

STATEMENT

The present thesis is an attempt to study the relation between the Gaekwads of Baroda and the Peshwas of Poona - 1707-1818.

This period is the formative period in the history of Modern India. In its first phase, it witnessed the break up of the Mughal Empire and during the middle and the last phases it saw the rise and decline of the Peshwas and other Maratha chiefs. The lack of a strong central power prompted and enabled the adventurers to exercise political power. The Marathas under their different leaders led incursions into the imperial dominions and overran the whole country both north and south of the river Narmada.

The study mainly focusses on political events of the period. During the early part of the eighteenth century the Marathas entered Gujarat under the leadership of Dabhades and Gaekwads. To understand the relationship between these two and through them to Maratha political order especially the relation between the Maratha King and the Peshwa, it is necessary to trace briefly the antecedents of these families and their rise in the Maratha Power system. This I have explained in my first chapter.

Uneasy relationship between Baroda and Poona was on account of many reasons. Mainly they are :

- i) Shaky power system in Gujarat.
- ii) Ill-defined mutual positions and shifting alliances,
- iii) Respective shares in Gujarat Revenue,
- iv) Gaekwad's own ambition and family faction-fights,
- v) Influence of other powers, and
- vi) Fast changing set up of the Maratha Confederacy.

Gujarat Politics in the first half of the eighteenth century was in a very confused state. Mughal empire was disintegrating and powerful chiefs of the empire were on their way of establishing their own independent states. As later Mughals were weak rulers, the real power lay in the hands of these chiefs.

By that time Marathas had established their sovereignty and were in a process of expansion. Thus it was evident that interest of the Marathas and the Mughals clashed. Still, as the circumstances were, they compromised with the situation. Taking advantages of the weakness of Central authority at Delhi, foreigners, viz., English, French, Dutch and Portuguese were also trying to establish themselves.

Maratha incursions reached upto Kathiawad and Sorath by 1711. They found the local system of 'Mulukigiri', or the system of collecting revenue by raids, more convenient and advantageous than incurring the expenses of permanently occupying the peninsula with a large army to manage its

administration.

Subsequently in 1716, Khanderao Dabhade, who was created Senapati of the Maratha army and who for many years subsisted his followers in Gujarat and Kathiawad, got the formal authority from Chhatrapati Shahu for levying the tribute in Gujarat. Senapati authorised his lieutenant Damajirao Gaekwad to levy tribute in Gujarat on his behalf. Under the Gaekwads these incursions became an annual feature.

Shahu Chhatrapati encouraged his sardars to make simultaneous raids in Karnataka, Malwa and Gujarat, but did not clearly demarcate the areas in which the different sardars could operate. Peshwa Bajirao had all the forces and prestige of Chhatrapati Shahu behind him and he sent his own military expedition in Gujarat. His main object was financial and territorial gain. This is one of the causes which led to the tension between the Gaekwad, who was already there, and the Peshwa.

Damajirao's nephew and successor Pilajirao Gaekwad had pushed the Mughal forces out of Gujarat and in 1734 had captured the town of BARODA and had established himself permanently at BARODA. He was collecting tributes from Gujarat and Kathiawad when Peshwa Bajirao sent his own agent Udaji Pawar to collect the revenue of the Gujarat district. Thus a confusing power struggle ensued in the Maratha Confederacy. By this action he created dissatisfaction among his own officers like Kanthaji Kadam Dande who too now came down from

Malwa in Gujarat and soon joined Pilajirao. Both of them joined their forces against Udaji Pawar who was driven out of Gujarat after a heavy defeat. It was a sordid affair.

As there was great jealousy among Mughal officers at this time in Gujarat, the situation was exploited by the two Maratha leaders Kanthaji Kadam Bande and Pilajirao Gaekwad. These Maratha leaders entered into negotiations with rival parties and decided which side was beneficial. Not only that but they changed their sides with great speed and by plunder they enriched themselves. Hamid Khan, Subdear of Gujarat and Nizam's nominee had promised Chauth to both the Sardars, and he together with these two Maratha chiefs defeated and slain first Shujaat Khan, the governor of Ahmedabad and then his brother Rustom Ali, the governor of Surat. For the help he had obtained from the Marathas, Hamidkhan rewarded Kanthaji and Pilaji. The right to collect Chauth in the territory North of the Mahi river was given to Kanthaji, while Pilaji got a similar right in the territory South of the Mahi.

The defeat of Rustam Ali was considered as very serious and Sarbulandkhan came to Gujarat. He was in a position to defeat Maratha leaders but not in one to drive them out of Gujarat. At this time Peshwa Bajirao approached Sarbulandkhan and requested him to assign Chauth of Gujarat to Marathas. Abaji Trimbak, Mutalik of Pant Pradhan had settled with

Sarbulandkhan for the surrender of the Chauthai and Sardesh-mukhi of Prant Gujarat and Malwa. The authorities in Delhi were not ready to sanction the arrangement of Sarbulandkhan, So he was recalled and a new Subedar was appointed. The Nizam to help Hamidkhan carried on his nefarious activities of tempting the various Maratha Chiefs such as Pratinidhi Chandra-sen Jadhav, Nimbalkar, Dabhade and Pilaji Gaekwad. Thus he expected to weaken the cause of Bajirao. Pilaji Gaekwad and Kanthaji Kadam Bande joined their forces and they defeated Bajirao's agent Udaji Power. He was driven out of Gujarat.

Pilajirao, the founder of the Gaekwad family in Gujarat was appointed as a Mutalik or Deputy of Yeshwantrao Dabhade. He was given the title of Sena-Khas-Khel or the commander of the special band or the leader of the sovereign band. The Senapati and the Mutalik had to manage the entire revenue of Gujarat. Pilaji had all the authority of Senapati as Yashwantrao Dabhade was found to be of a feeble mind. Within a short period of two years, Pilajirao was assassinated in 1734. Due to the death of Pilajirao, Damajirao was required to take upon himself all his responsibilities.

Damajirao was soon accepted as Mutalik by Umabai, the mother of Yashwantrao. Damajirao in due course dreamt of being free from the domination of the Dabhade and the Peshwa and be the defect ruler of Gujarat. With this aim in view, outwardly he tried to maintain cordial relations with Peshwa Bajirao

but he always tried to limit the power and influence of the Peshwa in Gujarat.

To establish his equality with the Dabhade house Damajirao secured the title of Sena Khachel from Raja Shahu in 1736. In order to be free from the domination of the Peshwa Damajirao tried to cultivate good relations with foreign powers. To stabilise and strengthen his position in Gujarat he first of all won over many Maratha leaders and persuaded them to make Gujarat as their permanent residence. But the question was, 'will the Peshwa allow this to happen ? '

On the other hand the power and influence of Peshwa Bajirao had increased very much. Peshwa Bajirao and his followers had run over central India. This rising power of the Peshwa was looked with an eye of suspicion by Damajirao. Bajirao won a great victory over the Nizam in 1728. Both Peshwa and Damajirao were jealous of each other. Damajirao looked for an opportunity to measure swords with the Peshwa and his party. This basic antipathy of each other was the root cause of the subsequent conflicts between the Peshwas and the Gaekwads. The death of Bajirao Peshwa in 1740 gave an opportunity to Damajirao to do what he desired for a long time.

In 1749 Shahu Chhatrapat died childless and there were intrigues for the succession. One Ramraja was adopted and crowned as Chhatrapati. Tarabai tried to dominate the Peshwa

by Keeping Ramraja under her thumb. Within no time hostility had arisen between Tarabai and Peshwa Balaji Bajirao. The Gaekwad supported Tarabai's Party. He advanced rapidly towards Poona with army but was defeated and confined in Poona.

Peshwa Balaji Bajirao knew how difficult it was to win Gujarat from the Mughals without the help of the Gaekwad. So the two chiefs made an arrangement. Damajirao was required to agree to pay to the Peshwa ten lakhs of rupees as arrears of tribute from Gujarat and to share equally all his possessions and future conquests. Financial aspects were kept in view and the territory of Gujarat was partitioned between the Gaekwads and the Peshwa. There after Damajirao changed his attitude towards the Peshwa and he helped the Peshwa not only in Gujarat but in other parts of India also.

The death of Damajirao introduced a new factor in the already troubled relations between Poona and Baroda. As a result of the succession dispute among his sons, the Bombay Government was enabled to have an increasingly influential role in the affairs of Baroda.

During his life time Damajirao had come in contact with British mainly because of his hold on the main trading centres of Gujarat. The British in order to protect themselves and to get their goods safely transported, kept this local ruler in good humour by large presents. But the succession dispute almost

led to the invitation being given to the English to interfere in the domestic problems of the Gaekwad.

According to the Hindu law the succession could be claimed by both Govindrao and Sayajirao. In order to get the claims established it was necessary for the rival claimants to secure the title and authority from the Chhatrapati of Satara. Consequently the power of deciding between rival brothers was placed in the hands of Peshwa for it was he, who exercised authority in the name of the Chhatrapati.

Madhavrao, the shrewd ruler that he was, seized the opportunity of weakening the family of his rival Damajirao by putting one claimant against another, when Damajirao died Govindrao was in prison at Poona. Being close to the Peshwa, after negotiations agreed to ratify the treaty of 1768. Govindrao recognised as Sena-Khas-Khel. But he was not in a position to move towards Baroda. However, when Madhavrao learnt that there was dispute for succession he did not like. So Peshwa Madhavrao sought a compromise.

The compromise was that Govindrao was to be allowed the title of Sena-Khas-Khel but on condition of his being satisfied with a small Jagir at Padra. Sayajirao was now proclaimed Sena-Khas-Khel. He being of weak mind, Fatehsing was appointed his Mutalik or deputy. Sayajirao had to spent more than fifty lakhs of rupees by way of fine,, arrears and Nazar. An agreement was signed by Peshwa Madhavrao and Sayajirao Gaekwad in 1772.



Fatehsing was very much disgusted with Madhavrao and there was the feeling of distrust towards the Poona Court. With a view of sovering his relations with the Poona Court he made proposals through the chief of Surat Factory, to the Governor of Bombay. The English did not accept these proposals of Fatehsingh as they feared that the proposals would lead them to a conflict with the Marathas. But at the same time they thought it much for their interest to keep on good terms with Fatehsingh. The English and Fatehsingh signed a treaty in 1773. This treaty is very important regarding the relations of Gaekwad and the Peshwa.

Peshwa Madhavrao died in 1772 and his younger brother Narayanrao became the Peshwa. With in a short period of (ten) nine months Narayanrao was murdered and Raghunathrao became the Peshwa. Raghunathrao was generally suspected of being a chief instigator of the plot of the murder. In 1774 Raghoba was deposed from power and chesed by the ministerial army of Poona. This scrable for power at Poona affected the relations of the Peshwa and the Gaekwad too much for a period of seven years.

Fatehsinghrao died in 1769. His younger brother Manajirao assumed the charge of regency on behalf of the Sayajirao. Now he required the sanction of the Peshwa. Govindrao was at Poona and he again placed his claims before the Peshwas. Peshwa Madhavrao Narayanrao was a minor and Nana Phadnis 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 Darbar from 1790 to 1800 towards Baroda made them appear as if they were the real owners of the Baroda State.

Govindrao's attempts were futile for Manajirao presented a huge Nazar and promised to pay Fatehsingrao's arrears. The title of Sena-Khas-Khel was conferred on Manajirao by the Poona Darbar.

Manajirao had been assured by Nana Phadnis of noninterference in their family feud, yet his relations with the Poona Darbar remained disturbed. Nana Phadnis regularly and repeatedly asked for the payment. Manajirao paid rupees twenty lakhs despite many difficulties. But Nana Phadnis was not satisfied and even threatened Manajirao in case further payment were not made.

The partisans of Govindrao Gaekwad were also appealing to Mahadji Sindhia to support Govindrao's claim on the Baroda Gadi. Mahadji was very powerful at Poona and so Manajirao had to keep him and Nana in good humour by giving valuable presents and by maintaining good relations. Manajirao was also asked for the payment of Govindrao's expenses. Manajirao suddenly died in 1793, leaving Govindrao to claim the Gadi of Baroda.

Really speaking after Manajirao there was no question of the succession to the Gadi as Manajirao had died childless.

But Govindrao was detained by Nana Phadhis till he signed the agreement. This agreement proved disastrous to the interest of Baroda Government. Govindrao accepted this agreement as he was impatient to be the ruler. the title of Sena-khas-khel Shamaner Bahadur was granted to Govindrao. He ascended the Gadi in 1793, But he had to undergo lot of trouble from 1793 to 1797. The relations of the Gaekwad and the Peshwa were generally affected by the changes at Poona.

Peshwa Madhavrao Narayanrao was minor, so his minister Nana Phadnis was at the summit of his prosperity. Mahadji Sindhia died in 1794. Other Maratha Sardars like Tukoji Holkar and Raghuji Bhosle listened only to Nana Phadnis. The death of Madhavrao Narayanrao Peshwa had affected greatly our problem.

After a great revolution Bajirao was given the Peshwaship in 1796. This change of the government in favour of Bajirao created ill feeling and distrust among the leading members of the Maratha State. Peshwa Bajirao was in need of money and he desired a regular income from Gujarat. With heavy extortations of the Peshwa, the Baroda State was under great financial stress. Govindrao expired in 1800. The history repeated itself again as his death was followed by fresh disturbances for power.

Anandrao was the eldest of all and he was acknowledged as Govindrao's successor. According to the tradition the ruler of Baroda had to get his claims recognised by the Peshwa.

At this time this formality was not observed. Anandrao Gaekwad did not pay either the succession fees or subsequently the usual annual tributes and the expenses for the military services. Consequently the attention of Peshwa Bajirao was drawn towards Baroda.

The treaty of Bassein and the definitive treaty of 1805 completely changed the nature of the Gaekwad-Peshwa relations. Their relations after 1805 were not cordial. So there was ground for vigorous assertion of the British authority in Gujarat.

Peshwa Bajirao II surrendered to the British in 1818 and the family of the Gaekwad, was freed from the Peshwas authority for ever. Due to the fall of the Peshwa all the territories of the Peshwa were annexed by the British. No additional territory was granted to the Gaekwad for their aid by the British. Thus the relation of the Gaekwad and the Peshwa ceased to exist with the fall of the family of the Peshwa in 1818. The Gaekwad called in the British to throw off his yoke of Poona Government but in doing so, first made himself completely self dependent and then subservient to the new rulers of the land i.e., the British. What were his gains in doing so ? This here look into. All the Gaekwad got was the end of the tribute of four lakhs which the Gaekwad had to pay to Peshwa and a Nazar. The Gaekwad family was freed from the control of the Peshwa but at the same time the British desired the expansion of their own power.

The lease of Ahmedabad was handed over to the British Company. The British also insisted that the subsidiary forces at Baroda should be increased and the additional expenditure should be met from Ahmedabad and the tribute from Kathiawad. The cession of this rich city of Ahmedabad was coveted by the company and it got it from the Gaekwad. In order to consolidate the British possessions in Gujarat there were exchanges of territories which were recently acquired from the Peshwa with these of the Gaekwad. These exchanges were made on the principle of the location of the places. These exchanges consolidated British possessions in Gujarat.

### CHAPTERISATION

#### Chapter I : THE EARLY CONTACT.

This introductory chapter provides the background to the main contents of the dissertation. It gives a brief historical account highlighting the early contact. It also deals with the Dabhade and Gaekwad families, its origin, early antecedents and emergence in Gujarat.

#### Chapter II : CONFLICTS AND DIFFERENCES OF THE GAEKWAD WITH THE PRESHWAS

This chapter splits into four broad sections :

(A) It deals with the points of conflicts between Gaekwad and Peshwa, Damajirao's plans were to be free from the

domination of the Peshwa and the Dabhade and to be defecto ruler of Gujarat. With this aim in view, outwardly he tried to maintain cordial relations with Peshwa Bajirao but he always tried to limit the power and influence of the Peshwa in Gujarat. Besides he maintained good relations with non-Maratha Powers. He tried to secure the rights of the collection of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from different parts of Gujarat which were at one time or the other assigned to different Maratha chiefs. Damajirao was to pay one-half of the Chauth and revenue derived from Gujarat to Shahu Raja - to the Peshwa Damajirao generally resented this and his attempts were to be free, if not from the king at least from the Peshwa. All these activities of Damajirao were directed towards the unpleasant relation between the Gaekwad and the Peshwa.

(B) It concentrates upon the two powerful personalities the two powerful personalities viz., Damajirao and Bajirao I. Both Bajirao and Damajirao were servants of Shahu Raja and they were driving at the common goal of expanding and strengthening the Maratha power. Both were thus obliged to maintain good relations and they did outwardly. The assumption of a superior authority by Peshwa Bajirao was always disliked by Damajirao and the successes of one other increased their internal jealousy.

(c) Vague nature of Poona Suzereignty: Peshwa Balaji Bajirao

demanding for the cession of half of Gujarat and for the payment of twenty five lakhs as an indemnity. Damajirao represented that he was only the Mutalik of Dabhade and had no authority for complying with what was asked. The peshwa suddenly invaded Damaji's Camp when he was quite unaware and looted his camp and captured two sons of Damajirao. Damajirao and his minister Ramchandra Baswant were imprisoned in Poona.

Damajirao longed for release from his imprisonment. Peshwa Balaji Bajirao very well knew how difficult it was to win Gujarat from the Mughals without the help of the Gaekwad as the two chiefs made an agreement. Damajirao required to agree to pay to the Peshwa fifteen lakhs of rupees as arrears of tribute from Gujarat, and to share equally all his possessions and future conquests. Financial points were kept in view and the territory of Gujarat was partitioned between the Gaekwad and the Peshwa.

(D) Role of women in Maratha politics. Shahu Chhatrapati died childless on December 15th, 1749. There were many supporters including Rani Sakvarbai, the senior most wife of Shahu for the protection of Shambhaji, Raja of Kolhapur, nearest relative of Shahu. But Shahu had debarred Sambhaji from coming to the throne of Satara. At the insistence of the aged queen Tarabai (wife of Rajaram) one Ramraja was adopted and crowned as Chhatrapati. Tarabai tried to dominate the Peshwa by keeping Ramraja under her thumb and within no time mutual hostility had

arisen between Tarabai and Peshwa Balaji. Tarabai's party was later on supported by Umadbai Dabhade and Damajirao Gaekwad for their personal reasons.

The Dabhades were reduced to insignificance and they were deprived of their estate and Subah of Gujarat. It was divided equally between the Gaekwad and the Peshwa. Umabai in her distress looked to Tarabai for help and the two ladies made a common cause. They raised a cry that Chhatrapati's Raj had been usurped by the Brahmins and they called all Maratha leaders to their help. The ladies wanted to rescue the Raja of Satara and all Maharashtra from the Power of Brahmins, they induced Damajirao to take the lead and head their cause. Damajirao was not slow to accept the invitation of Tarabai and Umabai and he advanced rapidly towards Poona with an army of 15,000 men. But Peshwa defeated Damajirao and captured two sons of Damaji's with Umabai and Yashvantrao Dabhade as prisoners. Damajirao and his minister Ramchandra Baswant were also imprisoned in Poona. This step of Peshwa gave a blow to all hopes of Tarabai, Umabai and their followers.

### Chapter III : THE ASSENDENCY OF FATEHSINGRAO IN BARODA AND GROWING POWER OF THE PESHWA.

The political situation after the death of Damajirao II became worst. How Govindrao and Sayajirao were prompted by the interested parties to further their claims is described in this



chapter. Among the outside intervention the attitude of the English, the position of the Poona Darbar and the Peshwas support in the succession dispute have discussed.

#### Chapter IV : THE CONTEST FOR PESHWASHIP AND ITS EFFECTS AT BARODA.

Chapter IV can also conveniently be divided into four phases viz., (1) Declining qualities of Peshwas, (2) increasing influence of powerful ministers, (3) Brahmin Maratha rivalry, and (4) Role of non-Maratha Officials.

The contest for the Peshwaship at Poona reveal a turning point in the contest between Govindrao and Fatehsingrao. It was a well-known fact that Peshwa Madhavrao by an order in 1771 had recognised Sayajirao and Fatehsingrao as the rightful rulers of Baroda. This order was revised by Peshwa Raghunathrao in 1773 and had accepted Govindrao as a rightful successor of Damajirao II. Not only that but Raghunathrao helped Govindrao with men and guns against Fatehsingrao. Govindrao was also given letters recommending him to the English by Peshwa Raghunathrao and thus the English power was invited to interfere by the Poona authorities.

Fatehsing tried to protect himself single handed against Govindrao but he was practically besieged in the fort of Baroda. This was grave situation for him and out of dire necessity he had turned his eyes towards the Bombay Government for help.

Govindrao too, with recommendation of Peshwa Raghunathrao approached the English authorities at Surat to secure help from the Bombay Government. Under such circumstance the English power thought wise to be neutral and Gaekwad brothers were alloed to decide their futures themselves.

Chapter V : SUCCESSION DISPUTE BETWEEN MANAJIRAO AND GOVINDRAO AND ROLE OF POONA GOVERNMENT.

Manajirao had assumed the charge held by Fatehsingrao. 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 Narayanrao was a minor and Nana Phadnis was the most powerful of all the ministers at Poona. He seized this opportunity of extorting as such money as possible from the Gaekwad brothers. This attitude of the Poona Darbar 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.

Chapter VI : THE EVE OF SEVERANCE OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GAEKWADS AND THE PESHWAS

As Anandrao was of a feable minded, he was treated as nominal head in the State and shrewd politician tried to make capital for their own ends. During the regime of Anandrao, the relations of the Gaekwad and the Peshwas took a peculiar turn and were terminated.

Chapter VII : THE FINAL RUPTURE BETWEEN BARODA AND POONA  
GOVERNMENTS WITH BRITISH INTERPOSITION.

The treaty of Bassein and the definitive treaty of 1805 completely changed the nature of the Gaekwad-Peshwa relations. The relations after 1805 were not cordial. So there was ground for vigorous assertion of the British authority in Gujarat. The policy of British also aggravated the dispute between the Gaekwads and the Peshwas. The Gaekwad family was freed from the control of the Peshwa but at the same time the British desired the expansion of their own power.

Finally the relation of the Gaekwad and the Peshwa ceased to exist with the fall of the family of the Peshwa in 1818.

Chapter VIII : CONCLUSION

The period under study is a formative one where different indigenous power system viz., the Mughuls, the Sultanate and the Maratha systems came to terms with the emerging and more powerful one, the British. This is also a period when 'foreign' Marathas invaders decide to settle and indigenise themselves in the Gujarati heart land. This process of getting disentangled from the clutches of the Poona government was not without its pains and when the price was paid to the British to achieve the short-lived independence, it was a sad experience of moving from frying <sup>pan</sup> to fire ~~pan~~. They finally settled to become a

a subordinate power of the English which the later Gaekwads resented but could do precious little to retrieve their position.

However, the scenerio of the eighteenth century throws very good light on how the lord and the vassal contest each other's claims and authorities how unremunerative and unsound economic policies of the Maratha confederacy pave way. further that bankruptcy, the irreperable damage caused by unspoken but keen Maratha Brahmin <sup>or</sup> enimosity accentuated by the role of women and non-Mahashtrian officials to the Maratha confederacy in general and the Gaekwad's interest in particular. For pending Gaekwads any price was fair to return power and this lust for power was fully exploited by the British in 1817-1818 A.D.