

INTRODUCTION

The 18th Century is considered to be a turning point in Indian History. The death of Aurangzeb in 1707 not only ended the hegemony of the centralized Mughal Empire in the sub-continent but also what is called the 'old order'. Important changes took place in many spheres. These aspects have been well researched in the recent years. In case of Gujarat in the course of the century the political scenario changed from the centralized, hierarchical and vertical structure to a decentralized, horizontal one. In this newly emerging structure various principalities emerged which were situated equally in terms of resources and sources of legitimacy and were constantly vying for greater power as well as resources. These principalities largely could not consolidate their gains. This in turn provided scope for the involvement of non-political people to take a share in the actual power in these places leading to an augmentation of their resources.

The region of Gujarat was one of the sixteen Subahs of the Mughal Empire. Situated on the western part of the subcontinent Gujarat was an emporium of overseas trade of India with Red Sea, Africa and from thence to Europe. The geographical contours of the region began to take shape since around the 13th Century. Under the Rajput rulers of Anhilwad-Patan a semblance of a centralized Political power came to be established. It was strengthened to a greater extent during the rule of Gujarat Sultans. 13th to 15th Centuries also

contributed towards the identity formation and the development of the regional language as distinct from the Marwad in the North and Malwa in the East of Gujarat and Deccan in the South. Different parts of the region in earlier times were known by different names like Anarta, Latha, and etc. By 15th Century however the name Gujarat referring to the whole region came into being. Thus when Gujarat passed into Mughal control it had become a compact distinct region which was fostered by the Mughals. The present day Gujarat largely corresponds with Mughal Subah Gujarat. The region composed of three sub-regions having distinct micro cultures viz., Main land Gujarat further divided into South, Central and North Gujarat for the sake of convenience; Saurashtra and Kutch. It was always attempted by the rulers operating from the mainland to assert their control over the other two sub-regions. They were successful in varying degrees in establishing control over Saurashtra but Kutch only tacitly acknowledged the suzerainty of the rulers from mainland, be it the Waghelas, Solankis, Sultans or the Mughals. This situation of near political autonomy of Kutch perhaps became greater during the 18th Century.

An attempt has been made in this study to gain a comprehensive understanding of the developments that took place during the 18th Century including the changes that came into being with the death of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 and the establishment of different principalities. The aim has also been to unravel the Power structure of the region during this volatile period. It was perceived that the changes mentioned above were in the nature of

institutional changes which shaped the new power structure. Power here has to be necessarily seen in terms of localities and not at the pan-regional level as elsewhere. This was one of the peculiarities of Gujarat. The political power and authority was extremely fragmented. The very extent of this fragmentation is what defines 18th Century Gujarat. The existence of many principalities, around 272 that passed under the British rule as princely states, was a product of this period. In fact the contours of the local power structure as it developed during this period were carried into the 19th Century subject to British modifications. Besides the existence of multiple political authorities the increased participation of people from Social, Martial and Economic arena not conventionally connected directly with State-building also contributed towards this fragmentation.

This study begins roughly from the last years of Aurangzeb's reign when the cracks in the Mughal administrative apparatus were becoming apparent. These cracks became wider since the beginning of the 18th Century leading to the complete breakdown of the Mughal power. The most visible result of this breakdown was the pervasive and regular Maratha raids into Gujarat which was largely unchecked by the Mughal officers. The study ends with the establishment of British hegemony in the region. However, the establishment of British hegemony in the region was not uniform. This differed from one principality to another and has been treated accordingly. The affairs of Surat for instance have not been taken into consideration after 1800 when the whole administration of the place had passed into British hands and the Nawabi was abolished. Similarly Bharuch passed into

British hands in 1772 but it was handed over to Sindhia in 1782 as a gift for bringing about the Treaty of Salbai. In 1803 Bharuch was regained by the British. Baroda accepted British paramount power in 1802 and more definitely since the conclusion of the definitive treaty in 1805 and therefore the affairs of Baroda's administration, etc does not concern us after this period. However, it was through Baroda's accepted suzerainty in the rest of the region that the British Resident could further establish the Company's hold on the various principalities of these areas. In addition the areas under the Peshwa's control and that of the Gaekwads in Gujarat were minutely intertwined. This made the British Resident use the Gaekwad as a shield in case of conflicts. This situation makes it imperative to look at the part played by the Gaekwad chieftain in areas outside Baroda well up to 1817-18 from various perspectives. It has also been found that the over lordship of the Gaekwads in Saurashtra was asserted and enforced by the British East India Company after 1802 so as to further its own interests. The British Company became a party in the affairs of Saurashtra since 1807 and in the Mewasi areas of North Gujarat since 1811-12 through the revenue settlements. The British intervention was resented by the parties who were ousted from power by the British and their resistance continued well up to 1815. In 1817-18 with the end of the Peshwa's rule his territories passed into the hands of the British Company. Kutch also accepted British subsidiary alliance in 1819. Through some other treaties and agreements the Company emerged as the suzerain power in the region by 1820 and thus the study also ends here.

Although this study is not concerned with the economic changes it has been found in the course of the study that the political sphere had opened up considerably and the power politics was being affected by the social and economic developments to a greater extent. The enhanced Role of the bankers/Shroffs in the 18th Century politics is a well researched area. In case of Gujarat also the role of the Bankers was enhanced and their participation in State activities was more direct and at times decisive. The perennial want of resources by the rulers and lack of access to ready cash dictated the involvement of the bankers. The bankers/merchants also contributed towards safeguarding towns and Qasbas earlier in the Century when the Marathas used to hold these places for ransom and demanded ready cash for sparing the town from destruction. At that time the bankers/merchants largely provided the money and not the rulers. The administrators and soldiers were also paid in cash which again was defrayed by the bankers. We also find the involvement of the Nagarsheths, etc undertaking such activities as managing the levying of the cesses, etc to safeguard the local population from the undue and harsh exactions from the rulers. The Bhats and Charans, held to be sacred, also became integral to the working of these principalities, to a greater extent than what they were earlier. The situation thus turned out to be more dynamic than hitherto understood.

SIGNIFICANCE OF 18TH CENTURY

It is largely held by the modern scholars that 18th century was a significant period in Indian History. The century witnessed major upheaval in the political situation with the decline and disintegration of the Mughal Empire. While the nature of the decline of the Mughal Empire and the causes for the same has been a matter of intense debate in the recent times, the establishment of various authorities filling the vacuum so created has also engaged the attention of the scholars. While the modern scholars freely use the term 'successor-state' to these 18th century entities in the larger context of India, the use of the term 'State' in the context of 18th century Gujarat has been avoided in this study. This issue is discussed in detail in the 4th chapter of the present study. A thorough study of the establishment of these principalities and the nature of their survival will without doubt provide greater understanding of the process of decentralization that was a significant feature of this period. Towards the end of the century the emergence of the British East India Company as the paramount authority in the sub-continent has been another major concern that has engaged the attention of the scholars since a long time. The nature of British presence, its rise to political power and its expansion was neither uniform nor similar in different regions of the sub-continent. In case of Gujarat, even in the 19th century, the nature of British presence was by and large not direct but through Princely states.

The significance of the 18th century in other areas has also been brought to our notice through many recent studies. The decentralization led to the emergence of a dynamic military market.¹ With the disintegration of the Mughal Empire which was the biggest employer of martial elements and the subsequent struggle between various contenders to resources, the soldiers found ample scope to make fortunes. Many groups organized on ethnic lines found employment as soldiers like Gosains, Arabs, Rohillas, Sindhis, etc. Their success depended on their entrepreneurial skills. It is also being asserted through some recent studies that this period saw significant changes in the collective perceptions of the people proving to be a precursor to 'Communalism'.²

CHAPTERISATION

This work is divided into six chapters. In the first chapter the breakdown of the Mughal authority in the region has been traced in detail. It has been found that the cracks in the administrative apparatus of Mughal Gujarat were visible from the last forty years of Aurangzeb's reign itself. These cracks opened wide since the beginning of the 18th Century and engulfed the Empire. The Maratha invasion and subsequent occupation of the region was a manifestation

¹ Recent monographs include William R. Pinch, *Warrior Ascetics and Indian Empires*, CUP, New Delhi, 2006; Dirk H.A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput & Sepoy, The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850*, CUP, Cambridge, 1990.

² Iftikhar Ahmad Khan, *Surat C. 1795: State, Community and Society*, Ph.d dissertation submitted to the Maharaja Sayajirao University, Vadodara, 2007.

of this significant trend. The Maratha occupation of Gujarat itself was not complete. The Marathas under Gaekwad and the Peshwa emerged as the overlord in the region by mid-century but their authority in actual terms was superficial and limited. The situation also worsened due to increased tendencies amongst the Mughal officers to disregard imperial orders. What followed was the rise of local recalcitrant elements that were largely uncontrollable by these officers. The Mughal Nazims and Faujdars were involved in their bid to attain greater control of their *faujdaris* and did not concentrate on maintaining order. They eventually chalked out separate spheres of control and authority called Nawabis. Several such Nawabis sprang up in the course of the first half of the Century in the region.

In the Second chapter an attempt to understand the role of certain social groups in the emerging power structure has been made. Here it was found that the role of the hereditary land right holders working at the semi-official level was enhanced. This was especially the case with the superior right holders called *desais* in Gujarat. The bhats and charans, originally genealogists to Rajputs and Kathis and held to be sacred by these people, had emerged as important links between the newly emergent principalities and the local populace especially the ryots. In the course of the Century they emerged as the most sought after 'Securities' or sureties in all the activities of the State including revenue collection, inter-Principality relationships and securing the travelers against looters. This situation also increased their resources materially. This position was later filled by the Arab and Sindhi *Sibandis* as well and much later the British East India

Company undertook similar duties which contributed towards the establishment of British hegemony in the region. The widespread use of Ijara and later its institutionalization was a discernible feature of the Mughal and Maratha administration of 18th century, as also of the rest of the Principalities. This gave rise to institutions like the *Manotidari*, *kamavisdari*, as also sub-farming leading to exploitation of the ryots.

The third chapter looks at the nature of British expansion in the region. The British East India Company was initially a trading concern which came into the possession of Surat castle in 1759 giving it a political status in the region. The Company made three attempts to gain political power at Surat in 1735, 1751 and 1759. The last one was successful. In 1772 the Company conquered the district of Bharuch through armed force. Here the claim of the early British Historians of the Company not having a territorial ambition in this area during this time is belied. The conquest of Bharuch was conceived and well planned keeping in mind the strategic importance of the place as well as the fertility of the Parganas for growing cotton. During the first Anglo-Maratha war Gujarat was the theatre of war. It was also the time when an internal struggle was taking place between two factions of the Gaekwads of Baroda. The British were benefitted by playing one party against the other. Ultimately, Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad, the man in control of Baroda was supported against Govind Rao Gaekwad, the fugitive. In the last phase of the war the Treaty of Kundhela was signed between Fatehsing Rao and the British which proved to be the foundation of Anglo-Gaekwad relations in the

subsequent times. They jointly made several territorial conquests which however had to be ceded back to the Peshwa through the Treaty of Salbai. The first Anglo-Maratha war was aborted with the Bombay Presidency losing all the benefits. In 1802 the British were accepted as the overlords by Gaekwads. Internal commotions in the principality led to the British intervention. The British established their Paramount authority at Baroda by defeating Malhar Rao of Kadi and later the Arab Sibandis, who had acquired much power in the principality. Through Baroda's authority in Saurashtra and the Mehwasi areas of North and East Gujarat the British authorities extended their hegemony in these areas. The instrument for this was the 'revenue settlements'. The British assumed the role of mediators between the smaller chieftaincies of these areas and the Gaekwad and Peshwa for tribute payment that the Marathas were entitled to as overlords. This ended the annual Mulkigiri or tribute collection expeditions undertaken by the Marathas. Through the Treaty of Poona concluded in 1817-18 the Peshwa's territories in Gujarat, as elsewhere, passed into the control of British East India Company.

The fourth chapter is a discussion on the nature of superior rights in the context of the disputes between various principalities. The authority is seen here as a right to collect the revenues of a given place. The existence of various such claimants in one place gave rise to frequent disputes. These disputes were largely undecided and were carried into the next Century to be resolved through British arbitration. This situation also gave rise to the practice of seeking

‘protection’ from higher powers with the British Company emerging as the most sought after protector.

The fifth chapter throws some light on the social conditions and the perceptions of the people regarding the existing situation as reflected in the folk literature called *garbas*. It was found that the *ganim* Marathas were feared by the common people. Many *garbas* and *pavadas* were written regarding the depredations committed by the Marathas and also describing their oppressive rule later. Besides this the levying of different kinds of cesses on various pretexts was a constant source of harassment and drain of resources for the people. The situation saw the intervention of the local leaders like Nagarsheths, Shroffs, etc who repeatedly saved the towns from plunderers by paying the ransom money.

The sixth chapter deals with the Military situation in the region. The decline of the Mansabdari system of martial arrangement gave rise to the employment of mercenary system. The sibandis and their head *Jamadar* came to acquire much importance. Here an account of the functions of the Sibandis, their organization, kinds of weapons in vogue then, their Remuneration, etc has been discussed. Amongst the various ethnic groups that were working as Sibandis in Gujarat the Arabs were perhaps the most sought after. They had come to acquire much importance in the power politics in the various principalities as well. The Arab *sibandis* were dismissed in large numbers from the region through British interference who perceived them as a threat to the establishment of the British hegemony.

SOURCES

This study is an attempt to understand the broader changes that had taken place in the 18th century. As already noted, Gujarat experienced the establishment of several different principalities during this period. These principalities derived their source of legitimacy from different authorities mainly the Mughal Emperor, the Peshwa and the English East India Company. A student of History therefore faces a serious hurdle in terms of sources as there are no homogenous set of documentation that can give an idea of the developments at the regional level during this period. Therefore, the researches carried out so far cover only some areas that were compact and could be studied through a homogenous set of sources, and not the region as a whole. However, understanding the region as a whole is important to a student of medieval History as Gujarat was a compact unit, culturally and politically, prior to the 18th century. Notwithstanding this problem, an attempt has been made here to piece together the information available largely from different conventional sources.

The primary sources for this study are mainly the 'Conventional' sources viz., the Chronicles, Travel accounts and similar compilations. Amongst the Chronicles the *Mirat-i-ahmadi* composed by the last Imperial Diwan Ali Muhammad Khan has been the basic source of information. It contains information up to 1761 in the most detailed manner. *Tarikh-i-Sorath* is another important source pertaining exclusively to the history of Saurashtra with Junagadh

being the centre of the author's attention, during our period of concern. It was written in the 19th century by Ranchodji Amarji, son of Ranchodji Amarji the celebrated *diwan* of Junagadh. This text gives a succinct account of the developments of Saurashtra during this period. This text has a mine of information for this area which is otherwise obscure. *Ahwal-i-Gaekwad*, a Persian work dealing with the rise of the Marathas and their activities in Gujarat has also been used. This text was written in 1827 by Sarabhai Nagar, an official in the Baroda residency. Sarabhai Nagar was commissioned to write a history of Marathas in Gujarat by the British Resident of Baroda. It also helps to corroborate information in the *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*. *Qissa-i-Ghamghin* is an account of the end of the Bharuch Nawabi and the British take over of Bharuch. It was written by Munshi Abbas Ali, a Munshi in the service of Muazzaz Khan, the last Nawab of Bharuch.

In addition published Documents, mostly letters, have also been used. Important amongst these is the 10 Volume series by the name *Gaekwads of Baroda*. It is the most comprehensive publication of documents with relation to the activities of the Gaekwads in Gujarat, the information coming from the British records. It concentrates largely on the inter-relations of the British and Gaekwads in this quarter of the country, as well as their individual activities. However it suffers from one limitation, it does not provided information on events going beyond the purview of the Gaekwad's involvement. Besides this the *Selections from the Bombay Records* in several volumes chiefly the one containing Alexander Walker's observations on Saurashtra, Ballantine's observations on Mahi-Kantha, Rewa-

Kantha, etc; and that of Robertson on Cambay has been used. Another major source from the Maratha side has come from the published Maratha records in the *Selections from the Poona Daftar* and *Historical Selections from the Baroda State Records*. Besides this certain sundry records like *Selections from the hereditary minister's of Baroda* and the *Selections from the Shastri Daftar* has been found useful. In addition various travel accounts has also been used. An attempt has also been made to study the local contemporary folk literature called *garba* and *pavada* to gauge the impact of the Maratha intrusion in the region.

DECLINE OF MUGHAL AUTHORITY IN GUJARAT

The beginning of the 18th Century saw major changes in the sub-continent. The death of Aurangzeb, in 1707 A.D. led to a general decline of the Mughal power in the Subah of Gujarat, as in the rest of the Mughal Empire. The most noticeable manifestation of this decline was the steady breakdown of the carefully built Mughal system of administration. The Maratha invasion and the serious disturbances created by such groups as the Kolis,³ Kathis,⁴ Girasias,⁵ etc., contributed to the decline of effective Mughal administration and authority in the region in a major way.

The Decline of Mughal authority in the region of Gujarat was the result of a combination of factors and is to be understood at various levels. Mainly it was the interests of the *Umrah* at the

³ The Kolis are believed to be the indigenous population of Gujarat who were marginalized first by the Rajputs and later by the Gujarat Sultans and the Mughals. They were a recalcitrant section of the Society and frequently indulged in harassing the officers and the people. This activity increased in the 18th Century leading to disorder and chaos. They are frequently referred as '*Muazzaran*' in the Persian sources.

⁴ Kathis were a tribe of people residing in central Saurashtra and were known to be recalcitrant. Their areas bordered with the sarkar of Ahmadabad. Under effective Mughal authority these elements were kept in check but with the decline of this superior authority their activity increased leading to disorder and insecurity.

⁵ The Girasias were younger members of the family of local chieftains who were given subsistence by the chiefs. They frequently expanded their fortunes by the use of sword. Their activities were kept in check by the Mughals earlier. During this period the Girasias also took advantage of the decline of superior authority and expanded their base. The role of the Girasias has been explored in detail in subsequent chapters of this study.

Imperial Court; their manipulations in controlling the Subah through Naibs; the percolation of the Imperial factional fight to the level of Subah officials and their subsequent infighting; regular invasions by the Marathas and the failure on part of the Mughal officials to control them, etc, contributed to the weakening of the Mughal administrative mechanism in Gujarat, leading eventually to the disintegration of the Mughal Gujarat. At the Subah level the administrative breakdown is reflected mainly in the abandonment of the practice of separation of offices originally meant to be a check on each other, and the coalescing of offices, either in one person or in one faction; civil wars as a result of growing ambitions amongst the officers to gain greater power; frauds and embezzlements by the officers going unchecked; etc. In the process, there was an erosion of the finer characteristic features of Mughal administration.

The signs of gradual fall-out of the administration and a tendency on the part of officers to disregard Imperial commands in Gujarat were already visible during the last 40 years of the 17th century. There was a further widening of these cracks, in addition to new developments typical to 18th Century that led to the break down of the Mughal Imperial authority in Gujarat. Let us now consider the available evidence to understand this process. Aurangzeb's reign was turbulent for Gujarat. The Mughal-Maratha contest in the Deccan caused disturbances in the Subah, Gujarat being adjacent to the Deccan. During the reign of Aurangzeb three major Maratha attacks took place. In 1664 and 1670 Shivaji attacked and sacked Surat, the

richest port town of Mughal India. In 1706 Dhana Jadhav, a Maratha *sardar*, invaded Gujarat and routed the Mughal army. The *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* which provides a mine of information for 18th Century Gujarat, surprisingly, does not provide any details of this event. The only detailed source of information on Shivaji's sack of Surat is the English Factory Records. These records provide ample information on the incidents and its implications. In 1664, for three full days the city of Surat was plundered and burnt down.⁶ The loot consisted of Rs.20 to 25 lakhs of one day alone, being carried away by 300 porters, each laden with two bags of Rupees, and some Gold. The Marathas also took 28 *sere* of large pearls, with many other Jewels, Diamonds, Rubies and Emeralds from the house of 'the reputed richest merchant in the world' Virji Vora.⁷ Besides Virji Vora, other big merchants like Haji Zahid Beg and Haji Qasim, were also looted.⁸ Since there was no wall around the city then, the Marathas' task was made easier. In this whole episode, the *Mutsaddi*, Inayat Khan along with other officers, sought refuge in the castle instead of arranging for defense. There is evidence that besides the laxity of administration, some of the Mughal officers were in concert with the Marathas.⁹ Shivaji once again attacked Surat in October 1670. This time the English Factors fled to Swali Marine along with their goods to escape depredations. Interestingly, most of the Mughal officers too fled the city and the *shahbandar*, *Qazi* and some eminent merchants sought protection

⁶ B.G.Paranjpe, *English Records on Shivaji 1659-1682*, Shivaji Tercentenary Memorial Series-Vol. VI, 1931, Shiva Charitra Karyalaya, Poona, P. 78.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Shama Mahmood, *Subah Gujarat under Aurangzeb*, unpublished Ph.D dissertation submitted to the Maharaja SayajiRao University of Baroda, 1999, P. 22-23.

from the English.¹⁰ The smaller Rajas of the vicinity took advantage of the situation and attacked the caravans of merchandise in the guise of Shivaji.¹¹ Following these incidents the trade, especially European trade, suffered heavily.¹²

Other than the direct attacks, the Marathas, from the last quarter of the 17th Century, took possession of the countryside towards the South-east of Surat. In 1672 the smaller forts such as Parnea and Bagvada in the Pardi subdivision of Surat Sarkar were conquered by Shivaji. A Maratha Sardar Moro Trimal conquered Salher in Baglana in the same year¹³. Salher guarded one of the most frequented passes from Deccan into Gujarat and served as a base for Dabhade, the Senapati of Raja Shahu, in his expeditions into Gujarat at the turn of the Century.¹⁴ Ramnagar to the immediate south of Gujarat was also taken. In 1675 Marathas under Hambir Rao collected *Chauth* from Bharuch.¹⁵ In 1686 Sambhaji plundered Bharuch again.¹⁶ Maratha disturbance loomed large in South Gujarat since then and regular reports were received of their presence on the threshold of the region.¹⁷ These conquests facilitated the rapid onslaught of the Marathas in Subah Gujarat following the death of Aurangzeb.

¹⁰ *English Records on Shivaji*, P. 177.

¹¹ Sir Charles Fawcett, *The English Factories in India 1670-1677*, Vol: I, 1936, P. 190.

¹² M.S.Commissariat *History of Gujarat, Maratha period 1758-1818*, Vol: III, 1980, Gujarat Vidya Sabha, Ahmedabad, Pp. 290-292.

¹³ G.H. Desai, *Gazetteer of the Baroda State I*, (now onwards *Baroda State Gazetteer*) 1923, Bombay, Pp. 432-433.

¹⁴ *Baroda State Gazetteer*, P.433.

¹⁵ Grant Duff, *A History of Marathas*, London, 1826, Vol. I, P. 194.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* P. 242.

¹⁷ Ali Mohammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, transl. M.F.Lokhandwala, Gaekwad's Oriental Series no. 46, P: 318 (now onwards *Mirat*)

Marathas under their leader Dhana Jadhav invaded the region again in 1706. Many Mansabdars of repute were either killed or were taken hostage. No strong Subahdar was present at this time in the region. Khwaja Abdul Hamid Khan, the Diwan and Naib-Nazim, was also taken as hostage and had to pay a sum of Rs. 3 lacks for his release.¹⁸

Besides having to face invasions the administration had also become lax and arbitrary during the last years of Aurangzeb, although regular royal orders were received to put things in order. In 1676 it was reported to the Royal court that the *chaudhries* and *muqaddams* in the Subah were taking Ijara of lands under their own jurisdiction. It was ordered that in both *Jagir* and Khalsa lands, Ijara was not to be given to anybody.¹⁹ In 1666 it was reported that the Nazim of the Subah, Mahabat Khan and other high Mansabdars, Bakshis, etc who were supposed to maintain a combined force of 25 thousand *sawar* could not even muster one thousand if needed. Aurangzeb reacted by recalling the Bakshi and the Waqai-nigar and replacing them.²⁰ In 1693-94, Sher Afghan Khan, the Faujdar of Sorath intruded into the villages of Dhandhuka *pargana*, the Nazim's *jagir*, and carried away cattle. He was reprimanded and asked not to meddle in the Nazim's *Jagir*.²¹ Around 1696 it was reported to the court that many people founded new *purahs* in Ahmedabad. This resulted in the loss of Imperial revenues, as the goods passing through the new *purahs*

¹⁸ The whole episode is covered in *Mirat*, Pp. 318-325.

¹⁹ *Mirat*, P. 260.

²⁰ *Ibid.* P.237.

²¹ *Ibid.* P.293.

would not pay the octroi duties to the Government. The Diwan was ordered to settle things as per the customary practice so that Imperial revenues were not lost.²² In 1704 the Nazim, Prince Muhammed Azam Shah, made appointments for the Faujdari of Baroda, Sorath and Diwani of the Subah on his own. The Emperor reprimanded him, as dismissals and appointments of Imperial officers was the sole prerogative of the Emperor.²³

During the reign of Aurangzeb we find evidence of charge of multiple offices being held by a single individual. The principle of Mughal administration of not combining *Jagirdari* with Faujdari offices was compromised. In 1693-94 one Sher Afghan Khan held the *Jagirdari* and Faujdari of Sorath.²⁴ Shuja'at Khan, the Nazim of the Subah from 1685-1702, is perhaps the best example of this trend. His first title was *Muhammad Beg Khan* and later *KarTalab Khan*. He started his career as the Thanedar of Pethapur in Gujarat, later made the Faujdar of Kadi, the Amin of Dholka, etc at different points of time. He also held the dual charge of the Mutsaddi and Faujdari of Surat.²⁵ Through an intrigue he later came to be appointed as the Nazim of Gujarat and was conferred the title of Shuja'at Khan. Simultaneously, he was made the Naib-Faujdar of Jodhpur.²⁶ In 1687 he was appointed the Faujdar of three places, Jodhpur Ajmer and

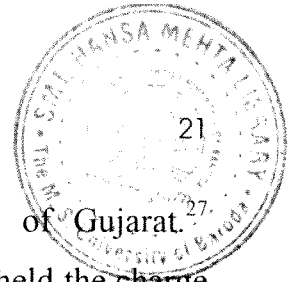
²² Ibid. P.299.

²³ Ibid. P.314.

²⁴ Ibid. P.293.

²⁵ Ibid. P.280.

²⁶ Ibid. P.279.



Patan, and this while he continued as the Nazim of Gujarat.²⁷ Similarly, the Diwan of the Subah, Amanat Khan also held the charge of Mutsaddi of Surat in 1687, in addition to the Diwani.²⁸ In the same way Syed Idris Khan was the Faujdar and *Jagirdar* of Nadiad around this time.²⁹ The above instances indicate that the established Mughal Imperial administrative practices were being disregarded by the powerful sections of the nobility leading to arbitrariness in the functioning of the Mughal administration in the Subah. After the death of Aurangzeb these problems got aggravated.

On the other hand, the Maratha depredations continued with greater vigour with Aurangzeb's death. Marathas under Balaji Vishwanath came in the vicinity of Ahmedabad, taking the Jhabua-Godhra route³⁰ and plundered the area. He did not meet with resistance from any of the Faujdars on the way; they seem to have been deterred by the debacle of 1706 when the Marathas had captured a number of Faujdars who were released only after payment of ransom. The Nazim, Ibrahim Khan, despite having collected a good force under his command choose to negotiate peace with the Marathas and a *Khandani*³¹ of Rs 2 lacs 10 thousand was paid to them from the *Bait-ul-Mal*. Ali Mohammad Khan explains this behavior in terms of

²⁷ Ibid. P.283.

²⁸ Ibid. P.283.

²⁹ Ibid. P.291.

³⁰ There were three routes through which the Marathas entered Gujarat. The first one was through Khandesh, crossing the Baba Piara ford into Surat, Second through Jhabua in Malwa to Godhra and thirdly through Idar in the extreme north bordering Malwa.

³¹ *Khandani* was the money extracted by the Maratha sardars to abstain from Plundering an area.

the absence of any successor to the deceased Mughal Emperor at that time.³²

Under Ghazi-ud-din Khan Firoz Jung, the next Nazim of Gujarat, many regressive taxes came into existence. He initiated levying of cesses '*abwab*' which were prohibited by Aurangzeb. On foodgrain, fodder for animals and other goods taken to market, an octroi duty @ 1% per cart load started being levied. An additional duty or cess of one rupee was to be collected from a Hindu and half rupee by Muslims on the above articles. This cess was called *Ghulak-i-Nazim*, or the 'Nazim's kitty' and was appropriated by the Nazim. A separate Karori was appointed for the purpose who was independent of the Diwan and other royal officers. Earlier, separate Karoris did the assessment and collection of different kinds of duties. Since the time of Ghazi-ud-din Khan Firoz Jung these two functions were merged in a single Karori. The ambit of merchandise under the new cess was also widened. It was now also levied on the sale of Vegetables, Ghee, etc., considered an innovation by the contemporaries.³³ In the course of time, the amount of revenues from the above levies became huge. Separate accountants were appointed for keeping an account of these revenues.

³² *Mirat*, P. 333-334.

³³ Dr. Farhat Hasan asserts that this cess was not new but was common during the 17th Century as well. Although such cesses were termed as '*abwab*' in Mughal terminology and repeatedly prohibited through royal orders the author asserts that its imposition did not stop. It was part of the 'local taxes' not recorded in the official records. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power relations in Western India, 1572-1730*, Cambridge, 2006, P. 121. However during the period of our concern this levy had become common and was considered to be a prerogative of the Nazim. It subsequently became as huge source of income as mentioned in the *Mirat*, Pp. 343-344.

Khan Firoz Jung died in 1711. Upon his death, his servants got hold of his treasure, appropriated large amounts of wealth and paid off salaries in arrears to his soldiers and others, without Imperial permission. They mishandled the accounts as well. This was the first recorded instance of high disregard for Imperial regulations and the practice of escheating the properties and wealth of a deceased Mughal Mansabdar by his followers without royal orders. This matter was however taken seriously by the Imperial Court. The Diwan was ordered to confiscate the wealth of the deceased Khan. Armed retainers were sent for his help. Amanat Khan the Mutsaddi of Surat, entitled Shahamat Khan, was appointed as the temporary Nazim with orders to tackle the situation. Shahamat Khan was transferred and replaced by Asaf-ud-Daula as the Nazim of Gujarat shortly after Jahandar Shah's accession to the throne, after the death of Bahadur Shah. It was reported that the preceding two Nazims, Khan Firoz Jung and Shahamat Khan had appropriated the revenues of the *Paibaki* and *Khalsa* lands. The Diwan of the Subah was ordered to transfer the balance into the Imperial treasury; its execution though is doubtful.

With the appointment of Asaf-ud-Daula the factional fights at the Imperial court had reached greater heights. In the province of Gujarat this trend gets reflected in the appointments of the *Naibs* in place of the Nazims themselves taking charge of the Subah. As already mentioned, the Subah of Gujarat was one of the most coveted

regions and was strategically and economically integral to the Mughal Empire. During the early 18th Century any noble wanting to control Deccan naturally aimed at the control of Gujarat as it gave unprecedented power and financial resources to such a noble. This was especially true in case of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah.³⁴ During this phase the Nazims kept changing with much greater frequency than before and this reflects upon the factional fights at the Imperial Court. Asad Khan sent Sarbuland Khan as his Naib-Nazim. Daud Khan Panni, a protégé of Zulfiqar Khan, soon replaced him. With the rise of the Sayyid Brothers and the Nizamat of Deccan being given to Hasan Ali Khan, their associate Ajit Singh was made Nazim of Gujarat. Following the end of the Sayyid brothers' hegemony, the victorious party at the Imperial court sent Haider Quli Khan as the Naib-Nazim.³⁵ The incoming and the outgoing Nazims invariably settled scores by armed struggle. The problem was further aggravated due to the financial crisis experienced by each party.

With the coming of Daud Khan Panni (1714) the Subah went into further administrative chaos. Daud Khan Panni was known to be a good soldier but not adept in the art of administration. He was a Bijapuri noble who had entered Mughal service following the Mughal occupation of Bijapur.³⁶ He entrusted the administration of the Subah to the *Deccani pandits* who had accompanied him to the subah. The

³⁴ Itimad Ali Khan, *Mirat-ul-Haqaiq*, Fraser collection, 124, Bodleian Library, Oxford, f. 66 (a).

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court 1707-1740*, Aligarh, 1959, P. 5.

Mirat attributes his lack of administrative wisdom as the main reason for the success of the raids made by the kolis into the city of Ahmedabad. The *Deccani pandits* also introduced a cess called *chattaman* to be levied on the Wazifadars and Sayyids.³⁷ During this time, an Imperial order was received directing the remission of duties collected on Ghee, Vegetables and cotton *mandis* to the Imperial treasury. The Nazim ignored it as it was an additional source of income for him and thus he was not willing to part with the same.³⁸

On the recall of Daud Khan Panni, Maharaja Ajit Singh was appointed as the Nazim. He was a confederate of the Sayyid brothers. Perhaps as a check upon their combined power Haider Quli Khan (a protégé of the other party at the Imperial Court) was sent as the Diwan of the Subah. In 1717 Samsam-ud-Daula Khan-i-Dauran, with Khwaja Abdul Hamid Khan as his temporary Naib, replaced Abhay Singh. At this juncture both the parties prepared to fight for the Nizamat, However, his advisors dissuaded the Maharaja and a major civil war was thus averted.³⁹ In 1718 Haider Quli Khan was appointed as the Naib-Nazim as well as the Diwan. In 1719 however Maharaja Ajit Singh (Abhay Singh's son and successor) was back as the Nazim while the Diwani was given jointly to Nahir Khan and his brother Ruhulla Khan.⁴⁰ The frequent transfers of the Nazims created a

³⁷ *Mirat*, P. 364.

³⁸ *Ibid.* P. 357

³⁹ *Mirat*, P. 377.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* Pp. 386-387.

situation of uncertainty and affected the general administration of the Subah.

The situation was worsened due to internal fighting amongst the local officers. The higher authorities, involved as they were in their own affairs, could hardly take cognizance of this problem. The first intra-administration tussle took place between Shahamat Khan, the Naib-Nazim and Mohammad Beg Khan, the Faujdar of Patan. The context of it was as follows: Mohammad Beg Khan, the Naib Faujdar of Patan and a relative of Shahamat Khan, was asked to take charge by Shahamat Khan for the above duty till his arrival from Surat. He involved himself in the seizure of Khan Firuz Jung's property. Muhammad Beg, it appears, embezzled some of it and did not deposit the entire property to the Imperial treasury. However, Shahamat Khan took charge as Naib-Nazim of the Suba and relieved Mohammad Beg Khan of the charge. Shortly Shahamat Khan sent men to collect the wealth confiscated by Mohammad Beg Khan. Mohammad Beg Khan resisted this attempt by military force and the battle took place on the streets of Ahmedabad. Elephants, guns and muskets were freely used on both sides. Peace was restored eventually due to the intervention of officers like Meher Ali Khan, the Bakshi and Safdar Khan Babi.⁴¹

In another event of 1713-14, a confrontation took place at Surat between the Mutsaddi, Muhtarim Khan and the Qilledar, Ahmed Beg.

⁴¹ Ibid. Pp. 346-347.

The conflict ended into an armed struggle between the two parties with aid being summoned from outside by both parties.⁴² In 1715 another similar conflict took place again at Surat between Momin Khan, the Mutsaddi and Zia Khan, the Qiledar. The Qiledar was defeated and peace was restored.⁴³ In 1718 during the Niabat of Haider Quli Khan, a trifling quarrel between the soldiers of Safdar Khan Babi⁴⁴ and Haider Quli Khan escalated into a battle while both officers were encamped at Petlad for revenue collection. In this case Safdar Khan Babi was defeated and he fled seeking refuge with the Koli chief of Attarsumba.⁴⁵ The two were later reconciled through the intervention of the Diwan of Palanpur.

Meanwhile, the Maratha depredations continued in the region. Dhana Jadhav, a Maratha sardar who had invaded Gujarat in 1706, continued with his predatory activities albeit on a lower scale. He continued to carry out several raids into southeast of Gujarat, mainly controlling the trade route from Burhanpur to Surat and exacting *Khandani* from the caravans. In 1716 Khande Rao Dabhade, a *sardar* active in Mughal Deccan, was appointed as the Senapati by Raja Shahu. He entrusted the charge of raiding Gujarat and settlement of *chauth* to Kanthaji Kadam Bande and Damaji Rao Gaekwad I, and his nephew Pilaji Rao Gaekwad. It was mainly Pilaji who made a lasting

⁴² Ibid. P. 355

⁴³ Ibid. P. 362

⁴⁴ Safdar Khan Babi was appointed as the Faujdar of various areas in early 18th Century. He also took *ijara* of various Parganas. It was the descendents of his family that later established the Nawabis of Junagadh and Balasinor.

⁴⁵ *Mirat*, Pp. 381-382.

mark on the history of the region. In 1719 he plundered the villages around Surat entering South Gujarat from Khandesh. He succeeded in capturing Sonpara within the jurisdiction of Tokruh, South of Surat from a Bhil Zamindar, built a fort and took up residence there.⁴⁶ The new fort came to be called Songadh, which became the nucleus of the rise of Gaekwad rule in Gujarat. Pilaji gradually occupied the Parganas of Surat sarkar and built forts at Konde Vajapur, Sakul Khad (Saekal Kacha of Ahwal), Rurgadh and Sadar Behl and thus consolidated his power in the region. He also befriended the Raja of Rajpipla and Panch Mahal.⁴⁷ The Naib Mutsaddi of Surat Shaikh-ul-Islam sent Mohammad Panah and Syed Aqil Khan to repel Pilaji Rao. They were, however, defeated and Mohammad Panah was taken hostage and released subsequently on collection of ransom. Since then Pilaji started making annual incursions deeper into Gujarat and the appointees at Surat, with the exception being Rustam Ali Khan, remained merely passive spectators.⁴⁸

However, some sporadic attempts were made by the Mughal Court to control the Maratha inroads, which proved largely unsuccessful. In 1711 Shahamat Khan, the Nazim successfully repelled Khande Rao Dabhade's attack on Bharuch.⁴⁹ In 1719 it was decided by the Royal Court that 5000 *sawar* belonging to Maharaja

⁴⁶ *Mirat*, P. 591; *Baroda State Gazetteer*, P. 438; Sarabhai Nagar, *Ahwal-i-Gaekwad*, Gujarat Vidya Sabha collection no.129, f.5(b).

⁴⁷ *Mirat*, P. 414; *Baroda State Gazetteer*, P. 438; *Ahwal*, f.5(b).

⁴⁸ *Ahwal*, f.6(a).

⁴⁹ *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. I, Government Central Press, Bombay, 1879, P.299

Abhay Singh must be maintained at Surat and another 5000 *sawar* were to be posted at a distance of 15 *kurohs* at the fords and passes from the Deccan, to stop the Marathas.⁵⁰ The Diwan, Nahir Khan was ordered to march immediately to Surat with a cavalry and infantry of 3000 each for the same purpose.

With the end of the Sayyid brothers' hegemony at the Imperial Court and the appointment of Nizam-ul-Mulk to the Wizarat of the Empire, Haider Quli Khan was made the Nazim of Gujarat (1721). He appointed Shuja'at Khan⁵¹ as his Naib. From this time the military struggle between the outgoing and incoming Nazims becomes a feature in Gujarat. A battle lasting for three days took place between the Naib-Nazims, Anup Singh (and Nahir Khan, the Diwan, belonging to the same party) and Shuja'at Khan. Peace was finally restored and Shuja'at Khan came in control of the administration. By this time one can see the rise of a new generation of Faujdars who were localized and distinguished themselves in various offices of the Subah. The fact that they held *Ijara* of various parganas only gave them greater scope to entrench themselves in the Subah. The Babis under Safdar Khan Babi and Jawan Mard Khan I and Shuja'at Khan and his brothers are the two most noticeable factions. It was inevitable that their interests should clash. Overt clash however was averted since both received patronage of Muiz-ud-Daula Haider Quli Khan, the Nazim of the Subah.

⁵⁰ *Mirat*, Pp. 396-397.

⁵¹ This Shuja'at Khan is to be distinguished from the earlier one who was a Nazim of Gujarat under Aurangzeb.

In 1722 Haider Quli Khan himself came to take control of the Subah. According to the narration in the *Mirat* it seems that this noble wanted to breakaway from the Imperial control and his subsequent activities also suggest the same. However, to understand his behavior in the larger context, other contemporary sources become useful.⁵² Originally Mohammad Reza, a protégé of Mir Jumla, he rose in Imperial favour during the reign of Farrukhsiyar. He received the title of Haider Quli Khan and was appointed as Diwan of the Deccan Provinces. He did not get on well with Nizam-ul-Mulk, then the Nazim of Deccan. He came back fuming. In 1717 He was given the Diwani of Gujarat along with many other important offices. This was meant as a check upon the combined powers of the Sayyid brothers, who held both Deccan and Gujarat under their control. Haider Quli it seems showed an increase in the revenues of the Surat port and the *khalsa mahals* of Gujarat during his Diwani. He was however not popular with the *ijaradars* of the region.⁵³ He also took an important part in ousting the Sayyid brothers. As a reward he was given the post of Imperial Mir Atish as also the Nizamat of Gujarat. Between the time of the fall of the Sayyids and Nizam-ul-Mulk's taking charge of the Wizarat, Haider Quli became very influential at the Royal Court. He is said to have commanded considerable influence over the Emperor. Nizam-ul-Mulk, upon his arrival at Delhi prodded him to

⁵² Jadunath Sarkar, *The Later Mughals*, vol.II, Orient Longman, fourth edition, 1988. It gives a succinct account of this noble's career taking information from various contemporary Persian sources.

⁵³ Shah Nawaz Khan and Abdul Hayy, *Maathir-ul-Umra*, (ed) H.Beveridge and Baini Prasad, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1941. Pp. 600-601.

take direct charge of his Nizamat in Gujarat (around 1722). This was the background for his subsequent actions in Gujarat. Upon his arrival in the region he started to confiscate the *jagirs* given to Imperial Mansabdars. His *jagirs* near Delhi were therefore confiscated as a punishment. He also seized the Arab horses that were being sent to the Royal Court, as also the wazifas, etc, and started granting *jagirs* to people of his choice. In short, he displayed all signs of rebellion.⁵⁴ This brought Nizam-ul-Mulk to Gujarat who had obtained the Nizamat of Gujarat for his son Ghazi-ud-din Khan. Hearing of the Nizam's arrival, Haider Quli sought to befriend the local nobles who were however not prepared to desert the Imperial cause in his favour. He therefore left for Delhi through an alternate route. It seems that his rebellion was not so much aimed against the Emperor whose favour he enjoyed but was against the rising power of the Nizam. This will explain as to why he was accepted back into the Imperial fold without any reservation.

In the absence of any viable arrangement to run the administration of the Subah firmly and the continuing political upheavals, the affairs in the province kept on deteriorating. During the 18th Century the practice of combining several offices in one person that was first noticed in the later 17th Century became rampant. Haider Quli Khan, as mentioned earlier, held simultaneous charges of Provincial Diwan, Mutsaddi of Surat, Diwani of Khalsa lands, Mutsaddi of Cambay, Faujdari of Baroda, Nadot, Arhar Matar, forests

⁵⁴ *Mirat*, P. 408; *Later Mughals*, II, Pp. 127-130.

of the Haveli *pargana* of Ahmedabad, etc.⁵⁵ In 1714 Momin Khan was appointed as the Mutsaddi of Surat, Faujdar of Baroda, Pargana of Petlad, Dholka, Bharuch and Nadiad.⁵⁶ Nahir Khan, the confidant of Ajit singh, was appointed the Diwan of the Subah, Darogha and Karori of Kathra Parcha, offices of octroi duties, Amin of the arrears of revenues of Ahmedabad Subah, Faujdar of Petlad Pargana and Dholka. Ruhulla Khan, his brother, was given the Naib-Diwani. Again in 1721 Haider Quli was appointed to the Faujdari of Kadi, Patta Chunwal, Pargana of Halwad, Thanadari of Tharad, Rajanpur, Bhamubi, Pethapur and Kheralu, in addition to the Diwani and Nizamat of Gujarat. His relative Sherud-Din Khan was appointed the Bakshi and Waqai-nawis.⁵⁷

During this period, the nature of the office of Diwan was compromised to a large extent leaving the Diwan ineffectual in the administration. During the 17th century, the provincial Diwan was appointed by a royal order. He had civil powers and his duties included collection of revenues from the Khalsa Mahals and dues on charitable endowments, payment of salaries as per rules and looking after financial matters relating to *jagir* assignments.⁵⁸ He was also required to look after the general welfare of the ryots and encourage cultivation; keep strict watch over the treasury and report embezzlement; stop collection of *abwabs*, scrutinize accountants,

⁵⁵ *Mirat*, P.367.

⁵⁶ *Mirat*, P.361.

⁵⁷ *Mirat*, P.404.

⁵⁸ Syed Nawab Ali and C.N.Seddon, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi-Supplement*, Baroda, 1928, p.148.

realize Taqawi, etc.⁵⁹ In short, the Diwan was a check on the powers of the Nazim in a Subah. During the 18th Century, following the factional fights amongst the Umrahs and their attempts towards aggrandizing their own position, the Nazim encroached upon the powers and resources of the Diwan. It was in the Nazim that all the powers came to be concentrated and the Diwani was relegated to a subordinate position. Bait-ul-mal was removed from the control of the Diwan and put under the control of the Kotwal in the city and the Faujdar-i-Gard in case of *Purahs*.⁶⁰ In the course of time the post of both the offices came to be combined in either one person or one faction. In 1718, as observed earlier, Haider Quli was made the Naib-Nazim as well as the Diwan⁶¹ and in 1721 when he was made the Nazim, his son Jafar Quli was made the Diwan. Maharaja Abhay Singh appointed Anup Singh Bhandari as Naib-Nazim and Nahir Khan as Naib-Diwan. Later Shuja'at Khan was given the *Niabat* of both Nizamat and Diwani.

However it must be observed that the process of decline was not a linear one. Attempts are also noticed in some cases to make the administration conform to the standard Mughal norms. In 1718 a royal order was issued to Diwans of all Subahs to the effect that any servant who was not present in his place of service and has appointed a *gumashta* instead was to be removed from service. During the wizarat of Nizam-ul-mulk, as is well known, attempts were made tighten the

⁵⁹ P.Saran, *Provincial Government under the Mughals*, Allahabad, 1941, Pp. 191-192.

⁶⁰ *Mirat*, P. 490.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* P.379.

reins of administration in provinces. In 1723 a royal order under the seal of the Nizam was sent to the Diwan Fidwi Khan removing the Karora of the Nazim in the katra parcha and certain cesses such as the 'Gulak-i-Nazim' were duly abolished.⁶² In addition, a Waqai-nawis was appointed in such places where octroi was collected and also in the Kutcheri of the provincial Diwans. It seems that a tab was sought to be kept on the Diwan's office.⁶³

Upon his arrival in the region in 1723 to oust Haider Quli Khan the Nizam appointed his own Naib, Hamid Khan to take charge of the Subah. Hamid Khan was the uncle of the Nizam. By 1725 however the Nizam went to Deccan and declared his independence. The rival party at the Royal court under the leadership of Burhan-ul-Mulk again appointed Sarbuland Khan, this time as the Nazim of Gujarat in place of Ghazi-ud-din Khan. Sarbuland Khan appointed Shuja'at Khan as his Naib and entrusted to him the task of ousting Hamid Khan.

Since this time the process of Mughal decline took a different turn in the region. In the subsequent events the regional factional fights becomes manifest. The inclusion of the Marathas in the regional polity added a new dimension leading closer towards the disintegration of the Subah. The battle between Hamid Khan and Shuja'at Khan's faction forms an important chapter in the history of 18th century Gujarat. Shuja'at Khan, along with his brothers, had

⁶² Ibid. P.413.

⁶³ Ibid. P.413.

emerged as a powerful group in the region, by this time.⁶⁴ To oust Hamid Khan from the Subah and thereby reducing Nizam's stake in the region, Shuja'at Khan applied for financial aid from the Imperial Court and he was sanctioned Rs.3 lakhs that was to be defrayed from the revenues of Surat port.⁶⁵ Hamid Khan on the other hand allied with Kanthaji Kadam Bande through the manoeuvres of the Nizam.⁶⁶ Kanthaji was promised the *chauth* of Gujarat for his support in regaining the Subah from Shuja'at Khan. In the battle that followed, Shuja'at Khan was killed. Following the death of Shuja'at Khan the Marathas entered the city of Ahmedabad for the first time. *Chauth* belonging to Kanthaji was fixed in all the *Mahals* of the city.⁶⁷ As the news of the death of Shuja'at Khan spread, the Marathas came to the region in hoards. Ibrahim Quli, the younger brother of Shuja'at Khan, attacked Hamid Khan in his house and in the ensuing scuffle, lost his life.⁶⁸

Rustam Ali Khan, who was then the Mutsaddi of Surat and was successful in containing Pilaji Rao Gaekwad's activities, came to

⁶⁴ It will not be out of place here to take a brief look at the fortunes of this family that played an important part in shaping the history of this region at this important juncture. Early in the century a Faujdar by the name of Qasim Beg had earned fame in the region through his exploits against the kolis. He however was killed while fighting the kolis of Munjpur in Baroda sarkar. Two other brothers of Qasim beg were similarly killed while in royal service. His other brothers and sons were patronized by Haider Quli Khan. Masum Quli, later Shuja'at Khan comes to notice when he ousted the Marwari Naib of Maharaja Abhay Singh from the Faujdari of Sorath for Haider Quli. He was also appointed as the Naib-Nazim by Haider Quli in 1721 who held on to the Subah by ousting the Marwari faction. He along with his brothers Ibrahim Quli Khan and Rustam Ali Khan had earned much fame especially in fighting the Marathas. They also held *Ijara* of various places at different points of time.

⁶⁵ *Mirat*, P. 417.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* P.417.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* P.423.

⁶⁸ *Mirat*, P. 425.

know of the death of his brothers. He immediately called for a truce with Pilaji and entered into an agreement with him whereby Pilaji agreed to help Rustam Ali Khan in fighting Hamid Khan. However, Pilaji, who could perceive Rustam Ali Khan as his rival as the latter had single handedly stopped Pilaji's inroads in the vicinity of Surat, secretly allied himself with Hamid Khan. Rustam Ali too was killed in the ensuing battle with Hamid Khan. Hamid Khan took control of Ahmedabad in the name of the Nizam. As per agreement made earlier with the Marthas, Hamid Khan agreed that Pilaji be allowed to collect the *chauth* on the south of the Mahi River⁶⁹ comprising the districts of Nandod, Champaner, Baroda, Broach, Surat sarkars, and Kanthaji was to collect the *chauth* of *sarkars* to the north of the Mahi River.⁷⁰

The victory of Hamid Khan was however short-lived. Upon the receipt of the news of the death of Shuja'at Khan and his brothers, Sarbuland Khan was sent by the Emperor to take charge of the Nizamat of Gujarat. The news of his having reached the borders of the Subah emboldened the Faujdars of the Subah and they openly came out against Hamid Khan. Sardar Mohammad Khan Ghorni, the *faujdar* of Kalol (14 kos from Ahmedabad), closed the gates of the town against Hamid Khan and Kanthaji combine; the latter was on way to the region to collect the *chauth* and *peshkash*. Shaikh Illah Yar, along with others, held out Ahmedabad against Hamid Khan⁷¹

⁶⁹ Invariably referred to as 'this side of Mahi' and 'that side of Mahi' in the contemporary Persian sources.

⁷⁰ *Ahwal*, f.7(b).

⁷¹ *Mirat*, P. 440.

who was left with little choice but to leave for Deccan along with Kanthaji.⁷² Sarbuland Khan took control of the Subah.

The Marathas however persisted in their endeavour to make *chauth* collection in Gujarat. Upon reaching the region, Sarbuland Khan commissioned his son Khanazad Khan to tackle the Marathas. Pilaji and Kanthaji made Ali Mohan (official Mughal names for Chota Udaipur and Devgadhi Bariya) in the east their base and started plundering north and central Gujarat well up to Dholka, Dhandhuka and Viramgam. In order to thwart the efforts of Mughal officers both the Maratha sardars started creating disturbances in different areas at the same time. Finding the Marathas undaunted, Sarbuland Khan agreed in 1726 to Kanthaji's claim of *Chauth* on the north of Mahi except Pargana Haveli Ahmedabad and the Ahmedabad city.⁷³ In 1727 a third faction of the Marathas entered the region. Baji Rao Peshwa sent Udaji Powar as his representative on the invitation of Sarbuland Khan. The rift between the Peshwa and the Senapati Triambak Rao Dabhade in the wake of the rising power of the Peshwa was common knowledge. Through this step, the Nazim sought to undermine the power of Kanthaji and Pilaji who were the representatives of the Maratha Senapati Dabhade. However, no agreement could be reached immediately.⁷⁴ In 1729 an agreement finally was reached whereby the Peshwa was bound to oust both Pilaji and Kanthaji from Gujarat and he would in return get the sole rights

⁷² Ibid. P.442.

⁷³ Ibid. P.447.

⁷⁴ Ibid. P.455.

of *chauth* in the region. It seems that the Imperial Court did not welcome this arrangement made by Sarbuland Khan and he was subsequently recalled from Gujarat.

Maharaja Ajit Singh, son of Abhay Singh replaced Sarbuland Khan as the *Nazim*. However, Ajit Singh followed the policy of his predecessor and honoured the agreement reached between the earlier *Nazim* and the Peshwa. The latter arrived near Ahmedabad to undertake the operations personally against Pilaji, who had by then occupied Baroda. The Peshwa, along with Mughal officers, laid siege to Baroda. However, the siege had to be lifted as Nizam-ul-Mulk, who was then a confederate of the Senapati in the Deccan, came close on the Peshwa's heel. The whole exercise thus remained inconclusive. A year later, the Peshwa killed the Senapati Khande Rao Dabhade in the Battle of Bhilupur (situated near Ahmedabad). Umabai Dabhade, the mother of the infant Yashwant Rao Dabhade, the new Senapati took control as the regent. She made Pilaji Rao Gaekwad the sole incharge of *chauth* collection in Gujarat. This alarmed the *Nazim*, Ajit Singh. In 1732 through an intrigue he got Pilaji murdered in his tent while the latter was on way to the north of region for collection of *chauth*. Ajit Singh immediately crossed the Mahi River and reoccupied Baroda and laid siege to Dabhoi, but failed to occupy it. He succeeded in pushing the Marathas out of the region, though temporarily. The Marathas came back in 1733 once again, under the leadership of Umabai Dabhade, the regent to the infant Senapati, who plundered and pillaged the vicinity of Ahmedabad. The *Nazim* Ajit Singh was

left with little choice but to settle *chauth* for the year with the Marathas. A *Khandani* of 80,000 was paid and peace was concluded.⁷⁵ Since then such Maratha expeditions became an annual affair in this part of the region as well.

In 1735 Baroda was retaken by the Marathas under Mahmaji, brother of Pilaji, from Sher Khan Babi. Around the same time Damaji, son of Pilaji was appointed the deputy by Umabai and was assigned the sole charge of collection of *chauth* of Gujarat. He sent Renkoji to the region north of Mahi River as his Naib. Kanthaji resented this and had to be defeated at Anand Moghri. Since then Kanthaji is not to be seen in Gujarat's politics any more. Around this time, Renkoji, with the connivance of the *desai* of the place, captured *pargana* Viramgam, a fertile area that was part of the Kahlisa *mahal*. Viramgam was also strategically important since it was through this place that Sorath or the Peninsular Gujarat could be reached. Ratan Singh Bhandari, the Naib of the Maharaja who administered the region was known for being oppressive. Besides, he also could not get on well with the local officers. A disagreement with Momin Khan prompted Momin Khan to conspire against the Maharaja Ajit Singh at the Imperial Court. He obtained a *sanad* to oust the Naib, Ratan Singh Bhandari from Ahmedabad and take control as the Nazim himself. He sought Renkoji's aid for this and agreed to share half the revenues of the Subah except that of the city and *pargana* Haveli Ahmedabad and the port of Cambay. Later, he also agreed to share the revenues of Haveli

⁷⁵ Ibid. P.507.

pargana and exchange the full revenues of Viramgam *pargana* in lieu of Cambay.⁷⁶ In 1736-37, after a year long siege, Ahmadabad finally fell into the hands of Najm-ud-Daula Momin Khan I. This was the beginning of the joint Mughal-Maratha rule in the region.⁷⁷ The Post Momin Khan Phase was wrought with factional fights between the local officers for the post of Nizamat and the Imperial court ceased to play any decisive role in the politics of Gujarat. The Court well up to 1752 made sporadic attempts to appoint Nazims but it was more of a ritual than a display of sovereign power.

In the rest of the Subah as well the disintegration of Imperial Mughal authority had begun simultaneously. At Surat since the death of Rustam Ali Khan, his son Sohrab Khan, entitled Behram Khan, continued to rule as the 'Nawab', independent of Ahmadabad. The Imperial attempts at replacing him, first with Mustafid Khan and then Momin Khan were fruitless. Surat chalked out its own history since then. In 1731, while Nizam-ul-Mulk was encamped in the vicinity of Surat having followed Baji Rao Peshwa, Abdullah Beg, the Faujdar of Bharuch, appointed earlier by Mubariz-ul-Mulk Sarbuland Khan, approached the Nizam and obtained a *sanad* acknowledging Abdullah Beg as his deputy. He was also given the title of Nek Alam Khan. The *Sarkar* of Bharuch consisting of the *parganas* of Bharuch, Amod, Ankleshwar, Hansot, Jambusar and Olpad was the personal *jagir* of the Nizam.⁷⁸ Even after the Nizam's withdrawal from the Imperial

⁷⁶ Ibid. P.541.

⁷⁷ Ibid. P.576.

⁷⁸ Ibid. P.485.

capital his *jagirs* were not confiscated. Thus, the Nawabi of Bharuch was formed although it was much later (1758), under Nek Nam Khan II that a formal *sanad* was obtained from the Court for the Nawabi. As already seen, Baroda, Dabhoi, Champaner, Viramgam, etc had fallen under Maratha control. Although Cambay was not independent, it was marked out as Momin Khan's personal sphere from around 1730's, as seen in the terms of agreement reached between Renkoji and Momin Khan in the sharing of Subah. In the Peninsula of Gujarat it was only in 1747 that Sher Khan Babi, titled as Bahadur Khan formed the Junagadh Nawabi. But Mughal authority in the peninsula started declining early in the century. This was largely unchecked due to the preoccupations of the officers with the mainland. The authority of the Faujdar of Sorath came to be confined to the area called 'New Sorath'.⁷⁹ By 1727 the Faujdar entirely lost control of the *thanas*. The *thanadars* of Mangrol, Kutiana, Una-Delwada, Sutrapada, Somnath-Patan, etc became independent.⁸⁰ Nawanagar, the biggest *peshkashi zamindari* in the Peninsula was included in the Imperial Khalsa in the last quarter of the 17th Century by Aurangzeb. It became independent soon after Aurangzeb's death. The Jethwa chief, a *bantha* (*wanta*) holder of Chhaya occupied Porbandar, a rich port town on the southern most tip of the Peninsula and started asserting himself in this area. Similarly, the Gohel chief of Sihor, a small chieftain to the southeast of the Peninsula founded the Bhavnagar port and made it his capital in 1723. It was these chieftains who expanded their spheres of activity in the course of the century and became decisive in the new

⁷⁹ M. S. Commissariate, *History of Gujarat*, II, Ahmedabad, 1980, P.433.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

power Structure in their respective localities. Thus, by 1740 the last vestiges of the effective Mughal authority were completely lost and a new power structure was taking its place.