CHAPTER - V

SUCCESSION DISPUTE BETWEEN MANAJIRAO AND GOVINDRAO AND ROLE OF POONA GOVERNMENT

Sayajirao as a ruler and Manajirao as the regent :

The treaty of Salbai gave twenty years respite to the Maratha nation. Fatehsingrao was allowed in undistrubed possession of his territories while the unfortunate Govindrao lived at Poona. He was getting a pension of rupees two lakhs a year as decided by the Peshwa, but for all the time he was hostile to Fatehsingrao.

Fatehsingrao conducted his affairs with his usual cleverness and prudence. The establishment of a body of Arab mercenaries was the only important action of his later phase. These Arabs created great difficulties in the subsequent years.

Fatehsingrao died on December 19, 1789.[1] It was presumed that Govindrao would succeed him but Manajirao, Fatehsing's younger brother, who was at Baroda, assumed the charge of regency on behalf of Sayajirao.

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1. Gense & Banaji, Vol.III.P.164.Here the date of the death of Fatehsingrao is 19th Dec.1789. While Grant Duff in his book, "The History of Marathas Vol.p.93 has mentioned 21st Dec.1789. Considering Factory records more authentic and reliable Dec.19th has been accepted.

Manajirao :

Though Manajirao had assumed the charge held by Fatehsingrao before but according to the custom, he required the sanction of the Peshwa. His elder brother Govindrao was at Poona and he again placed his claims before the Peshwa.

Peshwa Madhavrao Narayan was a minor and Nana Fadanis was the most powerful of all the ministers at Poona. He seized this opportunity of extorting as much money as possible from the Gaekwad brothers. This attitude of the Poona Durbar from 1790 to 1800 towards Baroda made them appear as if they were the real owners of the Baroda State and it had been mortgaged to its actual rulers.[2]

The Fierce opposition from Govindrao were responsible in making the sovereignty of the Gaekwads nominal. During Manajirao's period the authorities of the Poona Durbar were high-handedin their dealings as the Gaekwads were suspected to have inclination for the English. Under this pressure the ruler of Baroda became helpless. This was tolerated by them because of the internecine conflict and the decisive role of the Poona authorities in deciding succession.

The Poona Durbar and Manajirao :

Manajirao had to face a severe and loud opposition of Govindrao at Poona. Manajirao sent an agent to counteract

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2. Ibid. Page 165.

manoeuveres of Govindrao with large sums of money.[3] Manajirao as late as October 10, 1790 in his letter to his agent Balaji Govind[4] asked him to see Nana Fadnis and Tatya Phadke in person, and to bring to their notice that his state can come out of the difficult situation only if Nana and Tatya are sympathetic. Nana Fadnis Peshwa's Minister had already prejudice against Govindrao, as the latter had espoused the cause of Raghunathrao in 1775 and onwards. Still Govindrao tried his best to secure the title of Sena-Khas-Khel.

These attempts however were futile for Manajirao presented a Nazar of Rs. 33,13,000 and promised to pay Fatehsingrao's arrears which amounted to Rs. 36 lakhs.[5] After extorting this huge amount the title of Sena-Khas-Khel was conferred on Manajirao by the Poona Durbar. On this occassion Nana Fadnis and Haripant Phadke bound themselves by an oath not to interfere directly or indirectly in the Government of Baroda and that neither they or the Peshwa would afford any assistance whatsoever to Govindrao. They also assured Manajirao that he had nothing to fear. Even after these promises after about a year, under Mahadji Sindia's pressure the Poona Durbar failed to keep their part of the bargain and started negotiations with Manajirao

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3. Ibid. page 174.
4. His.Sil.from Baroda State records Vol.III,letter No.3 of 10-10-1790.
5. Baroda Gazetter Vols.p.481. A maratha M.SS.gives a different Account.According to his manuscript. Manaji Promised to pay sixty lakhs in four years by instalments of fifteen lakhs.

rival claiment Govindrao.[6]

Mahdaji Sindia had given his daughter in marriage to Anandrao, Govindrao's son. Therefore he did not like the arrangement made by Poona Durbar and supported Govindrao. The death of Sayajirao in 1792 added further weight to the claims of Govindrao. By the help of Mahadji Sindia, Govindrao secured the title of Sena-Khas-Khel, thus depriving Manajirao of it. Mahadji Sindia also helped Govindrao with troops to proceed to Baroda; then Govindrao was not in a position to assert his claims owing to the policy of Manajirao and Nana Fadnis.

Nana Fadnis had assured Manaji that he would not interfere in his affairs, hence Sindia's insistant demands were not immediately given effect. Nana Fadnis, already apprehensive of the growing power of Mahadji, considered that compliance of this understanding would lead to the addition or extension of Mahadji's influence in Gujarat. So with the assistance of Gulabrao, Manaji's agent he effectually frustrated Govindrao's manoeuvers.

Govindrao's march to Baroda was then help up causing large scale desertions from his camp and ultimately only one hundred men remained with him. Mahadji Sindia, after the consideration of Govindrao's claims, and on account of

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6. Gense & Banaji, Vol.III. p.165.

representations and receipt of presents[7] from Manajirao agreed to drop his support to Govindrao. Thus Govindrao lost his case, and he had to postpone his march towards Baroda on some future date.

Manajirao seeks the English help :

Manajirao had not been sure of the support of the Poona Durbar and he had therefore started negotiations for help with the English. Manajirao, his claims being superseded and forseeing a struggle with Govindrao had asked Bombay Government for mediation through Mr. Malet, the British President at Poona. He had also asked for armed support on the basis of the treaty of Kundhela of 1780.[8] Mr. Malet was of opinion that there was some justification for English interference even though that treaty had been superseded by the treaty of Salbai in 1782. On the ground of expediency as well he thought that support to Manaji would enable the English power to promote the independence of Maratha chiefs against the authority of the Peshwa. Further he advised the Bombay Government that the stipulation of the treaty of Salbai for the preservation of its integrity certainly furnished reason for interference.[9]

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7. H.S.B.S.R. Vol.III, letters 92 & 93.
8. Gense & Banaji Vol.III.p.176.
9. Ibid.p.180.

But direct intervention was also difficult because Manaji had no issue and after Manaji's death, the headship of the Gaekwad family was likely to pass to Govindrao or his sons. In such case the Poona Government would be immensely benefited.

The British due to these considerations maintained good relations with Manajirao but any commitments were not made, and the British scrupulously avoided involving themselves in the affairs of the Gaekwad brothers.

Manajirao's Financial relations with Poona :

Manajirao had been in 1790 assured by Nana Fadnis of non-interference in their family feud, yet his relations with the Poona Durbar remained disturbed. Navli Gavli, Manajirao's agent at Poona, in his letter dated January 2, 1792 to his master, informed him that Nana Fadnis and Baba Phadke were pressing for the payment of overdue instalments from Baroda.[10] Manajirao inspite of his good intention was not in a position to pay, as he had pressing difficulties at hom. He wrote to Nana Fadnis and Baba Phadke informing them of the reasons for his inability to pay the dues in his letter dated February 24, 1792. They were (1) heavy size of the amounts required to be defrayed; (2) Financial crises being felt by the State due to scanty rainfall and

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10. His.Sel.Baroda State Vol.III. letter No.59 of 29-3-92.

(3) Ismail Beg's expedition, which had sapped and dislocated all the sources of income. Inspite of such difficulties Manaji promised the payment of the instalments due[11] at the earliest.

Nana Fadnis regularly and repeatedly asked for the payment.[12] By October 1792 Manajirao had already paid rupees twenty lakhs despite many difficulties.[13] But Nana Fadnis was not satisfied and even threatened Manajirao[14] is case further payment were not made. Nana Fadnis however rarely took note to protect Baroda from either his own officers in Gujarat or from the English Company in Gujarat.

Manajirao's administrative relations with Poona :

Manajirao was then repeated compalined to the Peshwa for the harassment done by Peshwa's officers at Ahmedabad, Dabhoi, Petlad, Dholka, Surat etc. He had special grievences against Aba Selukar, the Peshwa's Officer at Ahmedabad and he saught the help of Nana Fadnis against Aba Selukar for removing the cause of grievence.[15] on the otherside Peshwa's Officer at Bhalod and Navapur requested Manajirao on June 6, 1792 to restore the property carried away by the Bhils residing in Baroda territories. The Peshwa also did not move for the Gaekwad State when the Navab of Surat repudiated the claims of Gaekwad in the revenues of Surat.[16]

11. Ibid.Letters 63-64,65.
12 Ibid. letters.69,70,73 of 30-3-92.
13. Ibid. letter No.101.
14. Ibid letter No.104 of 25-11-1792.
15. Ibid letter No.75 of 17-7-1792.
16. Secrete Public Department,Bombay Govt.letter dated 8th March 1790.

The partisans of Govindrao Gaekwad were also appealing to Mahadji Sindia to support Govindrao's claim on the Baroda Gadi. Mahadji Sindia was very powerful at Poona, and so Manajirao had to keep him and Nana Fadnis in good humour by giving valuable presents and by maintaining good relations.[17] The Poona authorities were often compalining to Manajirao for the non-payment of the dues and for the non-fulfilment of the agreement signed by Manajirao. He was also asked for the payment of Govindrao Gaekwad's expenses and of debts to creditors[18] made by him. Manajirao, after a few days of illness suddenly died on July 26, 1793,[19] leaving Govindrao to claim the Gadi of Baroda. Manajirao was recognised twice as Sena-Khas-Khel within a short period of three years. He was not in a position to satisfy Nana Fadnis for money, though in a short period of his regime he had paid more than fifty lakhs of rupees.

Govindrao Gaekwad - 1793 - 1800 :

Manajirao's death brought a turn in the wheel of fortune in favour of disheartened Govindrao. Three sons of Damajirao, Sayajirao, Fatehsingrao and Manajirao, who had contested with Govindrao for the Gadi of Baroda had passed away, hence no one was left to contest Govindrao's claim to the headship of the Gaekwad family.

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17. His.Sel.Baroda State letters. 97,98,105.
18. Ibid letter No.108 of 20-12-1792.
19. Ibid letter No.116 of 26-3-1793.

Govindrao had been recognised as Sena-Khas-Khel by the Peshwas several times before 1793. He was helped at one time or other by powerful persons like Raghunathrao, Tukoji Holkar, Mahadji Sindia and his uncle Malharrao of Kadi. He himself was a good commander still however partly due to the power politics at Poona and Partly due to ill-luck, he had never been the ruler of Baroda.

Previous recognitions of Govindrao's claims by the Poona authorities :

Govindrao was born of Damajirao's senior wife. He was younger than Sayajirao but he was recognised as Sena-Khas-Khel for the first time by Peshwa Madhavrao in 1768 on the death of Damajirao and was accepted as a successor to the Gadi of Baroda. Then Govindrao had paid a nazar of twenty lakhs of rupees to Peshwa Madhavrao. Nevertheless for a period of three years Govindrao did not go to Baroda due to the opposition of his step-brothers Sayajirao and Fatehsingrao. Due to the absence of Govindrao at Baroda Sayajirao and Fatehsingrao strengthened their position at Baroda.

Peshwa Madhavrao later on accepted Sayajirao as Sena-Khas-Khel and Govindrao was deprived of his rights to the Gadi. In 1771 Sayajirao was proclaimed as a ruler of Baroda and Fatehsingrao was recognised as his Mutalik (Deputy).

Govindrao was recognised as Sena-Khas-Khel by Peshwa Raghunathrao in 1773, after presenting a nazar of rupees ten lakhs to the Peshwa. Not only that but Govindrao was helped by Raghunathrao with men and ammunations and allowed to proceded to Baroda with a large army. His success however was out short by the Ministers at Poona who after deposing Raghunathrao deprived Govindrao of his title of Sena-Khas-Khel in 1775.

Fatehsingrao during the first Maratha war, signed the treaty of Baroda with Raghunathrao and Govindrao being desreted by his ally went over to the Ministerial party. In 1775 the title of Sena-Khas-Khel and Saranjam was bestowed upon Govindrao.

The treaty of Purandhar in 1776, annuled all the former treaties of the Bombay Government with the Marathas, so Fatehsingrao was again recognised as Sena-Khas-Khel by the Poona Government and Govindrao was disappointed.

Govindrao with the help of Tukoji Holkar in 1777 was in a position to persuade the ministers at Poona and it was decided by them to accept Govindrao as Sena-Khas-Khel. But Fatehsingrao give rupees eighteen[20] lakhs to the ministers and the Subedari of Baroda was continued to Sayajirao.

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20. V.S.Khare : Itihasik lekh sangrah part IX.p.4486.

After the death of Fatehsingrao in 1789, Govindrao tried his best to secure the title of Sena-Khas-Khel. But Manajirao promised to pay rupees seventy-five lakhs to the Poona Durbar[21] of which he paid rupees thirty-six lakhs on the spot and so Govindrao's claims were overlooked.

During Manajirao's regime, Govindrao's attempts to secure the title never ceased. In 1790, Govindrao promised to pay one crore rupees to the Poona ministers if he was helped with 3000 Gardis and 7000 horsemen and presented with dress and title of Sena-Khas-Khel. Unfortunately there was none to lend Govindrao this huge sum so to his disappointment the aid was postponed.

Govindrao continued his efforts by the help of Mahadji Sindia and he secured the title of Sena-Khas-Khel.Mahadji helped him with men and money but Govindrao could not make the best use of opportunity. He proved inefficient and there was desertation of the army soon. This time Govindrao's plans failed partly due to the timely promises of rupees fifty lakhs[22] from Manajirao to Poona Ministers.

Again in 1792, he was given a dress by the help of Mahadji Sindia, on condition of giving rupees one crors in cash and territories[23] yelding a revenue of rupees fourteen

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21. Ibid. page.4599

22. Ibid. page 4599

23. Ibid. page 4628

lakhs i.e. one-fourth of Gaekwad's land of fifty six lakhs a year. Before the Poona Government could conclude the treaty Manajirao died. Nana Fadnis was already negotiating with Govindrao and he appointed, an officer named Gabaji Ballal[24] as the Manager of the Baroda State affairs. Govindrao and his mother were directed to go to Poona where he was detained by Nana Fadnis till he signed the agreement. (see Appendix VIII).

The Criticism of the agreement :

Even a cursary persual of the agreement reveals that heavy obligations were forced upon Govindrao. The policy of Nana Fadnis was harsh and exorbitant which ultimately led to the ruin of the prosperity of the Gaekwad family. The Nazar was practically the largest of all so far charged to any of the Gaekwads. The relativesof the rulers were protected and they were to enjoy all their rights.

There is also an innovation as regards the appointment of officers on the important posts in Baroda. Nana Fadnis acting as Deputy of the Peshwa claimed to make the post of officers permanent in the family of State servants. This was analogous of the post of Peshwa under the kings of Satara.

Nana Fadnis did not like that the Maratha Sardars should act independently of Poona. It seems that Nana wanted to

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24. Ibliot : The rulers of Baroda Pp.77-78.

reduce the authority of the Gaekwad as nominal rulers and the heriditar officers might be the real administrators. These officers would bring naturally looking to Poona Durbar for their stand and thus the Poona Darbar would be in know of the ins and outs of the State by the inclusion of this article in the memorandum Nana got the right of appointing Officers in the Government of Baroda.

The personal presents of the elephants, the horses, and Mewels were made to Govindrao. This is the first time when the Peshwa made such demands to the Gaekwad ruler. Govindrao in his eagerness to become the ruler made an oath and swore to make over whatever money, jewels and even clothes might be in the treasury of the fort of Baroda. Thus Govindrao's reign marks a turning point in the fortunes of the Baroda State, and the sovereignty of the Gaekwads.

In addition Govindra o Gaekwad promised to surrender to the Peshwa[26], the Gaekwad's share in Surat and Surat Aththavisi, in the neighbourhood of Surat. Govindrao Gaekwad also surrendered the Gaekwad's share of the chauth of Surat. After signing this memorandum Govindrao was alloed to go to Baroda and he ascended the Gadi on December 11th 1793.[27] The cession of Surat Athtthavisi and Surat Chauth to the Peshwa was lookedupon by the British Company as a

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26. Elliot. The rulers of Baroda. pp. 77-78.

27. Grant Duff : Vol.III.p.95.

dangerous development for them, the action thus invited the British interference.

The British interferene on the Cession of Govindrao to the Peshwa :

There was a dispute between the Nawab of Surat and Fatehsingrao Gaekwad on the question of the payment of the tribute. Fatehsingrao had saught the mediation of the English as the Nawab was protected by them. This question was not duly attended to as they were aware of the growing weakness of the Gaekwad rulers. After the death of Fatehsingrao, Manajirao had also demanded for the early settlement of that dispute but the reply of the Nawab was mostly evasive and not sufficient justice was done to the Gaekwad in the revenues of Surat and district of Surat Aththavisi.

Nana Fadnis had found that the English were misuing their position by which their revenues were increasing, while that of the Marathas were decreasing. In order to check the ambitions of the English in Surat Nana Fadnis desired to acquire the Gaekwad's Chauth of Surat and the district to acquire the Gaekwad's Chauth of Surat and the district of Surat Aththavisi. With this in mind in the settlement with Govindrao he obtained both Surat Aththavisi and Surat Chauth for the Peshwa.

This action was seen by the British as being detrimental to their interest so Mr. Malet, the British resident at Poona,

immediately lodged a protest with Poona Government on the ground that the dismemberment of the Gaekwad State was contrary to the eighth article of the treaty of Salbai.[28] The British thought that the admission of the Peshwa's power was dangerous and they took all possible steps to check the transfer. The Nawab of Surat was asked by the English not to recognise the change.[29]

In this case Resident Malet exerted such pressure that the Poona Government immediately withdrew their demands and the Gaekwad's territory was saved for the time being.

Govindrao was thus allowed to have the absolute possession of the territory but he had to face the risings of his son Kanhojirao and his cousin the Kadi Jagirdar Malharrao, son of Khanderao. Govindrao had to undergo lot of trouble from, 1793 to 1797 and at the cost of great expenses he could imprison his on and defeat his cousing. By the earlier agreements the Peshwa was bound to help the ruling member of the Gaekwad family, against the other

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28. Gense and Banaji. Vol.III p. 151.

29. Ibid. p.183.

disobedient members of the family but the Peshwa did not help Govindrao, as the court of Poona was itself unsettled The relations of the Gaekwad and the Peshwa were greatly affected by the changes at Poona.

Circumstances at the court of Poona affecting Govindrao :

Peshwa Madhavrao Narayanrao, was a minor so his minister Nana Fadnis was at the summit of his prosperity. Mahadji Sindia, an able commander of the Peshwa, in North India died in 1794 and his son Daulatrao Sindia was in charge of Maratha Power in North. Other Maratha Sardars like Tukoji Holkar a and Raghunji Bhosle listened only to Nana Fadnis.

The policy of Nana Fadnis was resented by the Maratha leaders. Peshwa Madhavrao Narayanrao was greatly dissatisfied because of the servere and rigid treatment.[30] of Nana. The Peshwa was eager to see his cousin Bajirao, son of Raghunathrao. Nana Fadnis had great doubts about Bajirao, as Nana Fadnis was always hostile to Raghunathrao. Nana Fadnis came to know about the secret negotiations of these cousins and he rebuked Peshwa Madhavrao, and all his actions and negotiations were put under a strict watch. Peshwa Madhavrao being immature and emotional was dejected and

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30 Grant Duff. Vol.III. p.126.

on October 25, 1795 deliberately threw himself from the terrace of his palace. He survived from two days and he breathed his last on October 27, 1795.[31] The death of Madhavrao Peshwa has affected greatly our problem.

After a great revolution, Bajirao, son of Raghunathrao, the first cousion of the Peshwa, was given the investitures of the Peshwa on December 4, 1796. This change of the government in favour of Bajirao created ill-feeling and distrust among the leading members of the Maratha State. Bajirao was obliged by Daulatrao Sindia in getting this Masnud of the Peshwa and Bajirao had agreed to pay large sums of money to Sindia. So Bajirao needed money badly. Govindrao claimed friendship with Bajirao and expected kind treatment from him.

Govindrao's relations with the Peshwa Bajirao :

Govindrao and his father Damajirao were closely associated with Raghunathrao and they were in favour of Raghunathrao. Govindrao was taken as a prisoner long with Raghunathrao in 1768 after the battle of Dhodap. Madhavrao I suspected him and Govindrao's title of Sena-Khas-Khel was given to Sayajirao in 1771 though he was accepted as Sena-Khas-Khel for three years.

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31. Sardesai. Vol.III. p.307.

Raghunathrao when he was in the authority of the Peshwa, had helped Govindrao. Govindrao was accepted as Sena-Khas-Khel and he was helped with men and ammunitions by Raghunathrao. Govindrao had his rise and fall as the rise and fall of Raghunathrao. After the first Maratha war Raghunathrao was given a pension from Poona Durbar in the same way Govindrao was also given a pension from the Baroda Government. Thus the fate of Govindrao was to some exten followed that of Raghunathrao and the latter in his turn treated Govindrao, his loyal follower, as his son. On This basis Govindrao counted much when Bajirao was declared as the Peshwa.

Govindrao in July 1795 reminded Amrutrao (the adopted son of Raghunathrao) and Bajirao, to that Raghoba had declared in the presence of many, that Govindrao was for him just like his son Amrutrao.[32] In his letter he requested Bajirao Peshwa to act according to the promise of Raghunathrao. The purpose of writing this letter to the sons of Raghunathrao, when Bajirao was the accepted Peshwa, might be for seeking the favour and goodwill of the Peshwa.

Bajirao's father Raghunathrao had been getting the pension of Rs. 25,000 per month and he along with his family, was in custody for the long time. Naturally Bajirao had

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32. H.S.B.S. Book III letter. 39 of July 1795.

nothing to pay Daulatrao but promised against his help. Bajrao after getting Peshwaship had to pay in cash to Daulatrao Sindia so among other he demanded money from Govindrao Gaekwad.

Bajirao Peshwa's demands on Govindrao Gaekwad :

Govindrao had agreed in 1793 to pay enormous sums to the Poona Government before he started for Baroda and now he was reminded of them. Uhthoff, the British resident at Poona wrote to Sir John Shore, the Governor General of India on March 3, 1797, On the first instant arrived here Rouba[33] (Ravaji Appaji) one of the principle ministers of Govindrao Gaekwad, charged with the settlement of his masters affairs with the government." The resident wrote that daulatrao Sindia was extremely importunate with Rauba for the liquidation of his demands on Govindrao Gaekwad. According to the resident both the Peshwa and the Sindia were much in want of cash and had recourse to the most oppressive exactions.[34] On some further occassions he wrote that Daulatrao Sindia was to get two crores of rupees for helping Bajirao and Bajirao had given anassignment of rupees twentyfive lakhs on Govindrao Gaekwad.[35]

For this sum Rouba the agent of Govindrao Gaekwad at Poona, was subjected[36] to the embarrassment, mortification

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33. Poona Residency correspondence. Poona affairs Vol.VI, letter No.2 of 3-3-1797.
34. Ibid letter No.11 of May 5, 1797.
35. Ibid letter No.20 of 26th Aug.1747.
36. Ibid letter No.82 of 9-1-98.

and disgrace by Bajirao Peshwa. This sum was paid by Govindrao in 1797. In this year a memorandum[37] of the annual payments to be made by Govindrao Gaekwad was prepared and within three years Govindrao had already paid more than 80 lakhs of rupees by way of tribute, military service and rupees 25 lakhs towards the expenses of the army of Daultrao Sindia. Moreover a sum of Rs.39,82,780 still remained to be paid by Govindrao Gaekwad. In this memorandum, the Peshwa had asked Govindrao to keep three thousand horse and in case of need four thousand horse ready to assist him in his projected expendition against the Nizam. The Peshwa, here had demanded five elephants for his personal use and the jewels worth of one lakhs of rupees. Govindrao was also reminded of his debts to the Bankers of Poona.

This memorandum was affected much to Govindrao's interest, as it demanded that all the dues should be paid within two years without fail. The memorandum also stated that the relations in the city of Ahmedabad were also to be included as they had been settled in the time of Peshwa Madhavrao I and if there were any innovations those were to be abolished. Peshwa Bajirao was in need of money and he desired a regular income from Gujarat. The Peshwa was

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37. C.V.Aitchison, treaties, engagements and sanads Vol.VI, Appendix No.VII, of 1797.

not getting sufficient revenues from the Peshwa's share in Gujarat. So Bajirao thought of farming his share in Gujarat.

The administration of the Peshwa's share in Gujarat :

The Maratha dominion in Gujarat was partitioned by Balaji Bajirao in 1752. Since then the Peshwa's share in Gujarat was managed by the Peshwa himself. The settlement made by Peshwa Madhavrao was regarded as final. The British company had seized some of the Peshwa's territores during the first Maratha war. By the treaty of Salbai 1782 the territories conquered from the Peshwas and the Gaekwads were restored to respective powers. During the days of Manajirao the Peshwa's share in Gujarat was managed by Aba Shelukar. The relations of Aba Shelukar and the Gaekwad in Gujarat were not happy.

Aba Shelukar was one of the principle persons who were trusted by Nana Fadnis. Govindrao Gaekwad had also complained against Aba Shelukar to Nana Fadnis but no action was taken by Peshwa.

In the beginning of the regime of Peshwa Bajirao his brother Chimaji[38] was put in charge of the Government of Gujarat. This appointment was only nominal as Chimaaji was only 10 years old. So Aba Shelukar was continued as his deputy in order to perform all active duties in Gujarat.

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38. Grant Duff. Vol.III. p.145.

Nana Fadnis was not fully trusted by Bajirao Peshwa or Daulatrao Sindia and he was seized by Daulatrao Sindia. He was asked to furnish a bond for ten lakhs of rupees. Aba Shelukar gave a bond of security for ten lakhs of rupees and Nana Fadnis was released. Thus Aba Shelukar was taken up as the partisam of Nana Fadnis.

The appointment of Aba Shelukar as a Deputy Governor in Gujarat was not liked by Bajirao so he secretly wrote to Govindrao to expel him from Gujrat.[39] Aba Shelukar was short of money for ransome and he began to harass the people of Baroda territories,[40] for money. So hostilities between Govindrao and the Pushwa's officer followed. In the beginning of which Aba Shelukar was successful in the war of plunder and extortion.

Bajirao Peshwa had written to Govindrao that the later should prevent the collection of dues by Shelukar's men. But Govindrao was not helped by the Peshwa. So Govindrao in his distress asked the help of the English. He was willing to cede his share of revenue of Surat to English.

Govindrao had also to contest and fight against his son Kannojirao, his cousin Malharao, and Aba Shelukar but he was never helped by the Peshwa and due to the treaty of Salbai of 1782 the English also did not come to his help. Shortly

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39. S.P.D.Vol.46.letters No.46 & 47 dated April 4th & 8th 1800.

40. M.S.B.S.R.Vol.VI.letter No.36 of 30-1-1798.

afterwards Shelukar was defeated and imprisoned. Govindrao had to sacrifice men and huge sum of money to carry out the orders of Bajirao Peshwa. But no concession was given to Govindrao for his expenses. Ahmedabad was thus conquered to Govindrao and the Peshwa instead of appointing another deputy at Ahmedabad, granted his share of the revenue of Gujarat in farm to Govindrao.

Govindrao gets Sanad for the share of the Peshwa in Gujarat :

Govindrao obtained from Peshwa Bajirao a Sanad by which Ahmedabad revenues were leased nominally to his illegitimate, favourate son Bhagvantrao but really to Govindrao himself at five lakhs a year for a term of five years. This farm included all the Peshwa's territories in Kathiawad and Gujarat. It also included tribute of Sorath rulers. The Peshwa's share in the revenues of the city of Ahmedabad and custom duties in Cambay was also included. Daulatrao Shindia[41] had a demand of ten lakhs of rupees and so he was granted the proceeds of the farm for first two years.

This sanad proved of great advantage to both the Peshwa and the Gaekwad. During the Subedari of Aba Shelukar these areas hardly furnished a revenue of three lakhs to the Peshwa. Now by this arrangement he could get five lakhs without any expenses.

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41. Gazetter of the Baroda State Vol.I, Chapter VII pp. 484-85.

To the Gaekwad family it was worth more than to any other power as its own northern possessions were closely interspersed with those of the Peshwa. Thus the whole country north of the Mahi was placed under one authority. Really speaking Govindrao eliminated the authority of the Peshwa from Gujarat by acquiring on good terms as a farm of the Peshwa's share in Gujarat.

Thus Govindrao was successful but he had already paid nearly eighty lakhs of rupees to the Peshwa before 1798 and he added five lakhs more per year as tribute to the Peshwa. With this heavy extortations of the Peshwa, the Baroda State was under great financial stress. Govindrao expired on September 19, 1800,[42] and history repeated itself again as his death was followed by fresh disturbances for power.

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42. Gense & Banaji.Vol.III.P.245.