Call for papers

The recent studies on Indian Ocean as a connecting space for multiple cultural spheres are throwing new lights on the role of the sea coast cities as a gateway between land and sea. Ports are characterised by an original identity, defined by particular social, economical and political functions, a unique architecture, complex social set ups, and various economical and cultural activities.

Amongst the Indian Ocean ports, those located on the long Gujarati coastline played a significant role. The Seminar will focus on the various particular characteristics of the historical Gujarati ports of the Gujarati which were active from 12th till the 19th century.
Themes of presentation

Functions
- Terminology: Which terminology was used to describe the ports, does it indicate a functional differentiation?
- Function and status: Against which purpose the port was founded, how did it evolved? (transshipment, defensive function, trade, ship building etc.). Which political status the ports were holding, what were the executive bodies, who was holding the leadership, which evolution?

Location and Architecture
- Topography: How was the sea access? What were the docking facilities (off shore anchorage, jetties?), ship building infrastructures?
- Urban structure: Does the port show a particular urban set-up, influenced by its relation to the sea? What are the maritime related infrastructures (ware houses, custom houses, etc.)
- Architecture: Does the port have an original architecture? How does the relationships with the overseas affect it, and does the local architecture affect overseas regions?

Society
- Communities and demography: What was the port 's social composition? What was the function and repartition of local communities? Who were the travellers? How were the local and foreign communities related to each other? To similar overseas or extra regional communities?
- Cultural transfer: How did the trading activities and other travels affect the local culture (religion, language, literature, art, dress, mores, etc.)?

Activities
- Industry and Textile: What were the various local craft and industries? Which role played the textile production?
- Maritime activity: What are the structures related to the maritime activity (ship building, fishing, transshipment, etc.)? What do we know about those activities?
- Trade: Which trade systems were followed? Which currency was used, what were the banking systems?

Organisational details

The seminar is organised by Darshak Itihas Nidhi, and will be held in Surat in February, 2012. The proceedings will be published soon after the event, and participants will be requested to submit their final paper at the time of seminar. A circular letter with list of participants, organisational details and style sheet for publication will be sent to the final contributors.

Please kindly submit your proposition with a short abstract before December 1st, 2011.

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