donna Ignez de Miranda, widow of Rodrigo de Moncanto.²⁸

In the early days of Bombay, Garcia da Orta stood out as a remarkable figure. He was not just a doctor but also a naturalist, humanist, anthropologist, and antiquarian. He built a garden on his land in Bombay, cultivating roses and valuable plants for their practical uses. His work, “*Colloquios dos Simples e Drogas e Causas Medicinais da India*,” is a valuable source of information on Indian drugs. When Bombay was handed over to the British, da Orta’s house was owned by Donna Ignez de Miranda, referred to as the “Lady of the Island.” The treaty of cession was signed in this house on February 18, 1665.²⁹

For administrative purposes, Bassein was divided into two Kasbas, Mahim and Bombay, which were also stations for the levy of customs duties. The villages of Mahim, Parel, Varella (Vadala) and Sion were under Mahim Kasba. There were other small hamlets like Cavel, Colaba, Naigaon, and Dongri.

²⁸ Gerson Da Cunha, *The Origin of Bombay* (London: Society’s library, 1900), 68- 70.

²⁹ Gerson Da Cunha, 20.

CHAPTER 3: PORT ECONOMY OF CHAUL AND BASSEIN

Chapter 3.1: Economy of Chaul

During the period of Portuguese rule in Chaul, the economy underwent significant transformations. For the Portuguese, Chaul was a center reserved for captured Ships and for supplying provisions to Goa, as various articles were brought. Chaul emerged as a crucial port for maritime commerce, connecting the Indian subcontinent with Europe and Middle East. Twice a year, trade between Chaul and Cambay took place using small ships. The main imports included different types of textiles, sugar, finished ivory products, and indigo.¹

Chapter 3.1.1: Sources of income

1. According to a peace agreement between the Portuguese and the Nizamshah in 1509, the Nizamshah agreed to pay 2000 *pardaos* every year as tribute. After 1542, this amount was increased to 7000 *pardaos* annually because the Nizamshah promised this higher amount to the Portuguese for assisting in defending the forts of Sanki and Karnala. However, the Nizamshah often paid irregularly or in installments, and he used a lower value currency. This led to a total due amount of 130,000 *pardaos* by 1609.

To resolve this issue, the Portuguese gained the right to collect land rent from gardens or orchards near the Portuguese town of Chaul. The income generated from this source was called “*renda da praia*”.²

¹ A.B. Rajeshirke, 129.

² A.B. Rajeshirke, 156.

3. During 16th century, Portuguese signed several treaties and Contracts with the Indian rulers at Cambay, Cochin, Calicut, Chaul and Bassein but they did not miss to include a clause pertaining to the horses, almost in all the treaties and contracts. For example, on 22nd April, 1539, Viceroy Dom Garcia de Noronha made a contract with Nizam Shah. In the very first clause it was mentioned that all the horses which came from Ormuz would go to the city of Goa and not to the other parts, and Nizam Shah could ask from Ormuz 100 horses annually to Chaul but would have to pay duties on them to the King of Portugal. The Portuguese made profitable contracts with Nizam Shah that he was obliged to pay to the King of Portugal 7,000 *pardaos* of gold annually. Out of these, 2,000 *pardaos* were to be collected through the contract made by Diogo Lopes de Sequeira, the Governor, while 5,000 *pardaos* were arranged based on another contract made by the Governor Estevao da Gama.

2. In 1531 the Portuguese got permission to erect a factory at Chaul, at the mouth of the river, for the purchase of pepper and ginger in exchange for the merchandise from Portugal. In 1549, a total of 415 metric tons of pepper was sold at Chaul through the Portuguese local factory.¹ In 1618, spices including pepper valued at 41,390 *xerafins* were sold in Chaul. Then, in 1630, spices worth 60,000 *xerafins* were also sold. In 1632, the Chaul factory received 286,118 *xerafins* from the sale of spices.² the Chaul factory played a key role in providing essential food grains, especially rice, to different Portuguese settlements in India.³

4. Portuguese enjoyed the profit of about 2,000 *Pardaos* annually from Chaul, deducting - expenditure on Salaries of Officials and the Church. This profit gradually went up in due course

¹ A.B. Rajeshirke, 110.

² A.B. Rajeshirke, 111.

³ A.B. Rajeshirke, 119.

of time. During the second Siege of Diu (1546), the allowance had increased 2,000 *Pardaos* on account of a larger number of the wounded and sick, who were brought to the hospital of Chaul.

10. In Chaul, there were several retail shops whose owners had to pay an annual *bazaar* tax to the Portuguese, which was auctioned off to the highest bidder.⁴ In 1548, Governor Dom Joao de Castro assigned this tax to the Municipal Council of Chaul for its expenses. The Municipal Council managed this tax for many years, sometimes leasing it to a local resident along with other taxes. In 1581, King Philip I of Portugal transferred this tax from the Municipal Council to the royal treasury.⁵

5. In 1581, Governor Fernao Telles de Menezes issued an order stating that customs duties must be paid directly at the port of Chaul, rather than at Bassein or Diu. This was the first time that customs duties were collected at the Portuguese town of Chaul.⁶

Customs duties were imposed on goods imported and exported from Chaul based on their total value. Sometimes, Portuguese officials collected these duties directly but usually, it was given to the person who offered the highest bid to collect it.⁷ In 1633 Custom-House was established. However, before the establishment of this Custom-House, various articles of trade were taxed by the Portuguese.

The residents of Chaul were exempted from paying customs duties at their port, but non-resident merchants had to pay these duties, known as “*renda de Cambay, Ormuz e outra costa*”. This duty was introduced by Governor Dom Affonso de Noronha in 1553 and was set at a rate of

⁴ Historical Archives of Goa. *Subsidios Para a Historia Da India Portuguesa*. Lisboa, 124.

⁵ A.B. Rajeshirke, *Society and Economy*, 164.

⁶ A.B. Rajeshirke, *Society and Economy*, 147

⁷ A.B. Rajeshirke, *Society and Economy*, 145.

5% of the value for both imports and exports. The rate for exporting gold, silver, and money remained the same, but only 2% of the value was charged for importing them. Merchants trading with the Portuguese town of Chaul had to pay customs duties at Bassein or Diu.⁸

6. In 1583, Chaul had a thriving textile industry producing cotton and silk. Silk from China was frequently imported to Chaul, Cambay, and Dabhol. Silk also arrived in Chaul from the Persian Gulf area and was then sent to Balaghat and Mozambique.⁹ Goods like ivory and gold were imported to Chaul from Mozambique and sold to Gujarat merchants in exchange for textiles. In 1630, one hundred bundles of fine muslin were sent from Chaul to Mozambique. In 1644, twenty-three *corjas* of silk scarves were purchased in Chaul at a rate of two *xerafins* per *corja* and then sent to Mozambique.¹⁰

7. In the late sixteenth century, the Portuguese transported approximately 573.75 kilograms of gold annually from the African coast to Chaul. Until the early 17th century, the trade value between India and Mozambique, managed by the Portuguese, ranged from ten to twelve thousand *xerafins* each year.¹¹

From the early 1600s onward, ivory became a major commodity in Portuguese trade at Chaul. In 1667, a significant amount of 432,000.90 kilograms of ivory was brought to Chaul from Mozambique. Then, in 1669, nearly 4,152.825 kilograms of ivory were put up for sale at the Chaul factory.¹²

⁸ A.B. Rajeshirke, 146.

⁹ A.B. Rajeshirke, 112.

¹⁰ A.B. Rajeshirke, 114.

¹¹ A.B. Rajeshirke, 115.

¹² A.B. Rajeshirke, 116.

8. The Portuguese allowed unrestricted sale of tobacco. Similar to other taxes, the tobacco tax was leased out to the highest bidder, known as the *rendeiro*, every three years.¹³ Merchants brought tobacco from various parts of Gujarat and sold it in Chaul.

9. The local residents of Chaul were initially restricted from conducting sea-borne trade. Instead, they began selling goods to visiting merchants. By 1546, residents of Chaul were permitted to engage in coastal trade, and by the following year, they were allowed to trade at ports in the Persian Gulf and Africa.¹⁴

Starting from 1624, residents of Chaul began trading with the African coast, especially with Mombasa, Congo, and Mozambique. They exported textiles, rice, and tobacco to these ports, while importing gold, silver, ivory, and slaves back to Chaul.¹⁵

In the late 1600s, the residents of Chaul were known as some of the wealthiest merchants. The local merchants in Chaul were actively involved in trade with Hormuz, Mecca, and Basra. In addition to these foreign ports, they also conducted coastal trade, especially with Cambay, importing various types of cotton cloth to Chaul.¹⁶

11. Palm trees were abundant in and around the town of Chaul, and a variety of *arrack* was distilled from their juice. Those involved in making and selling arrack had to pay a tax known as *renda das orraquas* or tax on arrack. Until the year 1580, a portion of the income from this tax was used to support widows, their descendants, and wounded soldiers.¹⁷

¹³ A.B. Rajeshirke, 172.

¹⁴ A.B. Rajeshirke, 128.

¹⁵ A.B. Rajeshirke, 131.

¹⁶ A.B. Rajeshirke, 132.

¹⁷ A.B. Rajeshirke, 168.

Chapter 3.1.2: Decline in Chaul's Trade

Chaul was a highly profitable trading center that neighboring rulers desired to control. In 1613, Jahangir ordered an attack on Chaul by Nizam Shah because a Portuguese commander, Luis de Brito e Mello, had previously seized a Mughal ship returning from Mecca. In 1622, the Portuguese lost control of Ormuz to the Persian kings, cutting off the supply of horses to Chaul. Despite these challenges, until 1634, the budget consistently showed an annual surplus of about 27,000 *xerafins* after deducting all expenses.

On the other hand, the British were working hard to boost Bombay's prosperity by lowering duties on goods to encourage trade. This attracted more silk weavers from Chaul to Bombay, as they were offered favorable conditions. The fear of the Inquisition also led many weavers and artisans to migrate from Portuguese territory to Bombay. Chaul's trade further declined when the Dutch captured Cochin in 1662, one of its main seaports. By 1680-1684, the expenses in Chaul exceeded Portuguese income, resulting in a loss of 16,409 *Xerafins*, 2 *tangas* and 1% *reis*.¹⁸ Consequently, Chaul was abandoned more quickly than anticipated.

In the late 1600s, the region around Chaul experienced intense hostility towards the Portuguese. The Siddhis of Danda, Adilshah of Bijapur, Nizams and Aurangzeb, the powerful Mughal ruler, were all adversaries. Additionally, the Marathas conducted numerous raids across the Deccan, including Chaul. Consequently, trade at Chaul declined rapidly over time.

¹⁸ R.S. Chauhan, *The Portuguese at Chaul*, (Purabhilekh Puratatva, vol 1. 1983), 92.

Chapter 3.2: Economy of Bassein

Bassein, located on the north shore of the Ulhas River, had natural defenses compared to other ports in Gujarat. The region around Bassein was abundant in dense forests that provided high-quality wood, particularly teak, which was highly valued for shipbuilding. Local shipyards constructed boats for both coastal and offshore navigation¹⁹, contributing to the growth of the port.

Bassein with all its mainland and islands and the coastal areas was thereby given in perpetuity to the king of Portugal in 1534. All the rights, jurisdiction, revenue and whatever the Sultan and his captains were so far deriving from was surrendered to Portuguese.²⁰ The vessels leaving from Gujarat and on their way to Red Sea would first go to Bassein and obtain Cartazes and also according to the treaty, Bahadur Shah's ships carrying horses came to Bassein, then they had to pay full duty on all the horses except for the first sixty horses.²¹

Bassein had a rich history of trade and commerce, especially in international connections. Bassein was linked to trade routes extending to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf regions. Ships regularly brought horses from Mecca and other parts of Arabia to the port of Bassein. After the Portuguese took over, ports in Bassein were connected with those in the Atlantic Ocean for the first time, expanding Bassein's international trade significantly.

The significance of Bassein as a trade hub had unique characteristics. While Diu and Chaul were more prominent trade ports, Bassein's importance was partly due to its political status. Although it wasn't as bustling in trade, it excelled in shipbuilding and benefited from its position

¹⁹ *Ports of the Ancient Indian Ocean*, ed. Marie- Francois Boussac, (Delhi: Primus Books, 2016), 235- 238.

²⁰ K.S. Mathew. "The Economy of Bassein in the sixteenth century". *Indica*, Vol. 24, 1987, 132.

²¹ David, M.D. "Historic Bassein". *Indica*, Vol. 24, 1987, 90.

as the capital of provinces of North.²² Notably, Diu, Bassein, and Chaul were all developed by the Portuguese to serve trade and commerce needs. Their prosperity relied on import and export activities.

Bassein was both a trading hub and the political capital of the Portuguese empire in the North Konkan region. It generated income from various sources, including import and export trade, with a significant exchange of goods happening there. Ships traveling from the Malabar Coast to places like Cambay, Ormuz, and the Persian Gulf made stops at Bassein, contributing to trade in many products. By the late sixteenth century, it was known for its trade in grains, rice, and timber along the coast.²³

The cultivated areas surrounding Bassein produced various crops including opium, areca nut, betel leaf, rice, wheat, indigo, and sugarcane. Additionally, Bassein exported commodities like salt, fish, cotton and horses. However, Bassein could not compete with major trade hubs like Chaul, Dabhol, Goa, or Bhatkal.

The fortified city of Bassein had a large market where locally produced goods were sold. The city's administration oversaw this market, which had designated streets for merchants and craftsmen. Bassein engaged in active maritime trade with Africa and Europe, exporting items like sugar, rice, indigo, ivory, and gemstones. It also became a significant center for the horse trade, importing horses from places like Basra, Ormuz, Muscat, and Arabia—Basra alone supplied 600 horses annually. Bassein's imports included spices from Malabar and other goods such as iron, saltpetre, and wheat.²⁴

²² M.D. David,95.

²³ M.D. David,96.

²⁴ M.D. David,96.

The Portuguese in Bassein imposed taxes on various agricultural products such as opium, sugarcane, arecanut, betel leaves, cotton, oil seeds, black ink, different kinds of vegetables, flowers, and various types of timber.²⁵

In Bassein, the Portuguese derived significant income from non-agricultural activities. Many people were involved in extracting oil from seeds, possibly including coconuts. Ink and paints were manufactured by numerous individuals. Some worked as shepherds, while fishing was mainly conducted by the Kolis. Others were employed in slaughterhouses and meat supply. There were also milk producers and vendors, as well as jewellers specializing in certain crafts. Cloth bleaching and painting were handled by specialists. All these groups paid taxes to the government, particularly after revenue farming was expanded in 1548, when they became obligated to pay taxes to the appointed revenue farmers.

Bassein had its own industries including salt production and fishing, which were common activities in the Bombay region. Thousands of bullocks were used to transport salt from Bassein to Gujarat and other parts of Maharashtra.²⁶ Wealthy Portuguese landowners in Bassein exported timber from their large forest areas for shipbuilding to Goa, the Middle East, and even Portugal. According to the French traveler Pyrard de Laval, who visited Bassein in 1607, besides exporting timber, Bassein also exported a hard and fine stone used for building. He noted that the stone quarries there produced large columns and pillars used in constructing the churches and grand palaces of Goa.²⁷

²⁵ K.S. Mathew, 132-133.

²⁶ M.D. David, 96.

²⁷ M.D. David, 96.

Internal trade in the Bassein district was significant, with regular connections to Chaul, Goa, and other ports along the western coast of India. Local trade thrived as well, with the Portuguese government collecting fees from various goods sold, including fish, flowers, sugarcane, salt, milk, and arrack. Shop owners were required to pay regular fees to the government. Revenue collection from shops and standard sales was sometimes contracted out. Similarly, the Portuguese earned substantial income from tolls on the transportation of goods, with toll collection often delegated to others, similar to how land revenue collection was managed.²⁸

The shipyard in Bassein at Agashi was renowned and received shipbuilding orders from various Indian and Arabian rulers, as well as from the English and the Marathas. Shivaji commissioned his initial fleet of twenty battleships from this shipyard to confront the Siddi. Two skilled Portuguese shipbuilders, Rui Viegas and his son Fernao, were famous for their expertise in shipbuilding. They supervised a team of around 340 craftsmen, comprising both Portuguese and Indian workers.²⁹

The nobility managed both the collection and distribution of land revenue, taking the extra produce from the farmers for themselves. The nobles, who received villages instead of salary, resembled as feudal lords.

Alongside granting lands to nobles, the practice of leasing revenue to bidders also expanded significantly after 1548. For instance, in 1548, the incomes from the *kasbas* (small towns) of Bassein, Agacaim, Mahim, and Caranja, along with their toll stations, were leased out to the highest bidders. Districts like Thana, which had numerous ports, likely generated significant income. Bassein was divided into seven administrative units (excluding Bombay after it was given

²⁸ K.S. Mathew, 136.

²⁹ M.D. David, 97.

to the English in 1665) that collectively brought in substantial revenue.³⁰ This surplus income made Bassein one of the few Portuguese possessions in India that was financially successful.

The total revenues collected from the seven divisions of Bassein were significant over the years: 172,920 *xerafins* in 1686, 100,000 *xerafins* in 1709, 310,779 *xerafins* in 1719, and 914,125 *xerafins* in 1729. A portion of these revenues, specifically 14,657 *xerafins*, was allocated for religious purposes within the Portuguese empire in India, highlighting the influence of religion in their governance.³¹

Over time, the creek leading to the port began to fill with sediment and sand carried by tides, similar to many other coastal areas in the Indian Ocean. This gradual silting caused the decline of the port, affecting its usability and impacting trade activities.

³⁰ M.D. David, 97.

³¹ M.D. David, 98.

CHAPTER 4: PORTUGUESE FORTS: CHAUL, BASSEIN AND KORLAI

The Portuguese erected numerous fortifications along the western coastline of India, stretching from Diu in the North to Quilon in the South. These strongholds held strategic importance in the maritime trade of the Portuguese in India. Functioning as naval strongholds, they provided essential naval bases for the safe anchorage of ships. They were well equipped with water tanks, store houses, missionary houses etc. Fortifications were heavily armed and manned. During the time of naval battles, they were places of refuge to the navy. The ships, anchored in the bay of the forts were safe from enemy attack in naval engagement. Hence, these forts played an important role in asserting Portuguese control over maritime territories.¹

The canons and guns on the forts kept enemy ships away from entering the nearby sea or river. These coastal forts had factory establishments also, where the local goods were purchased and stored for shipment to various destinations.

Chapter 4.1: Bassein Fort

Bassein wasn't very important until the Portuguese came in the early 1500s. Before that, Bombay and the surrounding area, including Bassein were under the rule of Sultan of Gujarat. With increase in trade, Bassein became busier. It became a key port connecting India to the Red Sea, and ships carrying spices, cocoa, and other goods started coming to Bassein from the Malabar coast.²

¹ K.M. Mathew, *History of Portuguese Navigation in India* (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1988), 155- 158.

² *Indo- Portuguese Encounters: Journeys in Science, Technology and Culture*, ed. Lotika Varadrajan, vol. 2, (New Delhi: Indian National Science Academy, 2006), 159-160.

The treaty dated 25th October 1536 which confirmed the cession of Bassein to Portuguese by Sultan of Gujarat, Nuno da Cunha began to construct the Bassein fort in the same year. Once the fort was completed it had fortified eleven bastions.¹ Nuno da Cunha led efforts to strengthen the newly acquired territory against potential attacks from the Mughals. Because of his efforts, Nuno da Cunha is known as the Founder of Bassein.

The fortress of Bassein was built near the estuary of the river Bassein. Bassein's main defense came from its natural surroundings. The river and marshy swamps around the fort made it nearly impossible for enemy armies to approach the fortress from the north, south, and east in a conventional way.²

The Bassein Fort held a crucial military position as the capital of Portuguese territory in North Konkan. Its location allowed control over the entire region. With access to water routes from the Arabian Sea, it provided easy passage to places like Thane, Mahim, Tarapur, and even Goa to the south. The fort's strategic advantage was heightened by its position with a bay on three sides, making it very difficult for enemies to conquer. This ensured Portuguese dominance, especially with their powerful navy securing control over the surrounding waterways.

The area was rich in high-quality black basalt rock, similar to granite, which was abundant along the coast. Nuno da Cunha hired skilled craftsmen like masons and carpenters to construct the citadel at a strategic location facing the inlet of Bassein creek.³

¹ K.M. Mathew, *History of the Portuguese Navigation in India* (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1988), 159.

² Gerson Da Cunha, *Notes on the History and Antiquities of Chaul and Bassein* (Bombay: Thacker, vining & co, 1876), 132.

³ Teresa Albuquerque, *Bassein: The Portuguese interlude* (Mumbai: Wenden offset, 2004), 9- 11.

In the next decade, Bassein successfully defended itself during a siege by Mahamud Shah III of Gujarat. However, despite this success, due to advancements in military tactics, the citadel of Bassein became known as the weakest fortress in Portuguese India. It had an irregular shape with a tower on the left side of the entrance and three semicircular bastions on the west and north sides. Despite repeated suggestions to improve its defenses, no action was taken until 1546 when there was a serious threat from the Malik Tughan, Admiral of the Gujarat fleet, who had previously controlled the region before the Portuguese. In response, a temporary barricade of earth and a palisade of stakes were hastily built for defense. Shortly after this event, the citadel was further strengthened.

In 1590, the fear of invasion by the Dutch prompted the Portuguese to take action. They quickly began building outer ramparts for the fortress. The walls surrounding the fort were between thirty to thirty-five feet tall. However, it took a whole decade to finish constructing this massive barrier.

By 1600, the Bassein fort had a shape resembling an elongated seven-sided polygon. Inside the walls, the settlement had expanded into city. The fort had two large gates, with two tall rounded columns on each side. One gate was called the Sea Gate, and the other was called the Land Gate.

The fort had a strong wall that was three miles long. Around 1634, there were about 2,400 soldiers in the fort. Among them, 400 were Europeans, 200 were local Christians, and 1,800 were slaves. Inside the fort, there were six churches, four Christian schools, and two colleges. Artisans and Hindus were not allowed inside.⁴ There was a constable in charge of keeping order in the fort,

⁴ B.V. Kulkarni, *Mumbai Parisaratil Arthat Ekekalchya firanganatil kille* (Mumbai: Puratatva Vastusangrahalay Sanchalanalay, 2009),133.

who was paid 8 pounds 6 shillings per year. Outside the fort, there was a chief officer called the Thanedar, who got a salary of 43 pounds per year. Under the Thanedar, there were 20 lower officers called Havalgars, who got 5 tangas per month, and four Shiledars who got 7 tangas per month. There were also other officers like a sergeant, interpreter, repairer, and officers in charge of the sailors. Other officers included the Sea Bailiff, who got 2 pounds and 10 shillings per year, the Chief of the Night Watch, who got 5 pounds and 8 shillings, and the Chief Constable, who got 3 pounds and 16 shillings.⁵

In 1647, there were a total of 2,400 soldiers defending the fort, including 400 Europeans, 200 locals, and 1,800 slaves. Many of these people lived outside the fort in the northern part.⁶

In the late 1600s, the northern territories of the Estado faced economic problems, which likely led to fewer people living in Bassein and weaker defenses for the city. Around this time, the Marathas started attacking Bassein.

Chapter 4.1.1: Marathas attack on Bassein fort

The Marathas wanted to attack the Bassein fort, which was very strong. They planned to do it during the rainy season because it was harder to move around the area because of the rain. This meant there was less risk of being attacked from the sea, and the rain would make any gunfire less effective. So, on 9th June, 1737, they tried to get into the fort by using ladders. But their plan didn't work, and they failed to take over the fort.⁷

⁵ B.V. Kulkarni, 134-135.

⁶ *Indo- Portuguese Encounters*, 203.

⁷ B.V. Kulkarni, 137- 140.

After the first attempt to capture Bassein failed, Gangaji Naik, Yashwantrao Balaji Rao, and others decided to try again during the heavy rains. On 9th July, 1737, 4000 Marathas got ready with ladders to attack. But when the Portuguese in the fort noticed them, they quickly got ready and started shooting cannons and guns from above. The Marathas couldn't handle the shooting and had to run away.

Even though the first two attempts to capture Bassein failed, the Marathas were still determined to take over the fort, especially during the rainy season. They planned another attack. So, on 12th September, 1737, the Marathas prepared ladders and other things for the attack. They planned to use ladders at multiple spots to get into the fort at the same time. The Maratha soldiers were told not to retreat even if they faced gunfire from above. However, the Portuguese had already learned about the attack and were ready. When the Marathas tried to climb the ladders, the Portuguese fired guns, cannons, and grenades, causing many Marathas to die. This attempt was also failed.

In February 1739, the Marathas, led by Chimaji Appa, got stronger and focused on surrounding Bassein. Chimaji Appa himself arrived at Bassein on February 6th. When the Marathas started forming their troops, the Portuguese in the fort started shooting cannons. Many Marathas were killed by these cannons.

The Bassein fort was surrounded by land only on its northern side, while the rest was surrounded by the sea. So, the fighting happened mainly on the northern side.⁸ To defend

⁸ B.V. Kulkarni, 141.

themselves, the Portuguese placed 110 long-range guns along the shores of the fort and started shooting them. The Marathas attacked the embankments that were built to support the fort walls.

In addition to the cannon fire from the fort, the enemy was also attacking from ships in the port. To fight back, the Marathas decided to shoot guns at the port from the shores of Dharavi.

During the siege in 1739, cannon fire went on for two months straight. The Marathas dug around 10-12 tunnels. These tunnels were placed in the part of the fort connected to the ground and in the nearby area, around the three towers named Cavalieru, Remedius, and Sao Sebastian. The plan was to blow up these tunnels, creating gaps in the fort walls, so the Maratha army could enter and capture the fort.

The Portuguese already knew about the tunnels. On May 11, Chimaji Appa prepared for the attack and gave ladders to the people on the shore. Then, on May 13, 1739, both armies fought fiercely. At first, the Portuguese fought well, but as more and more Maratha soldiers joined the battle, the Portuguese suffered heavy losses and many of them died. About 130 of their officers were either injured or killed. The Marathas also suffered significant casualties in the battle.

On May 14, 1739, during the attack, the Marathas saw white marks on the ramparts, indicating a truce. They stopped the battle, on May 15, 1739, D'Souza Pereira, the last captain of Bassein, held a public meeting in the Bassein Fort and decided to surrender to the Marathas and the Portuguese sent their official to Chimaji Appa to ask for negotiations.⁹

After the Marathas conquered the Bassein fort, they didn't have enough resources to rebuild the fort completely. Chimaji Appa honored the agreement to allow religious freedom for

⁹ Gerson Da Cunha, 147-148.

all people in Bassein. However, when the Portuguese missionaries decided to leave Bassein, all the Christian churches in the fort were closed, despite Chimaji Appa's promise.¹⁰

Chapter 4.2: Chaul Fort

In 1516, Portuguese got the permission from ruler of Ahmadnagar to erect a fort. First, they established a trading post, this trading post quickly grew into a fortress, which was built by governor Diogo Lopez de Sequeira in 1521, and eventually, by the late 16th century, Chaul became a significant international trading center that overshadowed the old town.

The fort had a wall with nine bastions. The captain of this fort was Henrique de Menezes. The fortified city, named Sao Pedro e Sao Paulo de Chaul, was strategically positioned for defense. It was surrounded by natural barriers: the sea to the west, the river mouth to the southwest and south, and an estuary to the east.

Chaul underwent several phases of fortification. The original wooden fort was replaced by a stone structure in a square shape, featuring cylindrical towers at each corner, following the Manueline style.¹¹ Over time, various institutions were established within the fortifications, starting with the first parish church, Our Lady of the Sea, in the 1530s, followed by convents for the Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits and Augustinians. The exact locations of these institutions are unclear due to a siege in the 1570s by Ahmadnagar forces, which nearly destroyed the city.

In 1570, the fort required repairs as it lacked defensive walls, making it vulnerable to attacks by sea and land. Captain Luis de Andrade, who was the in-charge of the fort, received

¹⁰ B.V. Kulkarni, 146.

¹¹ Amita Kanekar, *Portuguese Sea Forts Goa with Chaul, Korlai and Vasai*. (Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2015), 95.

information about a Muslim force planning to attack Chaul to drive out the Portuguese. Upon learning this, Captain Andrade took measures to defend Chaul.

Captain Andrade organized his troops for any sudden threat, as the Muslim forces had set up camp near the Chaul fort. Francisco Mascarenhas was assigned to protect the sea with his fleet, while Andrade focused on defending the land. Alongside Lionel De Souza, Andrade shifted between different posts as required for defense. They ensured that every trench, bastion, and key position was well defended and secure.¹²

Upon witnessing the Portuguese's effective defense, Nizam-ul-Mulk ordered an attack on Chaul from all directions. The Portuguese resisted well against the Muslim forces.

On June 24th, 1571, the Portuguese were well armed to defend Chaul. They discovered the Muslim plan for a decisive attack. The Portuguese then engaged the Muslims and their many elephants in battle, but eventually, the Muslims were forced to retreat. It was a nine-month siege, The Muslims suffered a loss of twelve thousand men.¹³

Despite this siege, Chaul fort underwent reconstruction, including the construction of a larger polygonal fortification with bastions in the late 1590s, enclosing most of these institutions and a growing population of homes.

The defenses were continually strengthened afterward, focusing more on the landward walls for better protection. However, by the end of the 17th century, economic and military setbacks

¹² K.S. Mathew, *History of Portuguese Navigation in India* (Delhi: Mittal Publications), 1988, 206- 207.

¹³ K.S. Mathew, 207.

for the Estado impacted regional trade, particularly affecting Chaul. This decline in trade significantly affected Chaul's prosperity.

Chapter 4.3: Korlai Fort

Originally known as Morro de Chaul or Hill of Chaul, this fort was situated on a promontory overlooking the wide mouth of the Kundalika river, directly opposite Chaul. Its distinctive feature was its position along the elongated ridge of a hill, shaped both by its surroundings and its strategic purpose. The fort's location allowed it to command the river mouth jointly with another fort across the river.

The Portuguese initially built an observation tower here in 1521 when they fortified the Chaul trading post, along with a rampart at the north end. However, this was dismantled later due to objections from the Sultan of Ahmadnagar. In 1593-94, Ahmadnagar took control of the site, fortifying it at the north end, which led to objections from Portuguese and this eventually led to a battle which the Portuguese won. The ridge was further fortified over time, especially in 1646 after facing attacks from local chiefs, adding new structures like powder magazines and a chapel.¹⁴

The fort was handed over to the Marathas along with Chaul and subsequently abandoned.

¹⁴ Amita Kanekar, *Portuguese Sea Forts Goa with Chaul, Korlai and Vasai* (Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2015), 105.

CHAPTER 5: PORTUGUESE DECLINE IN NORTH KONKAN

Chapter 5.1: Portuguese Decline in Bombay

During the Portuguese rule, religious orders played a major role. In 1534, Franciscan monks arrived in Bombay and built St. Michael's Church at Mahim. Led by the first Bishop, Dom Fr. Joao Affonso de Albuquerque, they started missionary work, converting around ten thousand people in Bassein, Thana and nearby areas.

In 1542, the Jesuits joined the mission, with St. Francis Xavier being a prominent figure. They were followed by the Dominicans in 1548. These religious orders became influential, owning a large portion of the land where they built churches and colleges. The religious orders were so powerful that they redirected the funds meant for mosques, according to the Bassein treaty, to support missionary work, as ordered by the king.

The Franciscans possessed Salsette, Mahim, Bombay, and Karanja islands, while the Jesuits possessed Mahim, Dadar, Matunga, Bandra, Sion, Sewri, and Parel. Apart from Bombay proper and Mazagaon, which were given to notable individuals, most of Bombay belonged to the church. The religious orders were independent of the Portuguese Governor in Bassein.

Due to the Portuguese policy of intolerance, many Indians didn't trust them and fled these areas to protect their faith.

The English, along with other European nations, came to India primarily for trade and merchants from Venice, Genoa, and Lisbon served as middlemen in trade between India and Europe. This trade route passed through the Levant, Egypt, and around the Cape of Good Hope.

Chapter 5.1.1: English interest in Bombay

As early as 1626, the English started trying to secure Bombay. They saw its strategic location halfway down the West Coast of India as ideal for a naval base. Owning it would help them control the Portuguese and Dutch and dominate the entire coastline.

In October 1626, both English and Dutch fleets sailed to Bombay from Surat and attacked it from the 13th to the 15th. They captured and burned the Castle and the Great House. However, they didn't try to keep and share the land between them.¹ Due to the competition between the Dutch and the English made a lasting partnership impossible.

The Company kept urging Surat to get a safe port. President Kerridge of Surat supported acquiring Bombay and wrote to the Company in November 1626 praising its good climate, fertile land, and excellent harbor. He also mentioned the challenge of taking it from the Portuguese. In another letter on January 4, 1628, Kerridge provided more details to satisfy the Company's curiosity about Bombay and its benefits.²

The Company consistently aimed to build fortified towns to protect trade, and Bombay was considered one of the best locations for this. The council in Surat constructed their ships in the

¹ M.D David, *History of Bombay 1661-1708*. (Bombay: University of Bombay, 1973), 24.

² M.D. David, *History of Bombay*, 24.

nearby Bassein creek and suggested in 1652 that both Bombay and Bassein should be purchased from the Portuguese.

At that time, the Dutch were the most aggressive among European powers and were pushing the Portuguese out of many trade centers in the Indian Ocean. They were even trying to take over Ceylon from the Portuguese. This worried the English because they feared the Dutch might soon control the West Coast too. This fear, along with their desire to have a strong base, motivated the English to try to get Bombay or another suitable place from the Portuguese³.

Chapter 5.2.1: Cession of Bombay

The efforts of the Court of Directors in February 1660 to negotiate with the Portuguese for acquiring Bombay or another port were not in vain. The suggestion reached the Portuguese king. In the same year, the Portuguese Ambassador, Francisco de Mello, proposed a marriage alliance between King Charles II of England and Catherine, the sister of King Afonso VI of Portugal. As part of the agreement, Tangiers and Bombay were offered, along with a dowry of 2,000,000 *Cruzados*.⁴

Bombay came into the possession of the English king through this arrangement. It's important to note that Portugal gave up Bombay when facing political turmoil at home. There was the threat of a Spanish invasion. Portugal was also at war with the Dutch, and its unsuccessful conflicts with Spain had pushed it towards bankruptcy.⁵ Charles II of England came to Portugal's aid during this critical time, providing disciplined troops that played a role in achieving

³ M.D David, 26.

⁴ M.D David, 26.

⁵ M.D David,,27.

independence. However, Bombay and Tangiers were seen as insufficient compensations for the English assistance.

Bombay was given as a gift from the Portuguese to King Charles II of England when he married the Portuguese Princess, Infanta Catherine of Braganza. The marriage treaty was signed between King Charles II and Infanta Catherine, the sister of King Afonso VI, on June 23, 1661. The wedding ceremony occurred on May 31, 1662. The marriage treaty was primarily based on the political interests of both nations.

The Portuguese King promised to pay a dowry of two million Crusados to the English King, split into two payments. The Queen was allowed to freely practice the Roman Catholic religion. She was to receive an annual allowance of £30,000 and provided with a palace and staff. If her husband died, she could go to any country and still receive her annual allowance. Catherine gave up her claim to all her inheritance in Portugal, except her crown.

If the English took over any lands from the Dutch that originally belonged to the Portuguese, they were not obligated to give them back to Portugal, except for Muscat and Ceylon. However, if the English captured Ceylon, they had to give Colombo back to the Portuguese. In exchange, the port of Galle would be given to the English.⁶

The reasons for the cession are as follows:

- I. Queen Regent Louisa de Guzman of Portugal wanted a marriage alliance.
- II. Portugal needed support against Spain and the Netherlands, and Charles II was willing to help.

⁶ M.D David, 30.

III. Portugal feared Dutch dominance in the spice trade, which would harm English interests.

IV. Portugal sought English support to protect its trade and colonies from Dutch expansion.

V. England wanted a base in Indian waters to assist Portugal and increase its own trade in the East.

Sir Abraham Shipman, appointed by Charles II, was made Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Bombay. He was given a Commission and separate instructions for governing Bombay. The Commission allowed Shipman to take control of the island, its weapons, and fortifications upon arrival. He was also authorized to administer the oath of allegiance to the people living there.

The Portuguese King sent a letter to his Viceroy, De Mello de Castro, on April 9th, 1662, regarding the transfer of Bombay.⁷ The King mentioned the Marriage Treaty, stating that Bombay belonged to the English King. The Viceroy was instructed to ask for the credentials of the person receiving Bombay and to hand it over in a formal agreement. The entire process was to be documented and sent to the King for settling the dowry promised to Charles II. Catherine also sent a similar letter to the Viceroy.

When the English fleet arrived in Bombay on September 18th, 1662, the Portuguese Viceroy and Lord Marlborough were there.⁸ However, Abraham Shipman's ship, the Mary Rose, was delayed. Marlborough, not waiting for Shipman, asked the Viceroy to give Bombay to

⁷ M.D. David, 37.

⁸ M.D David, 39.

Shipman's Deputy, Colonel Hungerford. De Castro refused, saying he needed a letter from the English King, Charles II, specifying who should receive the island, as per his King's orders.

Sir Abraham Shipman arrived on the ship *Mary Rose* in early October 1662. He promptly gave the Portuguese Viceroy the letter from King Charles and showed his Commission. However, the Viceroy, De Mello de Castro, seemed unwilling to hand over the island from the beginning and tried to delay the transfer.⁹ It appears that the Viceroy carefully examined Shipman's documents. On October 5th, he wrote to Shipman saying he couldn't hand over the island because Shipman's letters weren't in proper order.

On August 16th, 1663, the Portuguese King D. Affonso sent a letter to his Viceroy, De Mello de Castro, ordering him to promptly hand over the island without any opposition or delay. The King emphasized that any new obstacles should be overcome for the surrender of Bombay. Additionally, the inhabitants were to be assured that they could keep their properties and practice the Roman Catholic religion freely.

Finally, on January 8th, 1665, English forces arrived on the shores of Bombay. The official transfer ceremony happened at the house of Donna Iñez de Miranda, the widow of Dom Rodrigo de Moncanto. The island was handed over by declaring the Instrument of Possession.

The agreement stated that Portuguese runaways couldn't seek refuge in Bombay. It emphasized non-interference with the religion of Bombay's inhabitants. Portuguese ships were granted full access to Bombay harbor, while property rights of Bombay residents remained intact. Islanders were permitted fishing rights in the strait dividing Bombay from Salsette without payment. People under Portuguese rule was prohibited from settling in Bombay, and deserters had

⁹ M.D David, 39.

to be surrendered, even if they wished to change their religion. Senhora de Miranda's rights over her Bombay manor were protected, and revenue recipients in Bombay retained their rights. Catholic priests were required to pay the same quit-rent as under Portuguese rule.

Chapter 5.2: Portuguese decline in Chaul

Chapter 5.2.1: Nizam and Portuguese

From 1540 to 1555, Lower Chaul enjoyed peace and became wealthy under the governorship of Francisco Barreto.¹⁰ However, this changed when Nizam-ul-Mulk fell ill and died in 1556, since Upper Chaul was under him. Francisco Barreto, was uncertain if Upper Chaul's new leader would maintain friendly relations with the Portuguese, he decided to fortify the promontory of Morro de Chaul as a defense. He understood that controlling this promontory, which overlooks the harbor entrance, would strengthen Chaul's defenses against attacks, especially as neighboring powers and local people were pressuring the Portuguese to leave India.

Nizam-ul- Mulk II was not in favor of this fortification so he appointed Farate Khan as commander of his army and instructed him to march towards Chaul with a massive force, including 26 war elephants, 8,000 cavalry, and 20,000 infantry.¹¹ This large army entered the old city of Chaul, while 4,000 cavalry from Ahmadnagar went north of Chaul to block reinforcements and supplies from Bassein. Additionally, a small fort called Caranja, defended by only forty men under Captain Duarte, was also targeted.

¹⁰ Gerson Da Cunha, *Notes on the History and Antiquities of Chaul and Bassein*. (Bombay: Thacker, Vining & co, 1876), 44.

¹¹ Gerson Da Cunha, *Notes on the History and Antiquities*, 48.

The Governor of the Chaul fortress, Garcia Rodrigues de Tavora, got worried about his defenses. He asked the Viceroy for help, and they sent a fleet led by Alvaro Peres Sotomaior to stop Farate Khan. The Viceroy himself went to Chaul with a fleet carrying 4,000 Portuguese troops and many local soldiers. Luis Freire Andrade, the Captain of Chaul, quickly strengthened the fort and stocked up on enough food and supplies for what he thought would be a long siege.

On January 10, 1571, Farate Khan led a big army with 34,000 horse riders, 100,000-foot soldiers, 30,000 pioneers, and 4,000 men including smiths, masons, and people from different countries like Turks, Persians, Abyssinians, and some European renegades. The Nizam also brought 300 elephants and 400 cannons. They faced the poorly defended Portuguese fort of Chaul, which had only a few brave men to protect it. Besides his army, the Nizam had naval support from the Samorim, with 22 ships carrying 1,500 gunmen. The Nizam told these ships to attack the Portuguese in the port.

At the start of the siege, there were only a few Portuguese soldiers in the fort. But soon, many officers, rich citizens, and their followers came to help. Within a short time, the number of defenders increased to 2,000 men.¹²

In April 1571, the Nizam decided to build more defenses to keep attacking the fort. Alexandre de Souza and Goncalo de Meneses, the commanders of Portuguese army, led a surprise attack with only 200 men.¹³ They didn't wait for orders and successfully attacked the enemy, killing fifty of them but losing a few of their own. Then, they destroyed the defenses they had captured. The Nizam, surprised by these losses, launched a big attack at night on all fronts. The defenders fought back fiercely, killing over 500 attackers while losing only five men. Just in time,

¹² Gerson Da Cunha, 62-71.

¹³ Gerson Da Cunha, 53.

reinforcements of about 200 men arrived from Goa, Daman, Diu, and Bassein with lots of supplies. Despite this, the siege went on until June 29, 1571.

After many losses, both the Nizam and the Portuguese leaders thought about making peace. Finally, the Nizam made a move, and after talks, they agreed on a peace treaty. Farate Khan and Asad Khan spoke for the Nizam, while Pedro da Silva and Antonio de Tive represented Portuguese. They signed a treaty for both sides to help each other in defense and attack.

After signing this treaty, Chaul enjoyed peace and calmness. Travelers who visited Chaul in the early 1600s left records of their experiences. One of them was Pietro de la Valle who visited Chaul in 1623 and 1625.

Chapter 5.2.2: Portuguese and Marathas

In the late 1600s, Western India saw a lot of conflicts, and Chaul got involved too. During this time, Shivaji emerged as a strong leader and established a new empire, uniting Hindu people in the Deccan region. Shivaji became a significant force, and Portugal found a new powerful enemy in him. Besides dealing with Shivaji's forces, the Portuguese also had to contend with two rival European nations, the English and the Dutch.

By 1667, the Nizam Shahi influence no longer impacted Chaul. Meanwhile, Shivaji took control of the entire coastline from the Rajapur river to the Penn River, except for Portuguese Chaul.¹⁴

In 1670, the Portuguese and Shivaji agreed to a treaty to protect each other's trade and political interests. By 1672, Shivaji's army completely destroyed the Muslim city of Upper Chaul,

¹⁴ Gerson Da Cunha, 71-72.

while the Portuguese part of Lower Chaul remained unharmed. Besides the Marathas, the Portuguese in Chaul also had another enemy nearby, the Sindhis of Janjira.¹⁵ Despite having a defensive alliance with the Portuguese, the Sindhi continuously attacked their trading ships, causing a lot of damage to Chaul's economy. After Shivaji died in April 1680, his son Sambhaji, along with 30,000 men, besieged the Chaul fortress. However, they suffered heavy losses because of the disciplined Portuguese soldiers and the strong fortifications.

Peshwa Baji Rao I, ordered Venkat Rao Ghorpode to attack Goa from another direction on January 12, 1739. Venkat Rao led his forces through Sanguem with support from the Raja of Sunda in the South and Jayrama Sawant Bhonsle in the North. On January 23, Venkat Rao captured Cuncolim with 3,000 horsemen and 6,000 infantries, and then took over the fort and surrounding villages of Ambelim, Assolna, and Velim.

On May 2, 1739, the Viceroy of Goa, Conde de Sandomil, sought peace. A peace treaty was signed between the Viceroy and Peshwa Baji Rao I. However, before the Marathas could leave Salcete, Baji Rao I died on April 28, 1740, and Venkat Rao Ghorpode took command.

After negotiations the Marathas agreed to leave Salcete, and the Bhonsle clan vacated Bardez, in exchange for Chaul and Morro. Baji Rao I's son, Balaji Baji Rao, signed a new treaty on September 18, 1740, ordering the Maratha troops to withdraw from Goa. In return, Salcete and Bardez were restored to the Portuguese, while Chaul and Morro were ceded to the Marathas.

Chapter 5.3: Portuguese decline in Bassein

¹⁵ Gerson Da Cunha, 68.

Garcia de Sa, who was the brother-in-law of General Nuno da Cunha, was chosen by him to be the first Governor of Bassein.

In the following years, Bassein faced a siege by Mahamud Shah III of Gujarat but managed to resist successfully. However, despite this victory, the military strength of the Bassein fortress was seen as weak compared to other Portuguese forts in India. Despite repeated advice to strengthen its defenses, nothing was done until 1546 when a serious threat came from the Muslim Admiral of the Gujarat fleet, who had previously controlled the region before the Portuguese. To defend against this threat, a temporary barricade was built.¹⁶

The steady income from the *Cartaz*, became a privilege for captains and officials. This significantly reduced the money in the royal treasury. Even the profitable ship-building trade faced problems when greedy captains raised the price of timber. This made ships more expensive and led to fewer orders from the royal authorities, who started ordering from Brazil instead of Bassein. Often, those in power prioritized their own trading interests over their official duties.

The Marathas , under the leadership of Peshwa Bajirao I, were expanding their influence and control over territories in Western India during the 18th century, they attacked Bassein, in revenge of inquisition.¹⁷ Being close to their own lands, and Bassein's highly strategic location would give them an advantage over their rivals along the coast: specifically, the Siddhis of Janjira, the Angres of Colaba, and the English.

The hostility between the Portuguese and Marathas started around 1719 when the Marathas took control of Kalyan, and the Portuguese refused to pay tribute. Due to threats and raids by the

¹⁶ Teresa Albuquerque, *Bassein: The Portuguese interlude* (Mumbai: Wenden offset, 2004), 37.

¹⁷ Gerson da Cunha, 143.

Marathas into Portuguese territories in the North, the newly appointed Viceroy of Portuguese India, Pedro Mascarenhas, decided to strengthen the town of Bassein. The Viceroy appointed his nephew Luis Botelho as the General of the North.

On November 26, 1723, Pilaji Jadhav attacked the Bassein territory claiming it belonged to Shahu. Due to insufficient forces, the Portuguese could not resist the Maratha invasion and, on January 10 of the following year, they signed a peace treaty. Despite this treaty, on October 13, 1724, the Governor of Bassein learned that by the 15th of that month, the Marathas were planning to move their troops into Bassein to collect tribute.¹⁸

In the year 1730, Maratha movements became more aggressive as they entered the Northern province with a large army. Faced with this crisis, General Francisco da Guerra de Mesquita sought assistance from the General of Bombay, who promptly sent a force of seven hundred men. With this help, the Portuguese General in the North managed to prevent the Marathas from occupying the Island of Salsette. The Marathas stayed within Portuguese territory until peace was concluded on January 30, 1732.¹⁹

In September 1736, the English general in Bombay informed the Viceroy that preparations were being made by Bajirao for a campaign against Bassein.²⁰

On April 12, news reached Goa that the Marathas had invaded and occupied the territory of Bassein. At dawn on June 9, 1737, the Marathas attacked the Bassein fort. They sent four thousand selected soldiers from their camp at Madrapur. After fighting for half an hour, they gave up and retreated, leaving many dead and wounded behind. Despite this setback, they launched

¹⁸ Pandurang Pissurlekar, "The Luso-Maratha Campaign of Bassein". *Indian History Congress*, 5 (1941), 421.

¹⁹ Pandurang Pissurlekar, "Luso- Maratha Campaign", 421.

²⁰ Pandurang Pissurlekar, 422.

another attack on Bassein during the night of September 15 with over 8,000 men. After a fierce battle lasting one and a half hours, they withdrew, having lost 2,000 men.²¹

Chimaji took command of the Maratha army and gathered a large force around Bassein to conquer the province completely. On January 20, Mahim was captured by the Marathas, leading to the surrender of the small forts of Queime and Sirgaum. Later, on January 22, the Maratha army moved to the camp at Tarapur and besieged its fort. They successfully occupied Tarapur's fort after seven days of siege, although Maratha records indicate it happened on February 4.

On May 6, the Viceroy agreed to hand over the Bassein fort to the Marathas. But even before this news reached Bassein, the new Governor, Caetano de Souza Pereira, who took over after Martinho da Silveira's death on April 15, had already arranged for the fort's surrender to the Marathas. This agreement was finalized on May 16, 1739, at the Bassein camp. The Portuguese left the Bassein fort on the early morning of May 23, and by the same morning, Saturday, the enemy had taken control of it.²²

On May 16, 1739, Captain Caetano de Souza Pereira surrendered and handed over control of the Bassein fort. Pedro Barretto was appointed by the General to meet with Chimaji and negotiate the terms of the truce. After reaching an agreement, the capitulation was signed on the same day.

Following are the terms of the treaty they agreed on:

²¹ Pandurang Pissurlecar, 423.

²² Pandurang Pissurlecar, 424-425.

1) The Marathas would let the Portuguese troops and civilians leave the fort safely, along with their weapons.

2) People of Christian, Hindu, or Muslim faith who wanted to leave Bassein would be allowed to take their belongings and go safely

3) Portuguese ships in the Bassein port could leave safely with their weapons and artillery.

4) If people felt forced to leave, the Marathas would help them. They would also ensure their safety during their journey.

5) Prisoners captured by either side would be returned.

6) Chimaji Appa's army would move far away to allow the Portuguese to leave the fort and board their ships safely.

7) Marathas would not take goods from Bassein without paying a fair price.

8) After signing the treaty, an official from Chimaji Appa's side would stay on board the Portuguese ship, and vice versa, to ensure both sides followed the agreement.²³

The Maratha's victory over the Portuguese was a significant event in Maharashtra's medieval history. As a result of this victory, the Marathas gained control of 20 forts, 340 villages, and ammunition worth 25 lakhs from the Portuguese.²⁴

The treaty ensured that the Portuguese garrison could leave the city with all the honors of war. Additionally, a week was given to the inhabitants who wanted to leave, allowing them to take

²³ Y.N. Kelkar, *Vasaichi Mohim* (Pune: Diamond Publications, 2008), 204- 205.

²⁴ B.V. Kulkarni, *Mumbai Parisaratil Arthat Ekekalchya firanganatil kille* (Mumbai: Puratatva Vastusangrahalay Sanchalanalay, 2009), 147.

all their possessions with them. Those who chose to stay were guaranteed the freedom to practice their religion according to their faith.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Portuguese presence in the North Konkan region, particularly in Chaul, Bassein, and Bombay was marked by strategic and commercial importance. These coastal areas became very important for Portuguese trade and maritime dominance in the 16th and 17th centuries. Chaul emerged as a maritime trade center, due to its strategic location which facilitate commerce between Gujarat and the Malabar coast. The port's maritime connection extended to the Red Sea, making it a center for spice and textile trade. Chaul was also the center of shipbuilding.

Bassein was initially recognized for its timber trade and later evolved into a major Portuguese stronghold. It was the capital of Portuguese possessions of northern territory. Bombay came under Portuguese control as part of Bassein's territorial jurisdiction

During Portuguese rule the economy of Chaul was driven by diverse sources of income such as tribute payments, trade in spices, textiles, and other goods, customs duties, taxes on local industries like tobacco and arrack, and revenue from land rent. Chaul emerged as a vital port linking India with Europe and the Middle East, although its prosperity faced challenges in the late 1600s due to external attacks and competition from neighboring regions. On the other hand, Bassein's economy was characterized by its role as a political and trade center. It generated revenue from trade activities, particularly in shipbuilding, agriculture (including opium and sugarcane), local industries like salt production and fishing, and taxation on various goods and services. Bassein's strategic location facilitated trade connections with Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, contributing to its economic significance within the Portuguese empire. Despite its decline due to silting of the port and changing political dynamics, Bassein remained financially successful, largely driven by its diverse economic activities and trade networks.

The Portuguese forts of Chaul, Bassein, and Korlai played important roles in Portuguese maritime history. These forts were crucial for Portuguese control over trade routes and served as strongholds protecting their interests. These forts served as naval bases for the safe anchorage of ships. Over time, these strategic positions faced various challenges, from local rulers and regional powers. Today, the remains of these forts stand as historical landmarks, reflecting the legacy of Portuguese influence in India's coastal regions.

The decline of the Portuguese in North Konkan, particularly in places like Bombay, Chaul, and Bassein, we see a gradual erosion of their power due to various factors, one significant factor was their policy of intolerance, which alienated local populations and eroded trust among indigenous communities. The Portuguese also struggled with economic mismanagement by Portuguese officials, relying heavily on tribute payments, customs duties, and taxes that burdened local industries. As external threats intensified from local rulers like the Marathas and Mughals, Portuguese forts in the region became vulnerable to military pressure and siege.

The transfer of key territories like Bombay to the English through political alliances further signaled the Portuguese decline. The advancing Marathas, led by figures like Chimaji Appa, posed formidable challenges to Portuguese forts, leading to capitulations and treaties that signaled the end of Portuguese control. The treaty of Bassein (1739) played a major role in the Portuguese decision to cede Bassein and retain Goa, Daman and Diu. This treaty likely reflected the choice made by Portuguese to prioritize the defense of their most strategically important territories. On the other hand, Marathas celebrated the capture of *Firangan* and counted it as their major victory.

Rise of Marathas and coming of English on western coast led to the downfall of Portugal in Konkan. The loss of Bassein and Chaul to the Marathas while retaining Goa, Daman, and Diu can be attributed to a combination of military capabilities, and shifting political dynamics in 18th century. The Portuguese prioritized the defense of their most crucial territories, while the Marathas focused on expanding their influence in the Konkan coast.

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Appendix I: Portuguese Document

124

TOMBO

daos,¹ E o ano de 548 por bijel pardaos,² E o ano de 549 arrecadou o capitaõ per prouisaõ do gouernador guarcia de saa, que pera iso tem.

E tem mais a Renda do anffiaõ e banguê e sabaõ, as quoaes cousas ninguem pode vender senão o rendeiro, ou as pesoas que com ele se concertarem; E o ano de 547 esteue arrendada por b^exx pardaos,³ E o ano de 548 pela mesma contia, E do ano de 549 pera quá arrecadou o capitaõ pela mesma prouisaõ. E estas duas Rendas estaua em custume arrecadarem os capitaes. E o ano de 547 me mandou o gouernador dom Joaõ de crastro que as arrendasse por d'elReey noso senhor, por lhe escreuer hũa carta sobre iso que o fizesse asy, e depois tornou a espreuer outra carta o dito senhor ao mesmo gouernador, em que lhe dizia que se enformase d'iso, a requerimento de vasquo da cúnha capitaõ da dita ffortaleza, pela qual carta o dito gouernador gracia de saa pasou prouisaõ pera as poder arrecadar em seu tempo.

E tinha sua Alteza mais na dita cidade a Renda do bazar, que he das bulicas onde se vendem as cousas pelo miudo, que soya render c^ol pardaos⁴ o ano de 547; e o ano de 548 a deu o gouernador don João de crastro á camara da dita cidade pera as despesas d'ela, pelos seruigos que alguns moradores d'ela fizerão a sua alleza no cerquo de dio e no ffazimento da ffortaleza, com condiçaõ que eles ouuesem d'elRey noso senhor prouisaõ pera o aver asy por bem, pelo que, se este ano que ora vem de 550 não trouxerem prouisaõ de sua Alleza, teraa o ffeytor d'esta cidade cuidado de arrecadar pera o dito senhor.

E tinha mais sua Alteza na dita cidade a renda do guanguao, a qual hera hũa casa em que todos os negros hiaõ jugar, e rendia cem pardaos, a qual o gouernador don João de crastro mandou que taal renda não ouuese, nem se arrecadase, nem taal cousa ouuese, por não ser seruiço de deos nem d'elRey noso senhor, nem se arrecadou mais.

¹ Novecentos e quarenta pardaos. ² Setecentos e cincoenta pardaos. ³ Quinhentos e vinte pardaos. ⁴ Cento e cincoenta pardaos.

Appedix II: Portuguese Forts



Chaul Fort

Photo Credit: Chinmay Gadgil

Photo Courtesy: Revdanda, Maharashtra



Korlai Fort

Photo Credit: Chinmay Gadgil

Photo Courtesy: Korlai, Maharashtra



Vasai Fort: Ruins of Captains house

Photo Credit: Chinmay Gadgil

Photo Courtesy: Vasai, Maharashtra



Chaul Fort: Tower of the Franciscan
convent of Santa Barbara

Photo Credit: Chinmay Gadgil

Photo Courtesy: Revdanda, Maharashtra