

## **The Indian Community in Zanzibar 1804-1856: A Historical Study\***

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### **Abstract**

This study sheds light on the Indian community that settled on the island of Zanzibar when it was part of the Sultanate of Oman, specifically between 1804 and 1856 under Sayyid Sa'id bin Sultan al-Busa'idi. Sayyid Sa'id did his best to improve conditions for Indians in the sultanate, exempting them from all types of taxes and giving complete freedom to non-Muslim Indians to practice their religions. He some Indians to work for him personally, and they became his most trusted associates. He recruited them to finance-related positions, particularly as Arabs had not exhibited sufficient skill in this field. In the areas he held in East Africa, Busa'idi entrusted customs administration to Hindus. Indian merchants acted as an intermediary in coastal trade between European and local merchants in Zanzibar, and they participated in the slave trade. They put their capital to work in various commercial enterprises, especially mortgages for Arab-owned properties. These Arabs did not have sufficient capital to fund their commercial activities, so they mortgaged many of their properties for loans from the capitalist Indian moneylenders. Because the Indians charged high interest rates for these mortgages, the Arabs became buried in debt. Much of their property was gradually transferred to the Indian merchants, who succeeded over time in gaining control of most commercial projects on the coast, surpassing their Arab counterparts. Many of them became extremely wealthy thanks to their outstanding ability to accumulate wealth and their skills in finance and accounting. The customs fees and their good command of Arabic and Swahili also helped.

**Keywords:** Zanzibar, Sayyid Sa'id, Indians in East Africa, History, African History, Indians, Hindus, East Africa.

### **Introduction:**

This study sheds light on the Indian community that migrated to Zanzibar<sup>1</sup> in the first half of the nineteenth century. identifies the regions from which they came and the position

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<sup>1</sup> Zanzibar is an island located on the East African coast, south of Mombasa, and the second largest island on the coast, after Madagascar. Zanzibar has an estimated area of 645 square miles and is about 25 miles from the coast. It is 24 miles long at its longest point and is famous for its fertile land; it is one of the most important regions in the world for clove production. The inhabitants of the island include Africans as well as Arabs who migrated there sporadically in different periods throughout history and some expatriate populations, such as Indians and others. The Arab presence in Zanzibar ended in 1964, and it is now part of the Republic of Tanzania. See (I-Mughayr 1994: 73); (Ghulab 1979:546).

of the Omani sultan Sayyid Sa‘id at that time toward them. It also reveals the policy of the British Government in Bombay toward the Indians, considering that Indians in East Africa were among its subjects.

Therefore, the principal questions this article seeks to answer are: What were the conditions of the Indian community in Zanzibar between 1804 and 1856, and what were the roles it played in this period?

The geographical scope of this study is the island of Zanzibar, and the time period under consideration is the first half of the nineteenth century, i.e., 1804–1856, during the rule of Sayyid Sa‘id bin Sultan al-Busa‘idi. This study addresses the following topics:

1. The Arrival of the Indians in Zanzibar.
2. The Move of the Omani Capital from Muscat to Zanzibar and Its Effect on the Indian Community.
3. The Indians’ Most Significant Work in Zanzibar.
4. The Role of the Indian Community in the Slave Trade in Zanzibar.
5. Conclusion.

### 1. The Arrival of the Indians in Zanzibar:

Indians had been settling on the East African coast to some extent since the early modern period. When the Portuguese explorer Vasco Da Gama<sup>2</sup> visited the coast in 1498 on his way to India, he mentioned the presence of a number of Hindu Indian merchants who had settled in the East African ports. One Portuguese historian who worked in India in the sixteenth century mentions that the ships setting out from India to East African shores would usually dock at Mombasa,<sup>3</sup> Malindi,<sup>4</sup> and Mogadishu,<sup>5</sup> and that the commercial interactions between the inhabitants of the island—Arabs and Africans—and the Indians took place through a barter system. The Arab merchants living at these ports would trade gold, ivory, and gum arabic, which they transported from the African interior, for the fabrics, spices, and wheat carried by the Indian merchants. This historian points out that the sultans of Zanzibar, Pemba<sup>6</sup>, and Mafia<sup>7</sup> wore silk and cotton fabrics brought in by the Indian merchants and bartered for in Mombasa. (Harraz 1968:109–110)

Given the strategic importance enjoyed by Muscat and Zanzibar alike, the Indians worked to use it to their advantage, relying on their commercial abilities and knowledge of the monsoon winds. When the winds blew from the northeast in December, they would propel the Indians’ ships, known as dhows, until they reached the shores of the Arabian Gulf and East Africa. In March, the southwesterly winds would take them to the ports of western India. Thus

<sup>2</sup> Vasco Da Gama was a Portuguese sailor and a prominent figure of the so-called “Age of Exploration”. He is considered the first explorer to reach India by sea by passing by the Cape of Good Hope, paving the way for European colonization in Africa and Asia. See (*l-Mawsu‘ah al-‘Arabiyah al-Mu‘assarah*, 1988, vol. 1:597).

<sup>3</sup> Mombasa is a small island located one hundred miles to the north of the island of Zanzibar. The ancient Arabs called it Basasa, a nickname for Mecca, because those who settled it came from the Hijaz. It is connected to the Kenyan coast by a long bridge and is now considered an important port of the Republic of Kenya. See(al-‘Uqqad1982:206)

<sup>4</sup> Malindi is now a port in Republic of Kenya. Al-Hamawi refers to it as a town in the Land of the Blacks that exported ambergris, located north of Mombasa. See ( Yaqut, 1979, vol. 1:333)

<sup>5</sup> Mogadishu is a city on the Somali coast in East Africa, now the capital of Somalia. This city was originally built by seven brothers who came from Al-Ahsa [present-day eastern Saudi Arabia] in the sixth century AD. See( al-Mughayri1994:24) (Zaki, 1970:38)

<sup>6</sup> Pemba is one of the small islands situated to the southwest of Mombasa, off the East African coast. Called the “Green Island”, it has an area of 380 square miles of fertile land. Some of its most important products are cloves and coconuts. It is now off the Kenyan/Tanzanian coast. See: (l-Mughayri, 1994 85–87)

<sup>7</sup> Mafia is an island east of Tanzania, 81 miles to the south of Dar es-Salaam, in the Indian Ocean. It has an area of approximately 106 square: <https://e3arabi.com/?p=1025647>

commercial interactions followed the cycle of these winds.(Turki 1994:13)

Zanzibar was becoming increasingly important commercially at the turn of the nineteenth century, due to political unrest in Persia and Bandar Abbas being replaced by Muscat as the regional trade hub. This attracted new forms of trade, and some merchant families in Oman and Zanzibar acted as commercial agents for Indians. The merchants' approach to buying and selling in both areas drew small merchants of all backgrounds to Zanzibar, in addition to the many European goods that reached Zanzibar by way of India (Landen,1994:73–74)

The increase in commercial exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and India resulted in a large number of Indians settling in Zanzibar in particular.

Beginning in the early nineteenth century, the number of Indian merchants on the East African coast increased, especially in Zanzibar. Muslim Indians came from Mumbai<sup>8</sup> and Surat,<sup>9</sup> while Hindus came from Kutch<sup>10</sup> and Jamnagar.<sup>11</sup> (Ibid)

The Indians living in Zanzibar can be divided into two main groups by religious affiliation: Muslims (Saldanha 1986:8) and Hindu Banias.<sup>12</sup>

We may briefly define them as:

**A - Muslim Indians:**

Muslim Indians in Zanzibar can be divided into several sects and religious groups: the Khojas, the Bohras, and the Memons.

**1 - Khojas:**

The Khoja sect was the largest and most influential Indian Islamic sect in Zanzibar. They belong to the Shi'i madhhab and constitute the largest group within the Indian community continuously residing in Zanzibar. They came from the ports of Mumbai, Kutch, and Surat, and after a period of time became permanent settlers in Zanzibar and started families there. Al-Mughayri 1994:261) ; (al-Farisi 1994:99); (Pearce1967:256).

The Khoja sect has been described as a merchant class, and they devote their lives from an early age to business, not engaging in any other activities. They usually start their days early and work late into the night. Khoja women participated in commercial activities alongside their husbands; women handled retail, sitting in the family shop and conducting sales, while their husbands were busy with business outside of the shop. Slaves, especially slave women, would handle the household work. Each Khoja household usually had two slaves to carry out all of the household tasks. (Christie 1875:336–337); (Pearce 1967: 256).

Members of the Khoja sect lived in households that were similar to one other in size,

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<sup>8</sup> Mumbai is a large Indian city on the Arabian Sea and therefore a major Indian seaport, founded in approximately 300 BC. The city is home to the University of Mumbai, founded in 1857, and is a major industrial center in India. The headquarters of the British East India Company were in Mumbai. See( al-Shammari1990:468); (*al-Mawsu'ah* 1988 vol. 1:445)

<sup>9</sup> Surat is an Indian city northwest of Mumbai and a major port on the Gulf of Cambay. It was a hub for European trade in the seventeenth century and became well known for exporting cotton products. The city was one of the areas in which the English founded commercial agencies, and it posed a threat to the Portuguese in India. See(*al-Mawsu'ah* 1988 vol.1:1032),(Nuwwar1991:548)

<sup>10</sup> Kutch is an area of western India whose merchants have regularly visited East Africa since trade between the regions began. See( Turki 1994:11,14)

<sup>11</sup> Jamnagar is located in western India, and most of its inhabitants are Hindus. Its people have always traded with East Africa. See( Turki 1994:14)

<sup>12</sup> Landen believes that *Bania* is a mispronunciation of *Bhatia*, a merchant class in India whose history is deeply tied to international trade, and that the term is used for Hindu merchants only. However, Rajab Harraz believes that *Bania* is used in East Africa for any Indian merchant, Muslim or Hindu. For more, see: (Landen 1994: 55,165) ,(Harraz 1968: 110)

arrangement, and lifestyle, whether they were rich or poor. These houses served two purposes simultaneously: shelter and trade. Khoja houses were located on small streets and were connected to the market. They were grouped together and consisted of two floors. The shop made up one room of the house that opened directly onto the street, slightly raised off the ground; in the shop are several shelves on which the goods are displayed. The woman of the house would sit in the middle of the shop, watching the shoppers closely. Behind the shop there was usually a long storeroom leading to a courtyard, and if business is slow, the storeroom was used as a bedroom and kitchen. The second floor was usually one room directly above the shop, but in large houses, instead of one upper room above the shop, there was another room over the storeroom that was used as a kitchen. The kitchen was opened onto the anterior room and was connected to the lower storeroom with a ladder (Christie 1875: 337–339).

The bedrooms were furnished with two beds, some seats, and a child's bed. The kitchen tools were extremely basic—nothing but the necessities. Some think that the shop became a bedroom at night if the grandmother and grandfather were staying with the family. However, much of the time, the shop was used as a sitting room and nursery, while visitors only entered the upper room when necessary (Ibid. 338–339).

The Khojas' food was simple: rice, curry, and chicken. One researcher (Ibid, 339–340). describes them as clean in personal appearance due to their white clothes, which they assiduously kept clean. At the same time, they were considered dirty in their daily life: their houses are described as unclean, and perhaps even more disgusting were the slave huts. Their houses had no toilets, and as a result they become infected with many deadly diseases, like tropical diseases, diarrhea, distension of the liver and spleen, and skin diseases. The mortality rate among their infants was so high that it could be said that if not for continuous immigration from India, the Khojas in Zanzibar would have died out.

The Khojas gathered every Friday in a certain location known as the “community meeting place”. The community had a chief who was elected annually, and this position was a point of pride, comparable to a magistrate or ruler. In addition to this weekly meeting, they also gathered at weddings and funerals. Their celebrations differed depending on the social status of the person involved: some lasted one night and a bit of rice was eaten, while others lasted several days and a variety of foods was served. Members of the poorer Khoja class were keen to attend these celebrations, as the meals served were the only heavy meals they could get. Wealthy Khojas used celebrations like weddings as an occasion to flaunt their wealth through women's attire and the types and quantity of food served (Ibid. 338–342).

Khoja individuals worked in wholesale and retail trade, and they represented most of the merchants and shop-owners in Zanzibar. Their business allowed them to establish expansive commercial connections with all ports in East Africa through sale of European goods and purchase of local products. Their work as intermediaries and retail merchants allowed them to form close relations with foreign merchants, especially Americans, in addition to the local inhabitants of Zanzibar and the wider coastal region (Letter from Atkins Hamerton, 336)

## **2 - The Bohras**

The Bohra sect was considered distinct from the Muslim Indian community in Zanzibar. They were fewer than the Khojas, and they also worked in trade, but some of them were craftsmen. They had their own mosques, and they did not mix with other Islamic sects. This sect resembled the Khojas from the outside in terms of their traditions, with the exception of the hijab; Bohra women wore hijab, and they did not work alongside their

husbands, in contrast to Khoja women. Bohras usually lived in their own quarter, and their community was highly cohesive. They had a good reputation in Zanzibar, and their population was estimated at approximately 700 under Sayyid Sa'id (Pearce 1967: 256).

### **3 - The Memons**

The Memon sect in Zanzibar comprised a number of Muslim families from the Sunni Hanafi sect, as opposed to the Khojas and the Bohras, who were Shi'is. They were the smallest group of Indians in Zanzibar (Al-Mughayri 1994:261); (Coupland 1965:302).

### **B - The Hindus**

The Hindus in Zanzibar were called Banias. They were an important merchant community in Zanzibar and the cities of the East African coast. Despite the fact that they were from western India (Kutch and Jamnagar), they were separate from other Indian sects because of their religion and foreign customs. The Banias were capitalists and greatest Indian merchants in Zanzibar. It was they who were entrusted with customs on the island as part of an agreement with the sultan. Therefore, there were many of them at most ports of the Sultanate of Oman in East Africa, collecting the fees imposed on goods; this work gave them familiarity with the movements of merchant caravans headed to and from the African interior. Despite the Banias' presence on the coast, they did not set out for inland regions in Africa for the most part, instead sending goods through merchant caravans owned by Arabs and Swahilis (Rusell 1935: 329); (Saldanha 1986: 10) ; (Christie 1875:346).

Because the Banias were the owners of capital and bankers, they had direct links to all commercial operations that occurred, and they held significant sway over trade in Zanzibar, directly or indirectly. Of course, not all Banias owned a great amount of capital; some of them were middle-class, earning money from small shops and pawnbroking with demanding conditions for the borrower (Burton 1875:328–329).

Although many Muslims in the local community in Zanzibar hated the Banias for their religious beliefs, this did not prevent the Banias from occupying a prestigious position in the community. This was due to their noticeable wealth and their role in customs. Therefore, it can be inferred that they were a merchant class who was especially organized in their business dealings (Christie 1875: 346–347).

The Banias did not settle permanently in Zanzibar, and their wives and families stayed in Kutch and other areas in India. This meant that the lives of the Banias in Zanzibar differed from their lives in India. They lived a social life cut off from the rest of society, as their religion and foreign customs separated them from the other social classes in Zanzibar. While in their commercial interactions the Banias communicated with all groups, in their social lives they communicated with no one (Ibid. 353–354).

The Banias made up the great majority of the Indian community in Zanzibar. They became accustomed to living in Zanzibar for long periods of time, 15–20 years, broken up by long visits to their families in India. Many of them did not bring their families with them (Rusell 1935: 329). for various reasons, most importantly the harsh climate and their fear of associating with a community they viewed as foreign, if not hostile. Therefore, they lived cut off from the society in which they worked, while simultaneously performing their religious rituals in their own temples and retaining their sectarian traditions. The Banias did not pray daily, but there were three temples that they would visit regularly, and they had many holidays, which they celebrated on their farm (Landen 1994:165).

Hindu Banias were known for their adherence to religious and national beliefs, and they

never wavered in their loyalty to India. Since India was the seat of the holiest places of their religion, custom forbade them to pledge allegiance elsewhere. Therefore, they were not subjects of the [Muslim] Omani sultan, which would have meant they were renouncing belonging to India, the birthplace of their religion.<sup>13</sup> Banias who lived outside the borders of India were required to return now and then to their country of origin to make offerings at their temples (Ibid.).

They lived in houses similar to those of the Khojas, so they required only the most basic necessities (Christie 1875:346-347). Their food consisted of vegetables, rice, wheat, ghee, milk, and sugar, and they added asafoetida, turmeric, and other hot spices to their food. The Banias either cooked their own food or had it cooked by other Banias in accordance with their customs. They also drew whatever water they needed from their own wells and carried it with them wherever they went. The Banias revered animals, so they avoided slaughtering animals or eating meat (Pearce 1967:256). They avoided speaking about how their food was cooked and eaten and they did not eat with or in the presence of anyone outside their religious community. The Banias did not smoke tobacco, but they did chew it, as they did betel leaves and peppers (Burton 1875 :328).

The Banias usually ate off of banana leaves and fed their food waste to the cows. They kept assiduously clean while preparing and eating food; they would remove their clothes, with the exception of an *izaar*, whenever they were eating food or washing up after eating. The Banias are described as clean in their personal affairs; they washed their white clothes themselves. A Bania person would wake up early, around dawn, and go to the beach wearing an *izaar* and a shawl that covered their head. They would wash part or all of their body, then return home, brush their teeth with a *miswak*, and clean their tongue, throat, and mouth. Then the barber was responsible for shaving their head, leaving a small amount of hair on top. Finally, they clipped their fingernails and toenails (Christie 1875:351).

They would start their business early in the day, diligently focusing all of their thoughts and concerns on this work outside of lunchtime and a short nap. They would spend most hours of the day on their business. At 10 p.m., they would eat dinner, bathe, and go to bed. The Banias' traditions were very strange and seemingly contradictory. Despite their clean habits, you might find them happy to have two or more cows in their courtyard and to sleep in a room neighboring this courtyard so as to be blessed by these animals (Ibid, 353).

In terms of excellence in trade, there was a kind of commercial competition between Muslim and Bania Indians in Zanzibar and Oman. The Hindu Banias had a stronger economic position, as they usually worked in cities and active ports in East Africa, as opposed to the Muslim Indians, who could be found even in remote areas. This is explained by the instability in those areas, which exposed the Hindus to violence more than the Muslims (Landen, 1994:166–167).

Extant historical sources (Nicholls1971:291–292) do not indicate that the Indian community in Zanzibar had any clear political influence there. This is despite the fact that large swaths of their country were under British control during this period, and Britain simultaneously held strong influence in Zanzibar and East Africa in general. Therefore, it is clear that the British Government in Bombay wanted Indians to act within certain parameters.

In any case, the Indians enjoyed commercial advantages granted to them by Sayyid Sa' id with the endorsement and support of the British Government in Bombay. This prevented

<sup>13</sup> Some Indians in Zanzibar were subjects of the British government; these renounced their loyalty to the English and declared themselves subjects of the Omani sultan in order to participate in the slave trade (Russell1935:385).

them from taking part in any political activity that might conflict with British interests. In addition, the Indians in Zanzibar were British subjects, so we find that their work was limited to commercial and financial interactions that were either harmonious with British policy or at least did not conflict with it. It is notable here that the Indians' activity and widespread presence in East Africa were tangible wherever British influence existed.

Here we may ask: Did the Indian community in Zanzibar ever integrate into the wider society? We may refer to the observations of one visitor (Gundara1982:25–26) to Zanzibar in 1843, who notes that Indians in Zanzibar were generally considered socially inferior, but no one harassed them. He indicates that the Indian community could have been considered distinct from other foreign communities. They came into contact with each other only as needed for trade and work. He also says that there was no competition between these sects: each one chose different business activities in the city and on the coast, and each sect tried to solve its problems on its own. Each Indian community was distinguishable from other sects by its unique clothing, particular customs, and characteristic traditions. These sects gathered and worshiped in different places; even when deaths occurred, their graves were separate. The groups that formed the Indian community in Zanzibar were socially isolated from each other based on their beliefs, background, and race, but if they did gather, they formed a closed social class.

## **2. The Move of the Omani Capital From Muscat to Zanzibar and Its Effect on the Indian Community:**

In the 1830s, Sayyid Sa'id began to take serious interest in his holdings on the East African coast. In 1832, he moved his capital from Muscat to Zanzibar. Perhaps Sayyid Sa'id's goal was to establish a trading empire, and this was what motivated him to widen the opportunities for foreigners to work in his country. Thus, he brought a number of Hindu (Bania) merchants with him to Zanzibar (Turki 1994:16).

Starting in 1832, he spent most years of his reign in Zanzibar, while not relinquishing control of his holdings in the Arabian Peninsula. He traveled regularly between Zanzibar and Muscat, and when he was absent from one shore of his sultanate, he would appoint a delegate to administer that section in his absence. He maintained constant contact between the two sections using his large fleet of ships. Here we may mention the most significant fundamental motivations behind moving the capital to Zanzibar, which are (Al-Ma'mari:1971,73);(Uqqad and Qasim1959:73);(Pearce 1967:120).

1- Zanzibar lay approximately at the end of the southern trade winds system. Furthermore, it was an ideal location for a trade hub due to its central location; it could be a trade crossing and an important hub for commercial exchange for all areas of East Africa. It was also located near the East African coast.

2- There were ports suitable for anchoring ships, and potable water sources were available, as well as arable land. This aligned with Sayyid Sa'id's interest in agriculture.

3- Its climate was more pleasant than that of Muscat, which was hot for more than four months of the year.

4- Because Zanzibar was an island, it was protected from attacks by the African tribes.

5- Zanzibar is the second-largest island in the region after Madagascar.<sup>14</sup> It has an area

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<sup>14</sup> Madagascar is located in southeastern Africa in the Indian Ocean, approximately 400 km from the coast. It consists of a large island and a group of smaller islands. Its inhabitants are divided into several African tribes, in addition to the Arab, Hindu, and Chinese settlers. It was formally placed under French occupation in 1885 and declared its independence as part of the French Community. See (Atiyyat Allah, 1980 vol. 2: 1384,1450); (*al-Mawsu'ah al-'Arabiyyah al-'Alamiyyah*1996 vol. 23: 8–9).

of 650 square miles.

6- It is relatively far from the Arabian Peninsula, which had many internal disputes between Sayyid Sa'id, the Saudis, and the Qawasim.

7- Zanzibar was a suitable point from which to dominate the neighboring coasts and islands politically.

8- Sayyid Sa'id believed that Zanzibar was a promising territory and the coastal regions were merely gateways to the continent.

Whatever his motivations were, Sayyid Sa'id was keen to take Indian merchants with him when he moved to Zanzibar. These merchants contributed a huge amount of activity to commercial operations in Muscat, and they took their expertise and capital with them to Zanzibar. One thing that encouraged these Indians to migrate to Zanzibar was the great tolerance and kind treatment they saw in Sayyid Sa'id. He would let them have religious freedom and would grant them the status they wanted in the commercial sphere (Qasim1968: 210) ;(Coupland 1965:303).

When Sayyid Sa'id moved his capital to Zanzibar, foreign consulates were established there and trade agreements were signed with Western countries. All this opened the door for American, European, and Indian merchants to enter Zanzibar and live there in order to carry out commercial activities. However, few Westerners came to Zanzibar for this purpose, incomparable to the number of Indians who became, over time, among the largest foreign communities, playing an important role in commercial activities.

In any case, there are numerous reasons for the presence of so many Indians in Zanzibar that the researcher may infer from close reading of historical sources. These reasons include:

1- Sayyid Sa'id supported them and wanted them to expand their commercial activities to cover all parts of the empire—Arabian and African—especially as he had previously worked with them in Muscat before moving to Zanzibar. He realized their commercial capabilities: the Indians would begin with little capital, then grow it with time, while living in conditions and circumstances unlike those of other foreign communities.

2- The Indians were capable of providing the funds Sayyid Sa'id needed to spur economic activity in his empire. These funds would be provided in cooperation with other Indian merchants in Muscat or with commercial institutions in India itself. Therefore, the Indians were in constant contact with Indian commercial institutions.

3- Sayyid Sa'id realized that the success of Indian merchants in his empire meant the introduction of new capital into its economy. One researcher (Landen1994:160) referring to this idea, believed that any Western commercial institution that wanted to do business with Sayyid Sa'id needed to find a partner among the Indian merchants. This partner would be able to overcome many of the obstacles Western institutions would face. In addition, the Indian merchant would give Western institutions advice on entering local economic arenas.

4- By opening the doors of his country to Indians and facilitating their business, Sayyid Sa'id hoped to establish constant communication between himself and the British Government in Bombay, with which he was always keen to establish good relations. He often worked with Indian merchants in their capacity as British subjects. The Omani-British treaties that opened the door for these Indians to enter Omani territories in their capacity as British subjects cannot be disregarded.

As a result, the number of Muslim and Hindu Indians in Zanzibar increased to 5,000 in 1850 (Kaplan 1978:28). At the same time, commercial methods used by Indians and their outstanding work in the field helped them to acquire social and intangible advantages from



Sayyid Sa'id, to the point that Indians represented the primary merchant class in Zanzibar (al-'Afghānī 1988: 83). There were Indians in all the cities and towns on the coast opposite Zanzibar; they even reached the Portuguese settlements in Mozambique (Rusell1935:329) and, according to R.F. Burton (Burton1875:315–317) took control of most commercial activity in the East African coastal region (Qasim1968:210).

In any case, Sayyid Sa'id's work to develop his commerce in East Africa stimulated the increase in Indian merchants in the region in this period. According to Ruete:<sup>15</sup> "If Sultan Sa'id was devoid of ethnic prejudice, then he realized that the interests of his country aligned with the interests of the Banias, and that one Bania would bring ten others of his nation behind him. Therefore, he offered them all the help and encouragement he could. His reward was a revitalization of his trade and an improvement in the condition of his subjects." (Ibid. 190 ).

### **3. The Indians' Most Significant Work in Zanzibar:**

When he moved to Zanzibar, Sayyid Sa'id was keen to have the Indian merchants settle there and granted them many economic concessions. He believed in free trade and cleared the way for their commercial activity, and they formed the primary class of businessmen in Zanzibar. Due to their success in the commercial sphere, Sayyid Sa'id depended on their competence in economic and administrative work. In particular, Indians were considered British subjects, so Sayyid Sa'id sought their favor to bolster his relations with the British Government in Bombay. When the British consulate in Zanzibar was established in 1840, they had an official body to protect their interests (Uqqad and Qasim1959: 63); (Harraz1971:34).

Therefore, Sayyid Sa'id did his best to improve conditions for Indians in the sultanate and sought to make them comfortable, exempting them from all types of taxes and giving complete freedom to non-Muslims to practice their religions. He took on some Indians to work for him personally, and they became his most trusted associates (Coupland 1965:302) ; At the same time, he began to recruit them to finance-related positions,<sup>16</sup> particularly as Arabs had not exhibited sufficient skill in this field. Therefore, he had no objection to filling some important state positions with Indians, and in the areas he held in East Africa (other than the Mrima region,<sup>17</sup> which was monopolized by the sultan<sup>18</sup>), Busa'idi entrusted customs administration to Hindus.

Beginning at the start of the nineteenth century, Indians began renting ports that were under Sayyid Sa'id's control for five years at a time. In exchange, they would pay a set annual sum to the state treasury, and after the agreed-upon period had elapsed, the ports would go up for bidding once again, and whoever offered the most would win this privilege.

<sup>15</sup> Rudolph Sa'id-Ruete was the son of Salima, Sayyid Sa'id's daughter, by her German husband, Ruete. He was born and raised in Germany, then moved to Britain with his mother. Nothing much is known about his life in England, except that he would meet his uncles during their frequent visits to London, despite the bad relationship between his uncle, Barghash bin Sa'id, and his mother, Salima, due to the fact that she had fled to Germany and converted to Christianity. Nevertheless, Rudolph was unaffected by the discord between his mother and his uncle, and liked his grandfather Sa'id. During a visit of Khalifa bin Harib, the sultan of Zanzibar, to London, Rudolph gave a lecture on the history of the Busa'idis in Oman and Zanzibar. This lecture was published as a book in 1929. See (Sa'id-Ruete1988:25–30).

<sup>16</sup> Receipt of a Sum( 1851).

<sup>17</sup> Mrima is a region located between Kilwa and Pangani. The Omani sultan enforced a monopoly in this region for trade of gum arabic and ivory. See ( Harraz 1971: 34) ; (Marqus 1975:2)

<sup>18</sup> Under the *iltizam* system, the *multazim* collects customs fees and taxes and, in exchange, pays a set amount of money agreed upon for a specified time period. This system [tax farming] was common in Europe in the late Middle Ages and in some Islamic countries. See: (Turki 1992: 20).

The Indians earned massive profits from the customs fees they charged for imports and exports ( al Farisi 1994:71–72).

The first contract that Sayyid Sa‘id signed was with an establishment owned by a Hindu named Wat Bhima, who was among the most prominent Indian merchants in Zanzibar, around 1817. The value of the contract was 70,000 Maria Theresa thalers (MTT) per year. The lease value of Zanzibar ports rose gradually, reaching 150,000 MTT by the beginning of 1833 (Gray1962:143), although this agreement did not last long; Sayyid Sa‘id began to think he had taken too big of a risk, and insisted on a larger share of the profit. Therefore, the contract was terminated. An Indian trading company owned by a Hindu merchant named Topan Shivji then applied for the rights to collect customs fees in exchange for an annual contract for 84,000 MTT, to which Sayyid Sa‘id assented, and the parties signed the contract in 1819. Shivji remained in control of customs until his death, when Sayyid Sa‘id signed an identical contract with Topan’s son Jairam. The Shivji family held a monopoly of all port rental operations in Zanzibar, from the north to the south. The value of the contract continued to increase, eventually reaching 100,000 MTT, and the Shivji family remained in control of customs administration for forty years ( al Farisi 1994: 71–72);(Bennett 1978:42).

Shivji held three important posts: President of the Customs Directorate on the Island of Zanzibar, Officer Responsible for the Port, and Governor of the State Bank. Shivji took advantage of his critical position at the bank to loan Sayyid Sa‘id large sums of money and gave loans to some Arab merchants and Indian and European commercial institutions. Rarely would the sultan or members of his family acquire money through anyone else ( al Farisi1994:72).Here we find that Shivji’s activity in his role as President of Customs extended beyond Zanzibar; he was active in Lamu, Mombasa, Mogadishu, Kismayo, and Dar es-Salaam, all of which fell under the Zanzibar customs administration (Gundara 1982:34).

Usually, the customs director would appoint an agent for each port on the East African coast that was under Sayyid Sa‘id’s control. Most of the time, these appointed agents would be either relatives of the customs director or his employees, and most of them were from the director’s own sect. The effect of this was that they worked as one team loyal to the customs director, and he could get reliable, precise information on all economic situations up and down the coast (Turki 1992: 24–25).

Working in customs administration would not have prevented an Indian from working independently as well. Jairam Shivji did a lot of business in Zanzibar and along the East African coast, alongside his commercial interests in Bombay and Kutch. He did not hesitate to take advance of his position as customs director and his strong relations with Sayyid Sa‘id and the merchant class to facilitate his own projects. When his personal interests conflicted with his duties as customs director, it would not be surprising for Sayyid Sa‘id to yield to him (Gray, 1962:144).

Jairam Shivji exercised more economic control than Sayyid Sa‘id himself. The sultan realized that, and instead of getting in his way, he established Shivji as the customs administrator, even when others were making better offers (Nicholls 1971:293).

This played a role in the growth and expansion of Shivji’s establishment’s business, due to his occupying such a critical position in the sultanate: the person responsible for financial affairs. It comes as no surprise that he was tremendously wealthy and held great sway over the Omani sultan. One source (Turki 1992:24). says that Jairam, who is described as the chief of the Indian community, left behind three million MTT in cash upon his death.

In the beginning, the economic activity of the Indians was limited to the coastal ports and cities in East Africa, while Arab merchants ventured into the African interior and established trade hubs. Over time, these became cities that demonstrated the power and influence that the Arab/African empire had in the interior. This control took the form of trade caravans, which encouraged trade relations between Arabs and Africans. As time went on, Indian merchants also ventured far into and throughout the African mainland interior and took over the movement of trade and wealth, to the point that, in the words of one historian: (al-Mughayri1994:471) "East Africa' could really be called 'Indian East Africa' if not 'Arab East Africa.'" Despite the fact that Sayyid Sa'id's affinity for the Indians came at the expense of the Arabs—a blot on his record as an Arab sultan—he was able to turn the inhabitants of Zanzibar into a pluralistic society whose people coexisted with one another.

The Indian merchants played the role of a middleman in East African coastal trade between Europeans and the local people. Beyond this, they put their capital to work in various commercial enterprises, especially mortgages for Arab-owned properties. These Arabs did not have sufficient capital to fund their commercial activities, so they mortgaged many of their properties for loans from the capitalist Indian moneylenders. This provided the Indians with sufficient funds to make their long journeys into the African continent. Because the Indians charged high interest rates for these mortgages, the Arabs became buried in debt. Much of their property was gradually transferred to the Indian merchants, who succeeded over time in gaining control of most commercial projects on the coast, surpassing their Arab counterparts. Many of them became extremely wealthy thanks to their outstanding ability to accumulate wealth and their skills in finance and accounting. The customs fees and their good command of Arabic and Swahili also helped. In addition, widespread trade relations had linked the Indians to the Arabian Peninsula and East Africa for centuries (Harraz 1968:110) helping the Indian merchants distinguish themselves in commerce and finance under Sayyid Sa'id. The Indians began to take control of the economy in Zanzibar and succeeded in monopolizing trade of many goods and economic resources.

The Indians did not focus their activity solely on banking operations, but purchased ivory and gum arabic from local merchants, as well as cargo from foreign ships, controlling imports and exports. Thus, the Indians did not work only as merchants or shop-owners but as clients for the various companies active in Zanzibar (Qasim 1968: 210); (Harraz 1968:109–110).

In any case, the Indians in Zanzibar were able to form a small ocean fleet to regularly transport goods between Zanzibar and Bombay. But when Jairam promised to rent American ships to transport goods to Kutch in 1837, the British authorities in India worked to thwart this plan. In 1839, Jairam's average profit was 100,000 MTT (Sheriff 1987:106–107).

The Indians invested a large part of their wealth in commercial activity in Zanzibar, carrying out banking operations by lending and financing commercial activity there. These operations earned them large profits from the high interest rates they charged. Despite the fact that sources say they charged only 4.5%, it was as high as 40% in some cases. In addition, they earned profits from the farms mortgaged by their Arab owners to the Indians in exchange for loans. The Indians resorted to regaining their loans by supervising output from these farms, and when this money exceeded their needs for their commercial projects,

they would send it to India rather than keep it in Zanzibar (Christie 1875:335–336).

In 1833, Sayyid Sa'id entered into the first trade agreement with a foreign country, the Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the United States.<sup>19</sup> A short time later, the American consulate in Zanzibar was opened in 1837. This agreement and the appointment of the American consul thereafter contributed to the increasing prominence of American activity in Zanzibar. From that year onwards, India was not the sole country presiding over trade with Zanzibar; foreign countries began to compete with the Indians in this domain, so the Indians began working to ingratiate themselves with the American consul in Zanzibar. They were able to establish a company which managed to take control of the market and promote American goods and they began competing amongst themselves. Some curried the favor of the British political agent in their capacity as British subjects, and some drew closer to the American consul (Qasim 1968:221).

Some Omani sources (al Mahdhuri 2014:180) describe the Bania Indians as masters of fraud, deception, trickery, extortion, and usury. Others (Ibid 181) justify the Indians' extravagantly high interest rates on funds they provided to the Arabs for their trade caravans by pointing out that these Indians had to withstand fluctuations in trade, especially as there were many cases in which the Indians would lose their money because the Arab trade caravans never returned from the interior because they had failed or been robbed. Therefore, while the Indians earned profits from their work as commercial middlemen and financiers for Arab caravans, they were not safe from losses either.<sup>20</sup>

The Arab tribes were naturally not pleased about the advantages the Indians enjoyed in the Omani sultanate, especially in the African part of Sayyid Sa'id's empire, where the Banias were practicing usury, using their capital for credit agreements, and providing mortgages for Arabs' real estate holdings (Harraz 1971:33). The chiefs of the Arab tribes expressed their grievances about the Indians' monopoly on major commercial projects to the Omani sultan, but Sayyid Sa'id took no interest in the subject (Ibid 1968:110–111) It seems that on the one hand, he did not want to anger the British, and on the other, his personal business relied on the Indians. Thus, it was to be expected that he did not respond to Arab calls for him to curb Indian influence in the sultanate.

It is clear that there was a relationship between support for English influence in East Africa and the presence of Indians in the region, especially considering that there was a solid line of communication between Sayyid Sa'id and the British Government in Bombay. It is also clear that he wanted to welcome Indians to his country on the condition that they were British subjects. Here we may say that the Indians in Zanzibar in this period (Russell 1935:385) were either British subjects or subjects of some Indian principalities that fell under a British territory, such as Kutch and Kathiawar at the time.

#### **4. The Role of the Indian Community in the Slave Trade**

While the Indians were honing their skills as professional businessmen in Zanzibar, Arab merchants, both those who arrived in Oman with Sayyid Sa'id and those who had settled in the region beforehand, turned to farming. Sayyid Sa'id granted them farmland and supported their work. At first, agriculture was concentrated in sugarcane, rice, and sesame (al Mughayri 1994:279), then the sultan introduced the clove crop and ordered the

<sup>19</sup> For more detail on this agreement, see; (Eilts 1985:9).

<sup>20</sup> One researcher mentions that there were many cases in which the Indians lost their money because the Arab caravans never came back from the interior. One Indian named Trikandas Binjani lost more than 20,000 pounds sterling because the Arab caravan he had financed never came back from the interior, having failed or been robbed. The source says that some interior cities like Tabora and Ujiji were full of Arabs who did not want to return to the coast, fearing the demands of their Indian creditors; see (Masilhi 1987:176).

Arabs and others to farm it. Within a short period, it became one of the most important sources of income in the Busa'idi state (Turki 1992:18).

In fact, the economic policy followed by Sayyid Sa'id after he moved his empire's capital to Zanzibar, whether in the agricultural or commercial sphere, contributed to the uptick in the slave trade in East Africa. Deliberately or not, most classes working in the region participated in the slave trade: land owners, caravan leaders, merchants, and capitalists. Researchers (Sheriff 1991:150) explain this by pointing out that the expansion in clove trade demanded the presence of a workforce, which could be acquired by venturing into the African interior to capture slaves and bring them back. Arabs were unable to accomplish this without the assistance of the capitalists, most of whom were Indians living in the region.

Under Sayyid Sa'id, the Indian community in Zanzibar was not isolated from the slave trade, as it was a powerful economic force in society on the island. Therefore, the Indians worked directly and indirectly in the sale and ownership of slaves, although the beginnings of the Indians' interest in owning and selling slaves in this region are not well understood (Turki 1992: 37). One researcher (Ibid.37) indicates that Indian participation in the sale and ownership of slaves, whether in Zanzibar or along the East African coast, goes back to ancient times.

One researcher explains how definitively involved the Indian community in East Africa was in the ownership and sale of slaves as follows: "The Indians certainly became involved in the slave sector and the slave trade was a fully developed part of the trade system. Bartle Frere<sup>21</sup> was the first to realize that it was impossible for anyone to be involved in East African trade to be completely sure that a portion of their transactions were not connected, directly or indirectly, to the slave trade." The researcher also mentions that the Indians had a significant hand in financing the caravan trade that ventured into the African interior to capture slaves and bring them back, along with the contributions of American and European merchants (Saldanha 1986:12);( Sheriff 1987:205).

He says that three quarters of the fixed (immovable) property at the end of Sayyid Sa'id's reign was held by the Indian community or mortgaged to them. In addition, one of the most significant factors in rising real estate prices in Zanzibar in this period was the number of slaves working on the properties (Ibid.1987:205).

Once Zanzibar became the center of the slave trade in East Africa, the vast majority of the inhabitants were enslaved people, This made it easier for the Indians to acquire slaves to work in their shops at very low prices; there were so few free workers in Zanzibar that it was impossible to find ones to hire. In addition, the Bania Indians needed people to serve in their homes or as concubines (Turki 1994:38) as they did not bring their families with them to work (Russell 1935:329).

Reports from the British consulate in Zanzibar in this period show that the Indians used some enslaved women as concubines, a common practice among Muslims and Hindus

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<sup>21</sup> Bartle Frere was Governor of Bombay and a member of the Council of India. He belonged to a school of thought supporting expansion of British control in India. When the formation of a select parliamentary committee to research and investigate the conditions of the slave trade in East Africa and how to eliminate it was announced in 1871 in London, Frere was appointed the president of a special commission to the Sultan of Zanzibar, Barghash bin Sa'id, and the Sultan of Oman, Turki bin Sa'id, to discuss the matter. Frere and his commission went to Paris, then Rome, then Alexandria, and finally to Zanzibar, and Frere eventually convinced Barghash to sign an agreement halting the slave trade, forbidding use of slaves, and closing slave markets. See:( Harraz 1968: 133-137); (Ross 1881:14) ; (Bennett 1978:96); (Sheriff 1987:236).

alike. Every Hindu Bania or Muslim Indian who settled in East Africa for some amount of time would buy an enslaved woman and live with her there. When they returned to their home country, they would usually sell the enslaved women to a friend from their own sect. However, when the Muslim Indians left Zanzibar for their country, they would usually take the enslaved women with them (Turki 1994:38).

The slave trade was highly profitable under Sayyid Sa'id. The Indians' participation in it increased, and Atkins Hamerton<sup>22</sup> states in a 1941 report that his investigations proved that the Indians were interested in owning and trading slaves and that all Indians living in East Africa were slavers. He also points to the role of the Hindu customs director, who levied a tax of one dollar per slave who set foot on the coast. It is well known that these taxes constituted a large part of Sayyid Sa'id's income; therefore, customs agents up and down the East African coast were certainly highly knowledgeable about the slave trade, whether about the slaves who were sold on the coast or those were sent abroad. These agents knew everything to do with this trade, and based on what was mentioned above, it was not in their best interest for them to divulge information about the slave trade or for it to vanish (Saldanha 1986: 12) ; (Turki 1994:40).

In another one of Hamerton's reports, in 1842, he accuses all Indian sects in East Africa of participating in the slave trade and says that the Hindu Banias acquired slaves through the chiefs of African tribes in the interior. The chiefs would capture prisoners in tribal conflicts and bring them to the coast, where they would sell them. On their way to the coast, these captives would carry ivory and gum arabic on their backs to barter these goods for others like beads, textiles, and other Indian products (Turki 1994:40-41);(Gray 1962: 255).

These reports indicated that the Banias had the lion's share of this trade, but the participation of Muslim Indians of various sects should not be ignored, even if it was less significant than that of the Banias. Muslim Indians bought slaves to serve in their houses, while Banias traded them by the thousands. Hamerton and other British officials did not explain why, but upon analyzing the data above, we may infer the following reasons:

- 1- The Indians' large-scale commercial capacity.
- 2- The political support and trade protection that Sayyid Sa'id granted to the Banias, especially as he trusted them enough to appoint one of them customs director.
- 3- The fact that many Banias considered themselves British subjects first and foremost, earning them a degree of freedom to trade between East Africa and India.
- 4- The increasing trade relations between Zanzibar, the United States, and France, especially after the United States successfully signed a trade deal with Sayyid Sa'id and opened a consulate in Zanzibar. Therefore, the American and French consults had extensive trade relations with the Hindu customs director, who would presumably would not refrain from putting great effort into serving the interests of himself and his sect in all types of trade, including the slave trade.

The Indians in Zanzibar played dual roles in determining their political affiliation, seeking more economic privileges. If they considered themselves British subjects or subjects of Indian territories, they accepted British sovereignty over those territories.

<sup>22</sup> Atkins Hamerton was the first to represent Britain in Zanzibar. In addition, he worked as a political agent for the British Government in Bombay during the time he spent there, from 1841 to 1857. He gained the rank of captain, then became a colonel. Before this, he was working as an officer in the East India Company, and acted as a British representative in Muscat before Sayyid Sa'id moved the capital to Zanzibar. He had a large role in Sayyid Sa'id signing the treaty banning the slave trade in 1845 and worked to resist French influence in East Africa. Hamerton died in Zanzibar after his health deteriorated due to the harsh climate. See: (Letter from Captain Hamerton 1842: 68); (Pearce 1967:277).

Eventually many shifted their political affiliation and called themselves subjects of the Omani sultan, solely for the purpose of being able to legally participate in the slave trade without violating the laws banning foreigners from doing so (Masilhi 1987:177), especially when they were trading with the Mrima coast, which was off-limits to foreign merchants (Turki1994:31). Thus, the Indians began to determine their affiliation when Britain began insisting that its subjects not be involved in the illicit slave trade. This is the first time Indians were forced to determine their legal status (Nicholls 1971:291).

When Sayyid Sa'id and Britain signed their first trade agreement in 1839, they emphasized that there was to be no participation by British subjects in Oman in the slave trade. The Indians felt that they would lose a significant economic resource, so the (Indian) customs director in Zanzibar suggested in 1841 that his people sign a pact declaring themselves subjects of the sultan. This pact would give them the right to continue to trade slaves. But some leaders in the Indian community in Zanzibar refused because such a declaration would ruin their reputation in India and cut the ties they had maintained with their home country, especially as many of them did not consider Zanzibar their permanent homeland. They had left their families in India and always planned to return to their homes in a few years. Moreover, this declaration would be terrible for their commercial interests (Sheriff1987:205), especially given that they saved most of the money they earned from trade, so if they declared their political and national allegiance to Sayyid Sa'id or Britain, they would lose business either in their homeland or in Zanzibar. They wanted to own property in India and be treated as citizens there while simultaneously continuing to work in the slave trade in Zanzibar (Nicholls 1971:291-292).

As a result, the Indians amassed huge fortunes. The fact that Jairam Shivji, the customs director in Zanzibar, left behind an estimated thirty million pounds upon his death (Masilhi 1987:177). confirms this. This was not unusual; some foreign sources indicate the central role Indians played in the slave trade and smuggling slaves out of Zanzibar. So, given that the Indians worked independently to smuggle slaves without paying taxes on them, we cannot rely on the customs numbers in Zanzibar and Mogadishu because they do not provide accurate data (Saldanha 1986:13).

The Indians were so successful in the slave trade that some wealthy Indians constructed their own warehouses in which to store goods and spaces to hide slaves they had captured. They had small groups of soldiers that guarded these warehouses, especially after the 1839 treaty that prohibited British subjects and the like from trading slaves. In 1850, Sayyid Sa'id issued a decision to burn Indian-owned slave depots (Ibid.).

The Indians had a prominent role in a new type of slave trade: trafficking Indian girls. When Hamerton arrived in Zanzibar in 1841, it was clear to him that slaves were regularly shipped from India to East Africa, and in order to avoid the British Indian Ocean fleet, the Indians would transport slaves as "servants" for people onboard. They would disembark in Zanzibar as such, although few of them could produce documents proving that they were servants (Gray 1962 :253–254). This business was reliable, and the victims of it were Indian adolescent girls.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study shows the significant commercial capabilities of the Indians and their success in coexisting and working in Zanzibari society. This community received political support and trade protections from Sayyid Sa'id, who trusted them enough to appoint one of them

as customs director. Many Indians considered themselves British subjects first and foremost, earning them a degree of freedom to trade between East Africa and India. They were supported in doing so by their large capital reserves and their cohesive community. Sayyid Sa'id gave them the freedom to practice their religion.

This study shows that the Indians were capable of providing the funds Sayyid Sa'id needed to spur economic activity in his empire. These funds would be provided in cooperation with other Indian merchants in Muscat or with commercial institutions in India itself. Therefore, the Indians were in constant contact with Indian commercial institutions.

This study emphasizes that Sayyid Sa'id was aware that the Indian merchants' success in his empire meant the introduction of new capital to his economy and saw that any Western commercial institution that wanted to do business with Sayyid Sa'id needed to find a partner among the Indian merchants. This partner would be able to overcome many of the obstacles Western institutions would face. In addition, the Indian merchant would give Western institutions advice on entering local economic arenas.

This study concludes that in the beginning, the Indian merchants played the role of a middleman in East African coastal trade between Europeans and the local people. Beyond this, they put their capital to work in various commercial enterprises, especially mortgages for Arab-owned properties. These Arabs did not have sufficient capital to fund their commercial activities, so they mortgaged many of their properties for loans from the capitalist Indian moneylenders. This provided the Indians with sufficient funds to make their long journeys into the African continent. Because the Indians charged high interest rates for these mortgages, the Arabs became buried in debt. Much of their property was gradually transferred to the Indian merchants, who succeeded over time in gaining control of most commercial projects on the coast, surpassing their Arab counterparts. Many of them became extremely wealthy thanks to their outstanding ability to accumulate wealth and their skills in finance and accounting. The customs fees and their good command of Arabic and Swahili also helped.

The Indians in Zanzibar played dual roles in determining their political affiliation, seeking more economic privileges. If they considered themselves British subjects or subjects of Indian territories, they accepted British sovereignty over those territories. Eventually many shifted their political affiliation and called themselves subjects of the Omani sultan, solely for the purpose of being able to legally participate in the slave trade without violating the laws banning foreigners from doing so.



Augustine 30th July 1844

Friend

I have the honor to acknowledge  
the receipt of your letter <sup>with enclosure</sup> of yesterday  
date and in reply to state as follows  
1<sup>st</sup> Having attentively read and  
considered the statement contained in  
the enclosure I am of opinion that the  
same is in substance correct and  
although I have no positive evidence  
of some of the facts set forth in the  
enclosure yet from all I have from  
time to time heard I am fully satisfied  
that where the enclosed account  
is correct.

2<sup>nd</sup> I was the witness of the encounter  
had with the above acting master

J. L. Webb and W. B. Bates  
Esqrs —

on the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> of  
 April last - when he positively  
 stated that Imbatoo had exerted  
 his influence <sup>with the King</sup> to induce <sup>the King</sup> to impose  
 "Bancar Pembe Pradje" either  
 to break contracts or engagements  
 which he was bound to other  
 people to furnish them with gum  
 copra or to quit the Island of  
 Zanzibar and the same morning  
<sup>and at the same time</sup> ~~also~~ stated by the Bancar  
 himself Pradje and  
 further that he had received his  
 Highness orders to either break  
 his contracts <sup>within the country</sup>  
~~cannot doubt~~ but such was  
 the case heard. Of the acting  
 Customs Master and the British  
 Officer made no secret of the  
 matter, but both fully declared  
 that the Imam had used them

## Appendix (1)

Letter from Atkins Hamerton, British Consul in Zanzibar, to American  
 merchants in Zanzibar, dated July 24, 1844, showing the commercial role played by  
 the Indians in Zanzibar.

Source: AA12/IC, Zanzibar National Archives.



## Appendix (2)

Source: Zanzibar AA12, Zanzibar National Archives.

## الجالية الهندية في زنجبار 1804-1856م: دراسة تاريخية\*

عبدالله بن إبراهيم التركي\*\*

### ملخص

ألفت هذه الدراسة الضوء على الجالية الهندية، التي استقرت في جزيرة زنجبار حينما كانت تُسَكِّلُ جزءاً من سلطنة عُمان، في الفترة ما بين عامي 1806-1856م، وذلك في عهد السيد سعيد بن سلطان البوسعيدي، الذي عمل كل ما في وسعه لتحسين وضع الهنود في سلطنته، وسعى إلى راحتهم، فأعفاهم من الضرائب بجميع أنواعها، كما منح غير المسلمين منهم حرية أداء شعائهم الدينية، وأتخذ منهم أفراداً لخدمته الخاصة، حتى استأثروا بثقته. وفي الوقت نفسه أخذ يستعين بهم في وظائف ذات طابع مالي، ولا سيما أنَّ العرب لم يُظهروا مهارة كافية في هذا المجال، فعهد إلى الهندوس إدارة الجمارك في أملاكه في شرق أفريقيا. وأدى التجار الهنود دور الوسيط في التجارة الساحلية في زنجبار بين التجار الأوروبيين والأهالي، وأسهموا في المتاجرة بالرقيق، وعملوا على توظيف رؤوس أموالهم في مختلف الأعمال التجارية، وخاصة في أعمال الرهونات على ممتلكات العرب العقارية؛ حيث لم يكن لدى هؤلاء رؤوس الأموال اللازمة لدفع النشاط التجاري الخاص بهم بالدرجة الكافية؛ فيرهنون كثيراً من ممتلكاتهم بقروض مؤجلة لصالح الهنود الرأسماليين المرابين، ونتيجة للفوائد الكبيرة التي يحصلون عليها تراكمت الديون على العرب، وبالتدريج انتقل كثير من أملاكهم إلى التجار الهنود، ومن ثَمَّ نجحوا في السيطرة على معظم الأعمال التجارية بالساحل، وتغلبوا على التجار العرب، وحقق كثير منهم ثروات طائلة بفضل قدرتهم الفائقة على الادخار، ومهارتهم في الأعمال المالية والحسابية، وتمكّنهم من تحصيل الرسوم الجمركية، وإجادتهم اللغتين العربية والسواحلية.

**الكلمات الدالة:** زنجبار، السيد سعيد، الهنود في شرق أفريقيا، تاريخ، التاريخ الأفريقي، الهنود، البانيان، شرق أفريقيا.

\* يتقدم الباحث بالشكر الجزيل لعمادة البحث العلمي في جامعة القصيم على تمويلها لنشر هذا المشروع.

\*\* قسم التاريخ، كلية اللغة العربية والدراسات الاجتماعية، جامعة القصيم، المملكة العربية السعودية.

تاريخ استلام البحث 2022/11/17، وتاريخ قبوله للنشر 2023/3/26

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