

POLITICAL CONDITION

According to Abu Turāb, the author of Tārīkh-i-Gujarat, the Sultenat in Gujarat came to be exterminated in 942 A.H. ^{AD 1535} following the Mughal onslaught because of the reckless intrepidity, thoughtless adventurism and the policy of uncalled for, confrontation adopted by Sultan Bahadur Shah towards Humayun.

Comfortable sway over Gujarat, however, eluded the Mughals for ^{forty} years, even after Bahadur Shah's defeat, due to the menace posed by Sher Shah and mutual dissensions amongst the Moughal nobles in charge of the affairs of Gujarat, till in 982 A.H./1573 A.D. Akbar annexed Gujarat as a part of his empire.

From 1573 A.D. to 1758 A.D. a period of 185 years, when the Mughal Rule came to an end, in Gujarat, 60 Governors all nobles of highest qualifications and princes known for their distinction in various fields, penmanship and swordsmanship, were appointed¹.

Mirza Aziz Koka, known as Khān-i-Āzam (1573-75 A.D.) was the first Moughal Governor. Administrative reorganisation of districts and parganas, extensive land survey by Raja Todarmal took place during his vice-royalty. Appointment of Mir-i-Hajj demonstrated that Akbar intended to continue the religious policy of the Sultans of Gujarat.

Khān-i-Khanan, a lad of ^{twenty} was advised, on appointment as Governor in 983-86 A.H./1575-78 A.D., to follow Wazir Khan, who could not deliver goods. Gul Rukh Begum, the wife of Mirza

1. Commissariat history of Gujarat Vol.III P.

Ibrahim, a disgruntled royal member, returned alongwith her son Muzaffar in ¹⁵⁷⁷ A.D. from Deccan where she had taken refuge, to challenge the mighty Akbar, but was defeated after initial, insignificant success, by Baz Bahadur & Pragdas near Dholka.

Mirza Muzaffar had to flee, when he again tried to assert himself with the help of Mehrali, who was killed, to Khandesh where he was captured and delivered to Akbar who forgave him.

Peninsula of Saurashtra defied the imperial authority for twenty years after ¹⁵⁷³ A.D. Shihab al din, Etemad Khan and Khan-i-Khanan had to live with the insurgency of the Sultan Muzaffar, who unsuccessfully but vigorously waged wars at various places of Saurashtra, Bhuj & Kutch & posed formidable challenge with the active support of the chiefs of that area and the sympathy of the population. Rao Bharamal, the chief of Kutch, where the Sultan had taken refuge, betrayed the latter & handed him over as captive to the Mughal in exchange of Pargana Morbi. The Sultan committed suicide by cutting his throat with a razor. Mirat-i-Sikandari ends with this incident.

One of the sons of Sultan Muzaffar, brought up by a faithful Zamindar, again raised, unsuccessfully, the standard of revolt against the Mughal authority in Gujarat, when Prince Murad, under instructions from Akbar, was busy with campaign against kingdom of Ahmednagar. He was made to flee by Suraj Singh a Mughal Officer.

With elimination of reducing it to manageable proportion, of all the ~~xxxx~~ irritants and sources of trouble such as

recalcitrant local chiefs, dissenting & rebellious Mirzas and claimant to the throne from Gujarat, to their authority, the Moughals now looked upon Gujarat as an advanced military post for onward thrust deep into Deccan in 1014 A.H./1605 A.D. when Akbar died.

Though minor refractory activities of Bahadur & certain Hindu chiefs were encountered here by the Governors appointed by Jahangir, their pressing concern was cooperation with the imperial generals carrying ineffective campaigns against Nizam Shahi of Ahmednagar. Under the able stewardship of Malek Amber, they not only defied the Moughals but had the temerity to plunder Surat. Raja Ramdas, Saif Khan & Abdullah, the Governors of Gujarat, had recorded their failure in this respect.

It may however be noted that the bloody battles were mostly fought on the periphery of Gujarat, sparing the interior.

Jahangir visited Gujarat during Muqarrab Khan's vice royalty in 1027 A.H./1618 A.D. Noted saints of Ahmedabad presented themselves at Cambay to receive the emperor.¹ Jahangir paid his homage to the renowned saints buried at Vatva, Rasulabad, Khanpur & Sarkhej. He also asked Saiyed Mohammed b. Jalal to translate Quran into Persian.²

Shah Jahan was appointed Governor of Gujarat but Rustam Khan administered on his behalf. Major development now was the serious rift in the imperial household and intrigues in the court. Noor Jahan, actively espousing the succession to throne, of Shehryar

1. Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri Page 225

2. Nuzhat al Khawatir Vol V P.123

her son in law, married to her daughter from her former husband, manouvered to elbow out Shah Jahan, the heir apparent. Taking advantage of besiege of Qandhar by Shah Abbas I, Noor Jahan prevailed upon Jahangir to despatch Moughal army under Shah Jahan to distant Afghanistan. Shah Jahan who smelt a rat in the plan was not prepared to allow Noor Jahan a free hand in the game of politics. National interest or threat to the integrity of the empire, when pressed into service by the disputants with a view to grind one's own private axe or in furtherance of self aggrandisement, not only cease to be appealing, but are counter productive. Compulsions of his own sense of priorities therefore led him to ~~re~~ revolt. Dismemberment of Qandhar in preference to the loss of crown, despite lingering nostalgic attachment to it, as an ancestral abode, could be temporarily acquiesced into, & taken care of later on, when firmly entrenched at an opportune time.

In the absence of any principles to fight for, the support to either camps was governed by the consideration of intimate relationship, blood or otherwise, & calculated benefits in case of triumph and presumably inter-rivalaries of the nobles, desirous of mutually settling scores among themselves.

Resources of Deccan Malwa Khandesh and Gujarat & services of Khan-i-Khanan & Abdulla Khan were at the disposal of Shah Jahan, who however lost ground in a number of engagements, but still continued his rebellious activities for three years, in various distant parts of the empire.

Nahir Khan shifted his allegiance to Shah Jahan

and Saif Khan interceded. Consequent upon the rapprochement, Shah Jahan succeeded to the throne.

The fact that Jahangir could undertake frequent excursion tour to the south & north indicates that tranquillity prevailed all over the country.

The tenure of the office of the first five governors of Gujarat, appointed under Shah Jahan's reign, was quite short. Gujarat witnessed an unprecedented famine. Kolis and Khathis of North Gujarat were notorious for their turbulence, coupled with it was the defiant attitude of the feudatary Saurashtra. Energetic governor like Āzam Khan therefore had to be appointed. A new mint was established under order from Shah Jahan in Junagadh.

Mirza Īsa Tar Khan & prince Aurangzeb succeeded as governors respectively for one year each. Frequent changes of governor, a common practice with the Moughal, was probably aimed at preventing them from striking root in the soil & stalling and minimizing the danger of their powerful connections & contacts, liable to develop into conspiracy with the local chiefs & nobles. From Jahangir's death to the succession of Aurangzeb, a period of thirty years, twelve governors administered Gujarat, three of them being princes, Aurangzeb, Dara & Murad. Some of the princes were content to rule through their trusted diputées. Shaista Khan, the brother in law of the emperor, was twice appointed governor of Gujarat within short intervals. Pompous & imposing construction by Shah Jahan in every corner of the country speak volumes for the fact that the prosperity had touched the peak.

Fraudulent fratricidal internecine war of succession between the brothers preceded the final coronation of Aurangzeb. Murad was lured into trap, Shuja defeated, Dara waged war against him but fugitively. He entered Ahmedabad via Sind & Kutch & tried to consolidate his position through coercive means, left for Ajmer where he was defeated. His re-entry into Gujarat was resisted by forces loyal to Aurangzeb. Amin khan, Sardar khan, Jaswant singh & Shuja at khan were the prominent governors appointed by the emperor. Mohammed Amin and Shuja at khan's tenure of office lasted for ten and sixteen years respectively. It means that the earlier Mughal policy of frequent transfers of the governors now fell in disuse. On the ~~late~~ death of Jaswant singh, Marwar, his kingdom, was ~~annexed~~ annexed to Mughal Empire. This alienated the Rajputs & their loyalty was strained. Durgadas Rathod, adopted guerrilla tactics for 20 years in Gujarat and espoused the cause of infant Ajit singh the son of late of Maharaja. This heavy drain on the treasury was telling. Famine was a recurring feature in Gujarat. Repairs to the forts and monuments were carried out. Shuja at khan subdued the revolt by the followers of Saiyed Shahji, a Shi'a sect, at Baroach.

Gujarat produced for Qādi al Qūdāt in this period namely Abd al Wahhab, the grand son of Maulana Mohammad Tahir of Patan, Shaykh al Islam, his son, Abu Sa'id, his son in law, and Mohammad Akram his grand son.

During the last few decades of his life Aurangzeb encamped in south and was busy with the subjugation of defiant Shivaji. Maratha invasion loomed large on the horizon of Gujarat. Surat was plundered. Dhanaji and Balaji Vishvanath were successfully advancing towards Gujarat.