

CHAPTER I

A. The origin of the Baroda State and its gradual development till 1875.

--

The Baroda State that we saw on the eve of its merger with the present Bombay State was largely a result of untiring perseverance of its Ruler Sir Siyaji Rao III and his able Ministers the first of whom was Raja Sir T. Madhav Rao. This early combination of an enlightened Ruler maturedⁱⁿ the modern way of life and modern Political thought and ^{of} (his) Dewan being an acknowledged man of eminence and wisdom trained in Administration by the British administrators and with matured understanding, familiar with an Indian Native Court^{the} was a boon to Baroda State. It is only from 1875 that its modern period begins. But to be better able to understand the history of Baroda from 1875 to 1920, it is desirable to trace its origin, its previous rulers and administration and then (only the reader will be able) to appreciate what a mighty effort was required by these incharge of the State to give it a 'New Look' to a mess that was created.

Origin of the State.

Historically the origin of the State is to be found in the period of the break-up of the Moghul Empire and the rise to power of the ^{Maratha} (great) ~~Maratha~~ rule under the great (hero) Shivaji and his descendants the kings of Satara. Of the early leaders of the rule, one of the most distinguished was Khanderao Dabhade. In 1705, he over-run^{ran} Gujarat (then a Mughal Dominion) and ^{levied} (imposed) a tribute^{from} upon the inhabitants.

In 1716, he was appointed Senapati or commander-in-chief by the then king of Satara. At the same time, his right hand man, another leader named Damajirao Gaekwad, acquitted himself so valiantly in the battles which the Senapati fought for the Maratha Empire that ^{Damaji} he was exalted to the rank of Second-in-Command and honoured with the title of Shamsheer Bahadur which distinction remained a proud title of the Head of the Gaekwad House till recently.

Founder of Dynasty.

Both Khanderao Dabhade and Damajirao Gaekwad died in 1721. The former was succeeded by his son Trimbakrao and the latter by his nephew Pilajirao who was the founder of the dynasty of Gaekwads of Baroda. Pilajirao who managed the affairs of the Gujarat on behalf of the Senapati acquired some territory in the province and built the fort of Songadh and made it the ^hHead quarters of his power. It remained the capital of Baroda dominions till 1761. Trimbakrao was killed ten years later in an encounter with the Peshwa (the Chief Minister of the king of Satara) and his minor son Yeshwantrao succeeded him, with Pilajirao as his Mutalik or Deputy bearing the title of "Sena Khas Khel". Pilajirao was assassinated in 1732 by the emissaries of the Mughal viceroy and was succeeded by his son Damajirao II.

Damajirao II.

Damajirao captured Baroda in 1734 and since then it had been in the hands of the Gaekwads. When Yeshwantrao Dabhade came of age, he proved to be incapable of wielding the Maratha Power in Gujarat, and in 1747, the king of Satara appointed Damajirao as his representative

representative in Gujarat. Before long Damajirao established his supremacy in Gujarat, defeating the Moghul viceroy and reducing him to a non-entity. Then arose internal strife, among the Marathas, beginning with the death of Shahu the fourth king of Satara in 1749. The authority of the king of Satara had passed into the hands of the Peshwa, who governed the land in his stead in the name of the king. This policy was not approved of by Damajirao and consequently when two years later, there arose an opportunity to challenge the Peshwa^{emphatically}, he prepared an expedition to Deccan with the object of restoring the then king of Satara, after rescuing him from the Peshwa's thraldom. With an army of 15,000 horse and Foot he met and defeated a large force of Peshwa at Nimb which attempted to impede his progress. Later, however, the fortunes of War changed and he was treacherously seized by the Peshwa and made (the) prisoner. The Peshwa offered to release him and his agreeing to cede half of Gujarat and (of) all his future conquests. He accepted those terms and entering into an alliance with the Peshwa he maintained his ^Sovereignty in tact, and two years later ^{with a} (the) joint assault together with the Peshwa's forces, he laid ^{Siege} siege to Ahmedabad and captured it.* This was the end of the Moghul power in Gujarat and that area was thereupon apportioned between the Peshwa and the Gaekwad.

Panipat and After.

The next important land mark in the history of these days was the great battle of Panipat, ^{in which} (when) the Afghans defeated the Marathas.

*In A.D. 1753. However, Grant Duff puts the date some where in A.D. 1755 P.

Damajirao fought on the side of the Peshwa and he and his forces distinguished themselves in the conflict. After the close of the historic battle they were able to withdraw and return to Gujarat, ^{where} when Damajirao consolidated his power and prevented the Moghuls from getting any advantage from the battle of Panipat. In fact, he extended his territory by conquering the area which formed the Mehsana District of the State.

Sayajirao to Govindrao.

The death of Damajirao in 1768 was followed by a period of disorder in which two of his sons, Sayajirao the eldest, and Govindrao, born of the eldest wife, disputed the succession. Ultimately the former was declared the heir by the Peshwa and ruled from 1771 to 1778. Owing to his infirmities, his younger brother Fatehsinhrao acted as Regent, during his reign. While Sayajirao still lived, Fatehsinghrao assumed powers of State in 1778 and ruled till 1779. On his death the fourth brother Manajirao seized the reins of power on behalf of Sayajirao, and it was not until he died in 1793 that Govindrao became ruler but only after he had paid a heavy nazar to the Peshwa in order to secure the title of Senakhas khel Shamsheer Bahadur.

Anand Rao.

Govindrao died in 1800 and was succeeded by his eldest son Anandrao. The early part of his reign was a period of trouble and unrest due to the bid for power by his brother Kanojirao, who was aided by Malharrao of Kadi, another scion of the family and a vassal

of the State. In this reign for the first time the aid from the foreigner i.e. British was sought for and this ^{thus} a foreign power involved itself in Baroda State history. This was an important change of policy in a State as later on the East India Company tactfully went on influencing the history of the State. Both parties sought the aid of The East India Company, who decided to help Anandrao, the rightful ruler. The Gaekwad at this time could not see that the invitation to a foreign power constituted the greatest danger to the State in times to come but was anxious to maintain his position by any means. A treaty was signed between the Gaekwad and the East India Company in March 1802 and two other treaties in June and July 1802 respectively. These were consolidated in 1805 in a definitive treaty which was supplemented by the Treaty of 1817. By these engagements the East India Company bound themselves to support the Maharaja Gaekwad, an offensive and defensive alliance was entered into, and the State agreed to receive from the Company a subsidiary force of 4000 native infantry, 1000 native cavalry, a company of European Artillery and two companies of Gun-Lascars. For the payment of these troops, the State ceded territory which at that time produced a surplus revenue of Rs. 24,31,909 P.9 *(References from Aitchison and Records) and gave over the direction of its foreign policy to the charge of the Company Government. By treaties made with Peshwa at this time the independence of Baroda was recognised. Because of these far

* A.T. Vol. VII - Baroda and Punjab 4th Edition.
 PP. 67 for A.D. 1805
 " 69-71 " " 1808
 " 77 " " 1817.

reaching changes Anandrao's reign is very important in the annals of Baroda History.

Sayajirao II and Ganpatrao.

In 1819, a year after Peshwa's power was finally over thrown by the Company (and Baroda consequently released from its annual payments on account of past claims) Anandrao died and ^{was} succeeded by his brother Sayajirao II. On his succession the Company Government withdrew from the minute interference in the internal affairs of the State which they were exercising while Anandrao lived. At this time ^{an} (the) arrangement was made by which the contract of the State paying tributes to Baroda was retained by the Company Government * This was another important mile stone in the history of Baroda, which was slowly and slowly losing its sovereign rights. The reign of Sayajirao was marked by differences between the Baroda and the Company Government which continued for nearly 20 years, until they were finally composed by Sir James ~~JAMES~~ Rivett Carnac, Governor of Bombay in 1841. Sayajirao, however was able to see intention of the Company gaining complete control over the State though not deposing the Ruler but making him to do as they wanted him in their policy of bring^g the whole of India under their suzerain authority. But he was unable to check ^{the} gradual passing of sovereignty from his hands in ^{to} another's as it was beyond his ^{power} (capacity) to rise against the Company's ^{the} ~~militarity~~ as his predecessor and brother had bound his hands and feet and made him capable of nothing except to acquiesce in what either willingly or against will, the East India Company did.

* Wallace P.281.

After the death of Sayajirao in 1847, his eldest son Ganpatrao came to the throne . In his reign some social reforms were carried on as also followed a policy of construction of roads, bridges and other public buildings ; but the period was without any political changes. Ganpatrao died in 1856 and was succeeded by his eldest surviving brother Khanderao.

Khanderao.

A few months after Khanderao's succession, there broke out the Sepoy Mutiny which threatened to overthrow the Company's Dominion in India. . Its repercussions were felt in Gujarat where there was a rebellious outbreak but the Maharaja steadfastly supported the Company Government. But for this support in these critical times, the hold of the Company over Gujarat would have been paralysed, and the mutiny would have spreaded to the Deccan. For his services the British Government presented him with ^a (the) splendid pair of fans made of peacock feathers * (Mor chhals) and remitted the annual payment of Rs. 3,00,000 % which had hitherto been made by the State for the upkeep of the Gujarat Irregular Horse. In 1862 @ an adoption Sanad was given to him. Khanderao was a liberal ruler. He reformed the administration, inaugurated a revenue survey of the land and planned many public works which, however, he did not live to complete. He died in 1870.

Malharrao.

On the death of Maharaja Khanderao without male issue, the next

* H.P.O. Selection No. 26. P. 133
% Ibid " Pp. 129-130
* Ibid " P. 135.

to ascend the Gadi was Malharrao, his younger brother. It however, soon became apparent that Malharrao was not fitted for the task of the ruler. He began attempting to wreak vengeance on the supporters of the previous Maharaja and went on ^{afterwards} (to oppress) his subjects financially and otherwise. In 1873, the Government of India appointed a commission to inquire into complaints of misgovernment against him and on its advice called upon him to reform the administration in certain particulars. In 1874, he was tried by another commission appointed by the Government of India for attempting to poison Col. Phayre, British Resident at Baroda. The commission gave a divided opinion. The three British members holding him guilty and the three Indian members holding him not guilty. The British Government declined to act on this verdict, but finally decided by a proclamation of 1875 * to depose him on the grounds of general misrule and (evident) incapacity to carry out reforms, the necessity of which had been established by the previous inquiry(*) They then deported him at once to Madras where he resided under the surveillance of a British officer until his death in 1882.

After him came Sayajirao the III on the Gadi and from his time our history begins. How he came to the throne, who was he and how

* H.P.O. Selection No. 26 P. 141

(*) The Commission comprised (of) Government of India nominees.

(1) Colonel Meade, the President.

(2) Mumtar -u-daula Nawab Faiyaz Ali.

Government of Bombay Nominees.

(3) Mr. Ravens Croft.

(4) Colonel Etheridge

The Commission held its first sitting in Baroda on the 10th November, its last at the same place on the 24th December 1873.

- Rulers of Baroda P. 250.

was he connected with the ruling House of the Gaekwad is a different story which will be narrated elsewhere. However, it will suffice to say here that he was adopted by Maharani Jannabai the widow of Khanderao Gaekwad and belonged to one of the branches of the Gaekwad who had been settled in Khandesh in the village of Kaviana. His original name was Gopalrao. He was the son of Kashirao, a descendant of Partaprao. Prataprao was the third son of Pilajirao Gaekwad, the founder of the State.

Such is the romantic history of Baroda since its inception, wherein the usual features of a fairy tale are to be found in abundance.

Here the kings when unable to wield power when given to luxury or owing to infirmities give their powerful Regents or successors an opportunity to fight for the Gadi. Here the internal strife between the powerful leaders of a clan results in cruel conflicts. Disputes on the death of the father between sons for the Gadi is a normal feature and bribing or entering into alliances is the result. Cliques work and gain. The fight between the legitimate and the illegitimate issues of the ruler was also seen. But it was good till the aid sought was of a native state or Prince but a different element and of importance enters to play the decisive role when an aid of a foreign power is sought and given. Later on when Britishers gained ground all over India and the Native States in friendly by alliance with them, by treaties and engagements firstly on the basis of equality, were rendered to subordinate alliance they asserted their Paramountcy in different ways. In the history of Baroda that romantic element of deposition of a king and placing on the throne a boy from a distant village ^{who} ~~when~~ never dreamt that he would be a king overnight is also not lacking. However the act of deposition was an act based

on the idea of Paramountcy of the British Government in the whole of Indian peninsula. What was this Paramountcy, what were the functions based on this theory, how did it manifest in the day to day affair was a story of all the Native States of India and we would have a change to go through it, as far as Baroda was concerned with this, later on.