

RISE OF BRITISH POLITICAL POWER IN GUJARAT

The English East India Company had existed pervasively as a merchant body at Surat during the 17th Century along with the Dutch. During Shivaji's attack on Surat the English chief and factors played a notable part in both safeguarding their own factory as well as providing protection to the people who sought it. The English East India Company also obtained trading concessions from Aurangzeb for their resistance to Maratha attacks. In the new power structure that emerged in Gujarat in the 18th century, the British East India Company perhaps derived the maximum benefit. The involvement of the English East India Company in the affairs in Surat, in subsequent years, helped them establish their political authority over the entire region.

The breakdown of the law and order situation in Gujarat had severe repercussions on the region. One of them was the loosening of the Mughal Imperial administrative control on big merchants as also the various East India Companies. They could obtain big concessions in the payment of the custom duties and other benefits by becoming players in the political tussle going on between various contenders to power. They were in a position to play one party against the other as they commanded material means. This was perhaps experienced in Surat more than any other place of the region. There were rapid

changes in the politics in Surat, brought about by ambitious elements, most of who were linked to commerce. Most notable amongst them were Mullah Mohammad Ali and Ahmad Chelabi. These elements were motivated by commercial interests in siding with one political faction or the other at Surat. It was this attempt to control the political powers to enhance their wealth that also prompted the English and the Dutch East India Companies to enter the political scene of Surat.

The design of the English East India Company seems to have been to enhance the Company's trade prospects vis-à-vis the others by creating monopolies. This was clearly evident in the phase following the British control of the Surat castle after which the *Nawab* remained merely in name. The British attempted and largely succeeded in undermining the trade of the other East India Companies, Dutch and the French as also the big Indian merchants like the Chellabis.¹⁸³ However, in the course of time the Bombay Presidency's need to augment its resources for its maintenance and the competition offered by the other two Presidencies seems to have had an overriding influence on the activities of the English in Gujarat. The conquest of Bharuch should be seen in this light. Bharuch was considered strategically important and rich in resources so needed by the Presidency. By the time of the 'Raghoba affair' (First Anglo-Maratha War)¹⁸⁴, the political complexion at the pan-India level had changed.

¹⁸³ The design of the English Company to monopolize the trade of Surat is mentioned by non-English travelers. V.G. Hatakhat (ed), *French Records relating to the History of the Marathas*, Vol. I, Bombay, 1978, P.3 & 71-72; Splinter Stavorinus, transl. Samuel Hull Wilcocke, *Voyages to the East Indies*, Vol. III, London, 1798, P. 59.

¹⁸⁴ This happened in 1775. The Raghoba Affair has been described in detail in the

The English East India Company had emerged as a power of significance in the midst of the triangular conflict between the Marathas, Hyder Ali and the English in the southern and western India.

The English possessions consisted of directly administered areas and Princely States. Surat was the first place to be conquered by the Company followed by Bharuch, as mentioned above. These were directly administered areas. With the acceptance of British hegemony in 1802-03 by the Anand Rao, the Gaekwad Chief of Baroda, the British were able to gain a definite standing in the region, something they had failed to achieve during the First Anglo-Maratha War.

We have traced in the following pages the account of expansion of British power in Gujarat starting from Surat, Bharuch and Baroda to Kathiawad and Kutch and to the regions of Mahi-Kantha and Rewa-Kantha. By 1817-1818, the British had gained a complete mastery of Gujarat, as after the defeat of Baji Rao II, the office of Peshwa was abolished and all his territories also came under the British control.

CONQUEST OF SURAT

As seen earlier, since the beginning of the century the Maratha expansion in Gujarat had disrupted its economic and social life. The main brunt of their activities was taken by Surat, especially its *parganas*, the Surat *atthavisi*. The *parganas* were agriculturally rich. Immediate to the death of Rustam Ali Khan, the Marathas occupied the whole of the countryside. The successors of Rustam could hardly check the rapid advance of the Marathas. They were busy in the factional struggle for the office of the *mutasaddi* whose authority was restricted to the control of the town only. Subsequent developments only worsened the situation. The merchant prince Mohammad Ali ousted Sohrab Khan, (also known as Behram Khan), son of Rustam, from the office of the *mutasaddi*. Mohammad Ali had the support of the Dutch and the English East India Companies. Teg Beg Khan (also known as Teg Bakht Khan) was appointed the *mutasaddi*. Mohammad Ali considered Teg Beg Khan a pliable candidate. However, Teg Beg Khan could disentangle himself from Mohammad Ali's control and got him assassinated.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ Mulla Mohammad Ali succeeded to the fortunes of his grandfather Mulla Abdul Jafar in 1719. In 1729 he attempted to establish a settlement on piram islands and later at Athwa at the expense of Surat's revenues. Sohrab Khan stopped him because of which Mohammad Ali got Sohrab Khan replaced with Teg Bakht Khan. Sohrab Khan was ousted from Surat. Later Mohammad Ali attempted to get an imperial sanad in the name of his son thus aiming to merge his wealth with political power. However Teg Bakht Khan got Mohammad Ali imprisoned and assassinated in prison in 1732 and Mohammad Ali thus ceased to play any part in Surat's politics. *Bom. Pres. Gaz, Vol.II, Surat & Broach*, Bombay, 1877, Pp.110-111.

After getting rid of Mahammad Ali, Teg Bakht Khan's administration was free from outside interference and he could maintain order and establish his sole authority over the whole town. Teg Beg Khan assumed the title of *Nawab*. Before him, the two officers, the *Mutasaddi* and the *Qilledar* were appointed by Mughal Imperial authority. However, Teg Bakht Khan after becoming the *mutasaddi* appointed his brother Beglar Khan to the office of *Qilledari*, without seeking consent of local Mughal authority. Another brother, Safdar Khan similarly was appointed as Naib for the police and other administrative duties.¹⁸⁶ As the countryside had come into the possession of the Marathas and the *Nawab* was unable to oust them, he entered into an agreement with Damaji Rao Gaekwad in 1735, whereby a yearly amount of Rs.2, 36,000 was to be given by the Marathas after collecting the revenues around Surat.¹⁸⁷

The relations of the English East India Company were always strained with the *Nawab/Mutasaddi* since the times of Rustam Ali Khan. It continued to be so under Sohrab Khan and Teg Bakht Khan as well. The main source of contention seems to have been the repeated demands of *Peshkash* made by the *Nawab* who was always hard-pressed for resources.¹⁸⁸ In the change of administration after Mohammad Ali's assassination in 1733, Henry Lowther, the English chief at Surat was known to have played an active role. This gave the

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. P.116.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. P.117.

¹⁸⁸ Surat Factory Diary, Letter from Bombay, 30th May 1725, C.f. Commissariate, op, cit., Vol. III. Pp.520-521.

Surat factory a political position in the local politics. The English now became politically ambitious.

The British made three attempts to gain a political foothold in Surat: in 1735, 1751-52 and 1758-59. In 1735 the British ambition in Surat was limited to obtaining the control of the *tanka* or the admiralty of the Surat port. This was a post created by Aurangzeb in 1687 after the conquest of Bijapur. He assigned the post to the Sidis of Janjira (Danda-Rajpuri). The function of this office was to guard the Surat coast against the pirates and thereby safeguard the sea-borne trade. This post carried with it a salary of Rs. 3 lacs Per annum. Immediate to the assumption of power by Teg Beg Khan, the English at Surat demanded that they be transferred the charge of *tanka* from the Sidis. The English considered the *Nawab* as obliged to them for their support in bringing him to office. The English did not resort to violence but adopted the peaceful means. They accordingly commenced negotiations with the *Nawab* from 7th June lasting till 31st July.¹⁸⁹ However, the *Nawab* did not acknowledge the English claim. He was desirous of coveting a part of the salary of the *tanka* for himself by keeping the Sidi in charge. The *Nawab* seems to have perceived the Sidi as a pliable candidate. The English on the other hand demanded the whole income since they were strong enough to enforce it. The failure of these negotiations led to friction between the two. The *Nawab* also ill-treated some of the Company dependants. Under this pretext the English chief left the town with his factors and

¹⁸⁹ "The Nawabship of Teg Beg Khan at Surat" in *Bombay Quarterly Review*, Vol. IV, Bombay, 1856, P.193.

went on board their Ships at the mouth of the river Tapi. He drew a formal statement of grievances demanding redress and threatened with reprisals on Surat trade. The terms included protection according to the charter of 1716; that their boats should not be molested and their dependants, those who were ill-treated, were to be compensated.¹⁹⁰ The *Nawab*, in answer, placed guards over the factory and forbade Indian merchants from trading with them. He also gave his own set of demands to the English. He accused the English of evading duties on the private trade under cover of exemption granted only to the company's goods.¹⁹¹ The English, on the other hand, repelled an attack made by the Sidi and blockaded the mouth of the river Tapi. It was from this river that the goods used to come into the town from the sea. This blockade continued for one full year and the provisions of the town had risen to 40%.¹⁹² In February 1735 the *Nawab* finally ordered the removal of the guards from the Factory and the Indians were permitted to trade with the English. The relations between the two continued to be sour.

It seems the English factors at Surat were rebuked by their superiors for their interference in the politics of the place, for we find the factors writing in 1741:

"Our business goes on without impediment and we hope it will not be otherwise, as we shall only confine ourselves to our own sphere and not the least interfere with any transactions relative to

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 197.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, Pp. 197-198.

¹⁹² Ibid, Pp. 200-202.

*government further than supporting your honour's privileges when called in question".*¹⁹³

It was not until 1751-52 that the English became politically active again. By then the situation had changed much. In 1746 Teg Beg Khan died leading to a spate of succession wars. In 1747 Safdar Khan, Teg Beg Khan's brother succeeded him and Waqar Khan, Safdar's son became the *Qilledar*. However, a year later Mian Achhind, Son-in-law to Teg Beg Khan defeated the father-son duo and took the *Nawabi* under his control. He had the support of his wealthy mother-in-law known as 'Begum'. It seems that the British helped Mian Achhind in ousting Safdar Khan from Surat.

By 1750-51 the *Nawab* had failed to pay the *tanka* fee of Rs.3 lacs per annum to the Sidi of Janjira, for some time. Therefore, he sent some cruisers (ships) into the river Tapi at a time when the monsoon was setting in. Under the pretence of monsoon, the ships remained at Surat and the *Nawab* was unaware of their real intentions. The commander of the squadron, Sidi Masud, took this opportunity to seize the castle. Immediate to this development many of the Achhind's dissatisfied officers viz., the former slaves of Teg Bakht Khan who had been freed by him prior to his death and who also had much wealth and power in the *darbar*, joined the Sidi faction. Two of Achhind's other important officers also joined the Sidi.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ *Bombay Quarterly review*, op.cit., P. 220.

¹⁹⁴ *GOB- I*, P.74.

The event which brought about another change of administration at Surat was as follows: Mian Achhind and Ali Nawaz Khan, his cousin and Custom-Master at Surat had fallen-off. Mian Achhind ordered Ali Nawaz Khan to leave the town and confiscated his wealth including horses and other assets. Ali Nawaz Khan instead took shelter with the Sidi.¹⁹⁵ This strengthened the Sidi's position. The Sidi retaliated on behalf of Ali Nawaz Khan by bringing Ali Nawaz's possessions into the town walls forcibly. This show of strength by Sidi so alarmed the *Nawab* that he started preparations for battle. He also invited the Marathas to his aid.

Meanwhile the merchants were apprehensive that this fresh bout of violence would bring the *Ganim* (Marathas) into a greater share of power in the administration of the town. They therefore approached the English Chief to arbitrate between the *Nawab* and the Sidi, which the English accepted after much deliberation. In the negotiations it was said that the *Nawab* would not bring in the Marathas provided Ali Nawaz Khan left the place. After much pressure was exerted the Sidi only promised to 'neither encourage him (Ali Nawaz Khan) to stay nor oppose his going'.¹⁹⁶ Ali Nawaz did not go. The merchants were desirous that the English should assist Mian Achhind and the merchants would defray the charges (as they were apprehensive that the *Ganims* would take over the control of the town). The chief declined the offer.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. Pp. 74-75.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

However, because of the greater involvement of the Dutch in support of the Sidi and the news of this party's designs to bring back Safdar Khan as *Nawab* of Surat made the English factors uncomfortable. The Sidi and Safdar Khan were also reported to have entered into a treaty with the Dutch whereby the new *Nawab* would procure a *sanad* for the Dutch entitling them to pay only Rs.10,000 annually in lieu of the customs and also to build a wharf and land all their goods there. This would have brought the Dutch at par with the English in the trade of Surat.¹⁹⁸ Bombay instructed the English chief at Surat to stop the Dutch from availing these privileges.¹⁹⁹ At this time the English chief also apprehended an attack on the English factory by the Sidi.²⁰⁰

On the other hand Mian Achhind proposed to cede the castle to the English whose revenues were Rs. 22000 with an additional 10000 from the *Nawab* for helping him against the Sidi. He also promised to cede the Sidi's *tanka*, which consisted of a fixed proportion of the customs amounting to around Rs. 1,75,000. The English servants believed this would put the English trade and Company's affairs in Surat on a very secure footing.²⁰¹ Bombay also entered into negotiations with the Peshwa, Balaji Baji Rao to secure his support in ousting the Sidi. The English at Surat still maintained that they were not interested in the politics of the place and were only defending their employer's interests. Amongst the many terms agreed were that Sidi

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. P.78.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. P.80.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. Pp. 78-79.

²⁰¹ Ibid. Pp. 80-81.

Masud Khan would be ousted from Surat, the English would have the *tanka*, Mian Achhind to be retained as the *Nawab*, the Dutch wall to be destroyed and the expenses incurred by the English was to be made good by the Surat government.²⁰² However it seems that the Maratha alliance was sought to neutralize the Peshwa while the English attempted to strengthen their position at Surat.²⁰³ The English then made a pact with the *Nawab* of Bharuch also.²⁰⁴

The final battle commenced with the Sidi attacking the castle in December 1751. The Sidi gained an upper hand and blockaded the English factory from receiving provisions and the castle was handed over by Mian Achhind. The English could not prevent the castle from falling into the Sidi's hand, as the *Nawab* of Bharuch could not raise enough force in time. The matter was finally settled with the Sidi agreeing to pay two hundred thousand rupees for all expenses and damages.²⁰⁵ The English gained nothing from this expedition.

This change of government brought about by the Sidi greatly enhanced his power. He not only retained the control of the castle, but also encroached upon the power of the *Nawab* and appropriated 1/3rd of the revenues for himself.²⁰⁶ When Safdar Khan and his Naib Faras Khan intrigued with the Peshwa to oust Sidi Masud, he immediately

²⁰² Ibid. Pp.96-97.

²⁰³ An agreement was reached by the English at Surat and the Peshwa to oust the sidi from Surat. GOB I, Pp. 96-98. The Peshwa was simultaneously attempting to occupy Surat himself and was negotiating with Miyan Acchind. G.S.Sardesai (ed), *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar, no. 24 The Peshwa's Commitments on the West Coast*, Bombay, 1932, Pp. 279-280. Both wanted to stop the Sidi from gaining power.

²⁰⁴ GOB I, Pp. 97-98.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. P. 101.

²⁰⁶ Stavorinus, Vol.III, op.cit., P. 33.

replaced Faras Khan with Ali Nawaz Khan as the Naib. He also kept the right to appoint the officers to important posts at the Darbar with himself. The *Nawab* became a pawn in Sidi Masud's hands.

Sidi Masud was all-powerful at Surat till his death in 1756. Upon his death his son Ahmad Khan succeeded him. Safdar Khan also died in 1758 leading to the succession of Ali Nawaz Khan as the *Nawab*. During these 7 years i.e., from 1752 to 1759 the English chief often played the role of a negotiator between the Sidi and the merchants, although they themselves were not free from molestation by the Sidi. The Sidi probably perceived them as a threat to his power.

It should be noted that unlike the picture painted by the English factors in the limited correspondence that has been available to this study, the English did not cease to play a political role against the Sidi. Michelguglielmo Torri has shown this convincingly.²⁰⁷ By 1758 Ellis, the English Chief at Surat had carefully built a plan to take over the castle of Surat. However, the Peshwa, getting news of this plan, attacked Bassein and threatened to attack Bombay itself. This immediately put a stop to all action from Bombay and the plans were halted. Following the death of Sidi Masud and Safdar Khan, the Peshwa was also observing the situation of Surat and wanted to take over the control of the place himself.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ MichelGuglielmo Torri, "Mughal Nobles, Indian Merchants and the Beginning of the British conquest in western India: The case of Surat 1756-1759", *Modern Asian Studies*, 32, 2, 1998.

²⁰⁸ G.S.Sardesai, *Peshwa Daftar*, no. 24, op.cit., *passim*.

At this juncture several developments took place that made Bombay renew its quest for Surat and its conquest was relatively smoother. The arrival of Admiral Pocock (Sent to fight the French on the West coast from Fort William) at Bombay tilted the balance of the power at Surat in favour of the English. The existence of such a big force at the disposal of Bombay kept the Marathas away from the Surat politics and the Dutch were also obliged to remain passive.²⁰⁹ At Surat the situation was becoming ripe for another major change. With the succession of Sidi Ahmad Khan and his reckless behaviour there was a fall-out between him and Ali Nawaz Khan. It seems that the Sidi at this time was trying to bring Mian Achhind back at Surat. He had invited Achhind's son to stay at his Castle at Surat in Nov 1758.²¹⁰ The *Nawab* therefore sought Peshwa's help to oust the Sidi. At the same time Mian Achhind, who was already under the Peshwa's patronage collected a large army and advanced upon Surat. He could capture Rander (the twin port of Surat and of lesser importance). He later conquered Surat itself from Ali Nawaz khan. With Ali Nawaz khan applying for Peshwa's help, the Peshwa tried to stop Achhind from going to Surat. He was however on the move and did not stop upon getting the instructions. The British, on their part forwarded the argument that the merchants of the city had applied for English help against the 'tyranny' of the Sidi. The English themselves were not free from abuse and monetary exactions. Besides, the people under their protection were ill-treated.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ *Stavorinus III*, op.cit., P. 37; M.Torri, op.cit., P. 791.

²¹⁰ G.S.Sardesai, *Peshwa Daftar* no. 24, op.cit., Lt. 204, Pp. 204-205.

²¹¹ *Stavorinus III*, P. 36.

John Spencer had succeeded Ellis as Surat Chief in early 1759. Immediately, two of Achhind's officers approached the English Chief requesting him to take over the castle. These officers were Sidi Jafar and Walliullah. They were both wealthy and apprehensive that their wealth could become the reason of their ruin. The condition for their support was that Faras Khan be made the *Nawab* or at least the Naib *Nawab*.²¹² To ensure success in this venture the English also entered into an agreement with the Peshwa to oust the Sidi.²¹³ The Peshwa, on his part was keen to continue the friendly relations with Bombay in the wake of the joint Anglo-Maratha action against the forts of Underi and Vijaydurg in the Deccan and against the rebellious Angrias on the west coast.²¹⁴

Following these arrangements the English were ready for action. The Factory Chief at Surat decided to go on-board, as on previous occasions, to make the impact felt. Although this action was predetermined they needed a pretext. Therefore a Jamadar was sent to the Sidi's Darbar to make representation of the insults that were meted out to the English. Having come to know of English plans the Sidi attempted to stop the *vakils* of the Factory, Edul and Nasserwanji, from joining the English factors on board. This was used as a pretext by the English to commence action.²¹⁵ By chance the *Nawab*'s family had just then reached Surat from Bombay via Sea-route. The chief

²¹² G.W.Forrest, op.cit., Vol: II, P. 55.

²¹³ Stavorinus, op.cit., Pp. 49-50.

²¹⁴ G.S.Sardesai, *Peshwa Daftar*, No. 24, op.cit., passim.

²¹⁵ *GOB I*, P.132.

kept his 'Zenana' on board as a security against injury to the factory and to Mr. Erskine.

Meanwhile Mian Achhind made fervent appeals to the Peshwa to take control of the city before the English do.²¹⁶ The Peshwa stayed neutral in the face of criticism of his policy from his own people.²¹⁷ On the other hand the British at Surat were waiting for reinforcements from Bombay before commencing the hostilities.²¹⁸ With the arrival of the British troops there was much alarm in the town. The Sidi detached himself from the *Nawab* and prepared to fight. Achhind was apprehensive of the English, as they would support Faras Khan instead of him. The British took possession of the outer wall. Due to the insistence of Walliullah and Sidi Jafar it was agreed to make Faras Khan the *Naib- Nawab* instead of *Nawab*. An agreement was reached between the *Nawab* and the English through which the Makai gate leading into the inner town was opened up and the British troops took control of the Castle. The Sidi threw himself at the mercy of the English without giving a fight.²¹⁹ The castle and the *tanka* passed into British hands on 5th March 1759.²²⁰ Thus Surat became the first territorial possession of the English East India Company providing a base for their subsequent expansion in the region.

²¹⁶ G.S.Sardesai, *Peshwa Daftar* no. 24, op.cit., Lt. 230, Pp. 233-234.

²¹⁷ It seems that simultaneous negotiations were being carried on by the Peshwa's officers to take over Surat town during this time as well, but the Peshwa seems to have refused to use force against the English in this instance. *Peshwa Daftar* no. 24, Lt. 234, Pp. 237-238.

²¹⁸ *GOB I*, p. 137.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.* P.150.

²²⁰ *Ibid.* Pp. 150-151.

CONQUEST OF BHARUCH

The pargana of Bharuch was one of the fertile *sarkars* of Gujarat. The port town of Bharuch was an important centre of coastal and internal trade during this period. It was ruled by a *Nawab*, who owed allegiance earlier to the Nizam of Hyderabad and since the mid-century, he acquired the *sanad* from the Mughal Emperor. The countryside of Bharuch was considered very fertile and suitable for cotton production. Much of the cotton produced in this region came from this area.

Briefly let us look at the rise of Bharuch *Nawabi* before its take over by the East India Company. Following the death of Rustam Ali Khan, Pilaji Gaekwad occupied Bharuch. He could hold it only for nine months. The Qasbati²²¹ troops that were left to garrison it submitted the town to one Abdullah Beg, the *faujdar*, so appointed by Sarbuland Khan. In 1731 Abdullah Beg received the patronage of the Nizam and established his rule and thus became the founder of a dynasty. In 1758 Nek Nam Khan obtained a Mughal *sanad*, adopted the title of *Nawab* and freed himself from the tutelage of the Nizam.²²²

Around 1741 Damaji Gaekwad could obtain a 60% share in the revenues of the place. A Chauthia was left there to collect the share. The *Nawab*'s authority by then was confined to the town only; the *parganas* of Ankleshwar, Hansot, Olpad, Jambusar, etc were in the

²²¹ For a description of the *Qasbatis* see the second and sixth chapters.

²²² *Mirat*, P. 730.

hands of the Marathas. In 1751 when Damaji was compelled to share his possessions with the Peshwa these *parganas* fell in Peshwa's hands. Subsequently the *kamavisdars* were appointed by the Peshwa.

This situation made the *Nawab*'s position vulnerable to a great extent. He was always in the danger of being eliminated by his more powerful neighbours, be it the Marathas, Peshwa and the Gaekwad, or the other *Nawabs* of Surat and Cambay. However the English East India Company proved to be the more ambitious one. The episode of British conquest of Bharuch was as sudden as it was unexpected. The British had emerged as an important power in south Gujarat by then. Bharuch was coveted because of the rich cotton growing *parganas*. Immediate to its conquest it was also contemplated to exchange this area with Salsette, Bassein, etc.²²³ The latter places supplied Bombay with its necessities and were considered to be important for its sustenance. The Peshwa was keen to have Bharuch, as it was strategically important, situated as it was between Malwa and Gujarat. The deal could not be made.

The reason for the desire to conquer Bharuch on part of the Company servants is well described by Mr. Tayler. It goes like this:

²²³ J.H.Gense and D.R.Banaji (ed), *The Third English Embassy to Poona comprising Mostyn's Diary sept' 1772-Feb' 1774 and Mostyn's Letters*, Bombay, 1934, (Now onwards Mostyn's Diary), Lt. dt. 26th January, 1773, Pp. 81-83 & Ibid. Pp. 131-132.

*"... Broach is the key to the rich kingdom of Gujarat where most of our Europe investment is provided, and from whence all the best cotton is brought for the consumption of India and China. Behind Gujarat lie the extensive provinces of Ajmer and Jaisalmer, which formerly took up a large quantity of our woollens and other European Commodities..."*²²⁴

There is an ambiguity in our sources as to why the British wanted to conquer this *Nawabi*, especially in view of the fact that later Bombay Presidency tried to exchange it with other areas near Bombay. The only information that we get in this context is that around 1770 Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad attempted to even annex the revenue share of the *nawab* (left to the *nawab* as per the earlier agreement). He wanted to control Bharuch so as to stop Govind Rao Gaekwad from gaining a foothold in the region. The chief of English factory at Surat James Ryley apprehended that the Gaekwad would become more powerful in the region, if he got control of Bharuch.²²⁵ He therefore proposed taking over Bharuch in the name of Surat *Nawab*. He also assured his higher authorities that such a step would not be questioned by the other powers since the Surat *Nawab* also was a Mughal, deriving his legitimacy from Delhi. Being in the Treaty with the Company, Bharuch could be safely entrusted to him.²²⁶

²²⁴ *GOB II*, P. 108.

²²⁵ *Ibid.* Pp. 2-3

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, Pp. 2-3.

On the basis of this advice and information the Bombay authorities authorized James Ryley to put forward a claim to the 'Furza' (customs) of Bharuch port through the Surat *Nawab*.²²⁷ Accordingly it was claimed that the *faujdar* of Bharuch was earlier under Surat government's authority. Nek Nam Khan appropriated this right that belonged to Surat. This dependence was supposed to have been since the last 150 years and the arrears due since last 40 years. Therefore it was asked of Muazzaz Khan to pay the arrears of the *furza* and hand over the future control of the same to the Surat *Nawab*.²²⁸

It seems that this claim was fictitious or at least unsupported by any strong evidence. During hey days of Mughal Empire Bharuch was placed under the jurisdiction of the *faujdar* of Surat. From Rustam Ali Khan's time Bharuch got detached from Surat.²²⁹ Thus, the so-called right of the Surat *Nawab* was ill defined to say the least. It only served as an alibi to the British who were looking for an opportunity to take over Bharuch. They computed the Amount of arrears at the rate of Rs 70,000 per year which amounted to the total of 28 lakh rupees.

²²⁷ Ibid, P. 3.

²²⁸ Ibid, P. 4.

²²⁹ Syed Maqbool Ahmad, *A History of the Nawabs of Broach based on the Persian manuscript 'Majmua-i-Da'anish'*, Delhi, 1985, P. 170. This manuscript is a collection of letters pertaining to the Nawabs of Broach and divided into four parts. Two forms of this text has been available for this study. The first two parts has been edited and translated by Saeed Hasan. many letters from the other two parts has been translated and reproduced in the monograph entitled '*A History of the Nawabs of Broach*'. The importance of these translations as appearing in the second work can be ascertained as the original text is not known to exist in any of the repositories. The second work will now onwards be referred to as MD in HOB.

In addition to this another monetary claim was also made. This came directly from the Company. In 1764 the *Nawab* of Bharuch had entered into a treaty with Mr. Hodges whereby it was settled that the custom duties were to be paid to the *nawab* at the rate of 1½% on all goods belonging to the Company and those under the Company's protection. After two to three years to this agreement the *Nawab* arbitrarily raised the Duties to 2½ %. The amount of the difference was calculated at the rate of Rs. 1, 50, 000. Thus, the total amount of claims on the *Nawab* of Bharuch came to Rs. 30 Lakhs. The authorities at Bombay believed that this step would intimidate the *Nawab* who would then be amenable to sign the Subsidiary Treaty and come under the Company's protection.²³⁰ The *Nawab* on the other hand refused to acknowledge both the claims and attributed the demand of the English to the instigation of the 'people of Surat'.²³¹ This was immediately followed by the first British expedition against Bharuch. Gambier was appointed as the Commander of the British troops. These troops first conquered the island of Talaja, a stronghold of Koli Pirates. It was a fort in the group of Islands in the Gulf of Cambay. This provided a good standpoint to land the British troops and commence action against Bharuch.²³² The troops were ordered to take the sea route in attacking Bharuch. Gambier, however, took land route disregarding the orders. The expedition failed completely and *Nawab's* men defeated the British troops. In the Enquiry that followed

²³⁰ *GOB II*, Pp. 4-5.

²³¹ *Ibid.* P.36.

²³² *Ibid.*, Pp. 5-6.

it was noticed that the British lacked vital information on the fords of the river Narmada, the strength of *Nawab*'s army, the condition of the Fort walls, etc.²³³

To withdraw the troops completely at that juncture was thought to be disastrous to the military reputation of the Company. Therefore, Gambier persuaded Muazzaz Khan to send Lallu Das, his Diwan with two reliable persons to Surat to settle the dispute and to offer him some petty presents with a request to withdraw the English troops.²³⁴ The *Nawab* on the other hand realized the danger of having the now politically powerful Company as an enemy and sent the said people to Surat to negotiate on his behalf. In the negotiations the English at Surat proposed that the *Nawab* should pay Rs. 45,000 annually from the *furza*.²³⁵ Muazzaz Khan agreed to this reluctantly on the condition that the English should take it upon themselves to realize the customs and the income from the *parganas*, deduct the expenses and take the remainder towards their demand.²³⁶ The negotiations did not yield any positive results.

By now both the Bombay authorities and the *Nawab* were keen to reach a settlement. The Desais and the ryots were anxious of another British attack.²³⁷ The Bombay authorities on the other hand

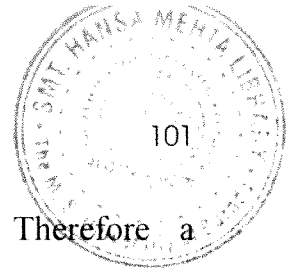
²³³ Ibid, Pp. 42-46.

²³⁴ Ibid, Pp. 19-20.

²³⁵ *MD III*, Lt.170 in *HOB*, op.cit., Pp. 69-70.

²³⁶ Ibid, Lt. no 173 in *HOB*, op.cit., P.69.

²³⁷ *GOB II*,P.15.



were reprimanded for their unjustified action.²³⁸ Therefore a diplomatic visit was made by the *Nawab* to Bombay, on invitation. Both parties however did not trust each other. The *Nawab* made preparations to defy the English in case of a second attack. He purchased two cannons and employed some expert Portuguese musketeers from Diu. He also arranged to keep spies in the Surat factory and Bombay as well.²³⁹ The Bombay authorities on the other hand instructed their servants, sent to fetch the *Nawab*, to make observations regarding all the important matters needed for conquest.²⁴⁰ Their information was recorded minutely and used later in the second expedition. At Bombay an agreement reached whereby the *Nawab* agreed to pay an amount of Rs.4 Lakhs in response to the demand made on him. Since he did not have ready money to pay it was agreed to receive half the amount in six months and the rest the next year.²⁴¹ However things did not prove as smooth as it seemed. The *Nawab*, upon reaching Bharuch, refused to acknowledge many terms of the Agreement. He was to have provided a suitable place for setting up the English factory in Bharuch town. Once James Morley, the commercial resident, reached there, the *Nawab* refused to provide the place. He further insulted him by publicly refusing to accept the present sent to the *Nawab*. It turned out to be a big mistake on *Nawab*'s part. The Bombay authorities took the whole thing seriously and recalled Morley. The *Nawab*'s behavior, without doubt was rash but not unfounded. The problem started while the *Nawab* was in

²³⁸ Ibid, Pp. 30-31.

²³⁹ MD III, Lt.177 in HOB, Pp. 71-73.

²⁴⁰ GOB II, Pp. 42-46.

²⁴¹ Ibid, P. 52.

Bombay itself. There are two set of sources here, one from the English perspective and another from *Nawab's* perspective. According to the English sources while the *Nawab* was coming back to Bharuch from Bombay he sent his luggage under the care of his agent (*mehta*) through the land route. Although he had asked for a Maratha pass and the Bombay President had written to Poona for acquiring one, the *Nawab* did not wait for the same. It so happened that while the luggage was passing through the Maratha controlled areas near Surat, the Maratha *kamavisdar* Nagav Ram seized the luggage and imprisoned the caretaker and his men. The *Nawab* made repeated requests to the President to help him get back his men and things from the Marathas and asserted that it was according to the terms of the Agreement of protecting mutual interests.²⁴² But the President paid no heed. The explanation given by the English was that since the *Nawab* did not wait for the arrival of Maratha *Pass* from Poona it was not their responsibility.

The evidence from the *Nawabi* sources, however, gives a completely different version of the events. According to these sources the luggage of the *Nawab* was intercepted while it was on its way to Bombay and not while coming back as recorded in the English sources. It further informs that this party was going through the land route on the advice of the President of Bombay. The latter is also said to have desired to interfere in the matter while the *Nawab* was at Bombay itself but was stopped by the *Nawab* who did not want to

²⁴² Ibid, Pp. 67-68.

create hostilities between the Peshwa and the English. He further assured the President to order his men to get back to Bharuch and refer to the President in case the matter did not solve with that.²⁴³ On his return to Bharuch the *Nawab* set out to tackle the matter himself. He went to Hansot with the intention of redressing his losses. He simultaneously pursued diplomatic route as well. He sought the help of Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad and wrote to the English President as well. Finally, the matter was settled with the help of Fatehsing's interference.²⁴⁴ After 8 months of captivity his men were released and the *Nawab* paid Rs. 5,200 for their maintenance.²⁴⁵ The *Nawab* also resented the fact that the English factory at Bharuch was put under the authority of Surat factory and not directly under Bombay.²⁴⁶

Whatever the cause may have been, the Bombay Council took the *Nawab's* defiant attitude seriously. Bharuch was attacked for the second time and in a short time taken by the British forces under Wedderburn on 18th November, 1772. The *Nawab* fled to the Koli chief of Dehwan, who provided refuge to him. The *Nawab* died within a short while to this event. His son Mumtaz Khan, under the direction of the Koli Chief Zalim Jalia, attempted to attack the town subsequently but was repulsed by the British garrison. Bharuch passed successfully into British possession, later to be given over to the Sindhia.

²⁴³ *MD III*, Lt. 208 in *HOB* Pp. 98-100.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid*, Lt. 243 in *HOB*, P. 123; *HSBSR-II*, Lt: 30, P: 173; *GOB II*, P. 68.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, Lt. 251 in *HOB*, P. 123.

²⁴⁶ *GOB II*, P. 72.

The British occupation of Bharuch brought the Bombay Presidency more closely into the power dynamics of the region, a process that began almost immediately with the commencement of the first Anglo-Maratha war. Gujarat was the theatre of the major action of this prolonged war.

FIRST ANGLO-MARATHA WAR IN GUJARAT

The Maratha war began as an internal disruption in the Maratha Polity at Poona. It was a struggle for the office of Peshwa amongst the rival factions of the Marathas at Poona comprising the *Barbhai* or the 'Ministerial Party' against the pretensions of Raghunath Rao (Raghoba), brother of earlier Peshwa, Balaji Baji Rao. G.S. Sardesai and Grant Duff have given details of this episode.²⁴⁷ According to them, Raghunath Rao was accused of having assassinated Narayan Rao Peshwa, upon whose death Raghunath Rao came to power. He was known to have earlier made similar attempts with Madhav Rao Peshwa, but he proved stronger. Narayan Rao was weak. He was killed sometime in 1774. Once this charge was proved, the ministers at Poona known as *Barbhais* formed a league to oppose Raghoba. They started military action against Raghoba who was then encamped

²⁴⁷ Grant Duff, op.cit., Vol. II, P. 204 onwards. G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol III, Bombay, 1948, Pp. 63-88.

in Karnatak. Upon getting the news he joined Sindhia and Holkar in Burhanpur planning defence. Sindhia and Holkar entered into negotiations on his behalf, trying to secure favourable terms for Raghoba with the *Barbhais*. At about the same time a son was born to Narayan Rao posthumously. He was unanimously declared to be the next Peshwa and the *Barbhais* became strengthened. Raghoba, on the other hand, opened negotiations with the Bombay Presidency through the Surat factory chief Robert Gambier. This was the beginning of British interference in what was otherwise an internal war of the Marathas.

In the Course of the separate negotiations, being conducted by Sindhia and Holkar, they secretly agreed to hand over Raghoba to the *Barbhais*. Receiving this news Raghoba immediately fled to the vicinity of Baroda to join Govind Rao Gaekwad who had by then besieged Fatehsing Gaekwad in the confines of Baroda fort. Govind Rao was a partisan and staunch supporter of Raghoba. It was to Raghoba that he owed his present position. It becomes imperative here to understand the Gaekwad contest for power in Gujarat in order to appreciate the significance of the Gaekwad support to Anglo-Raghoba alliance. The death of Damaji Rao Gaekwad in 1768 brought many disputes in the Gaekwad chieftaincy of Baroda. Most importantly the succession dispute between two of his sons proved detrimental to the power this principality held in the larger Maratha Polity. In 1768 the last of the battles for supremacy was fought between the Peshwa and the Gaekwad. Damaji Rao refused to pay the

tribute due to the Peshwa that led to this battle known as *Battle of Dhodap*. Damaji Rao was defeated by Madhav Rao Peshwa and Govind Rao Gaekwad, his son, was taken as hostage to Poona. Almost immediately Damaji Rao died. Damaji Rao had five sons from two wives. Sayaji Rao was the eldest; Fatehsing was his brother and Manaji Rao still younger. Govind Rao on the other hand was the son of the eldest wife though younger to Sayaji Rao. His brother was Malhar Rao. Thus both Sayaji Rao with Fatehsing Rao as his regent and Govind Rao laid claim to the *Gadi* of Baroda. At that time the claim of Sayaji Rao and Fatehsing Rao was accepted by Madhav Rao Peshwa and the claims of Govind Rao also was admitted with the interference of Sindhia who patronized him. Govind Rao was assigned the military duties, as a part of the Gaekwad's responsibility towards the Peshwa, his overlord. Fatehsing Rao was given the civil administration of his possessions in Gujarat. In other words, Govind Rao was kept out of Gujarat and his chance of getting possession of his ancestral patrimony was nullified. When Raghoba came to power he reversed the decision and provided Govind Rao with 2,000 men and some guns for his conquest of Gujarat. He also gave to Govind Rao letters addressed to the English.²⁴⁸ This was in January 1774. Govind Rao thus attacked Gaekwad possessions in South Gujarat starting from Songadh. He had replaced Fatehsing Rao's Chauthias with his own in all these areas and had besieged Baroda when Raghoba joined him.

²⁴⁸ GOB II, P. 179.

Raghoba opened negotiations with the English at Surat through Narottam Das, his agent. Robert Gambier, the chief of Surat, was authorized by the President of Bombay to undertake these negotiations. In return of Bombay's alliance, Raghoba was asked to cede certain territories around Bombay viz., Salsette, Bassein, Karanja, etc. Raghoba who attached much importance to these strategic places around Bombay refused to cede them. In its place cession of certain areas around Surat and Bharuch was agreed upon.²⁴⁹ The Bombay authorities were very keen to bring about this alliance formally and in their favour for which Gambier promised monetary and territorial rewards to Narottam Das, the agent.²⁵⁰ The draft of the Treaty that was desired to be concluded between the two parties had to be revised several times because of technicalities. For instance, Bombay questioned the authority of Raghoba in alienating the territories and revenues of Surat and Bharuch, which belonged to the Gaekwads and Raghoba even as the Peshwa lacked the necessary authority to give it away.²⁵¹ It was desired that he should obtain the grant of these places from the Gaekwad family and transfer the same to the company.²⁵² In concluding the negotiations Gambier had expressed orders to make sure that the 'territories to be had' was to be conveniently situated for administering, and of the value of Rs. 18½ lakhs.²⁵³

²⁴⁹ Ibid. P. 209.

²⁵⁰ Ibid. P. 212.

²⁵¹ Ibid, Pp. 216-217.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid. Pp. 231-232.

In the meanwhile, Govind Rao and Raghoba had to raise the siege of Baroda as Fatehsing Rao received reinforcements from Poona. With this Govind Rao lost all the advantages he had gained in the last months.²⁵⁴ However, before this information reached Bombay, the authorities had resolved to help Raghoba on 22nd January 1775.²⁵⁵ In a skirmish with the ministerial forces Raghoba was defeated mainly because of the defection of his Arab forces. He immediately fled to Cambay apprehending general defection of his forces. He demanded the protection of the English Resident at Cambay but the *Nawab* refused to admit him. He therefore fled to Bhavnagar from where he was sent to Surat.²⁵⁶ The Treaty of Surat was signed between the English and Raghoba in March 1775. In the final negotiation the English could obtain the territories of Bassein and its dependencies, Salsette and its dependencies, Greater and Little Karanja, Kenery, Elephanta and Hog Island. In Gujarat Raghoba granted the Peshwa's share of Jambusar, Olpad, Hansot, Ankleshwar etc to the English.²⁵⁷ He also promised to procure necessary *sanads* for the Gaekwad's share of revenues from Bharuch town and *parganas*.²⁵⁸ With this, the English troops entered the battleground with Thomas Keating as the commander.

It was also thought that Fatehsing Rao should be induced to join the Anglo-Raghoba alliance. It was proposed by Bombay to induce

²⁵⁴ Ibid. Pp. 229-230 .

²⁵⁵ Ibid. P.231.

²⁵⁶ Ibid. P.245.

²⁵⁷ Ibid. 5th Article in the Treaty of Surat, P. 250.

²⁵⁸ Ibid. 6th Article in the Treaty of Surat.

Fatehsing Rao to desert the *Barbhais* cause. He was perceived as the soul of the opposing party as without him the *Barbhais* would be lost, not knowing the local fords and roads. It was also proposed to bring about an accommodation between the two brothers, Govind Rao and Fatehsing Rao Gaekwad. Territorial divisions for the same were also proposed by the English factors.²⁵⁹ To this, Fatehsing also replied positively.²⁶⁰ It was reported that the *Barbhais* did not trust him.²⁶¹ Because of the British involvement the Gaekwad contest was subsumed within the larger power struggle in the region.

Several factors were responsible for the commencement of this war. It was not just a struggle of Raghoba to gain power but also of the Bombay Presidency. The Bombay Presidency had to apply for financial support to Bengal for its sustenance. This was an opportunity for Bombay to augment its resources through territorial cessions, which could make it self-sufficient. The advantages to be had from the cessions made by Raghoba are expressed by Bombay council to Warren Hastings in these words:

"...The compact and the convenient situation of the several parganas with respect to our settlements of Surat and Bharuch will enable us to collect the revenues with little expense, and a very small addition to the garrisons at those places will be quite sufficient for their defense.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. Pp. 267-269.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid. A Note by the English agent Shankar Mall.

*The Revenues will defray the expenses and provide the investment of this presidency. The Company will possess many valuable articles of Commerce within their own territories, and be able greatly to extend the sale of wollens and other staples of Great Britain. We have been some (time) in peaceable possession of all the ceded territories except Bassein. The revenues are collecting without any difficulty...*²⁶²

The income arising from the limited territories under the control of Bombay and the trade being carried on, although extensive, was not enough for meeting the expenses. Therefore the necessity to enlarge its territories was felt by the Bombay authorities since 1768 since which time additions were made to the fortifications and the military establishment was increased.²⁶³ According to later English source two motives had induced the British to interfere in the Maratha affairs. Bombay needed to have control of Salsette for its existence and the danger from the French who might have become a threat with stronger support on the west coast. The English wanted Marathas on their side since the Maratha support could have been decisive.²⁶⁴

However, the Calcutta authorities were not in favour of action against the Marathas. Warren Hastings dubbed the steps taken by Bombay as 'impolitic, dangerous, unauthorized and unjust' and the

²⁶² Ibid, P.324.

²⁶³ English East India Comapany, *An Historical account of the settlement and possession of Bombay*, London, 1781, Pp. 8-9.

²⁶⁴ W.W.Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India-The Indian Empire*, Vol. II-Historical, London, 1907, P.442.

Treaty with Raghoba was declared invalid. It seems that Calcutta was attempting to assert its position as the Supreme authority of the British East India Company in India over the other two presidencies. It was recently vested with this power through the Regulating Act of 1773. The troops were ordered to be recalled and their intention of sending an Embassy to Poona to open fresh negotiations was declared by Calcutta.²⁶⁵ Colonel Upton was accordingly sent to Poona. At the same time the cession of Bharuch revenues made by Fatehsing Rao, districts of Chikli, Variav and Koral were ordered to be retained till a definitive treaty was concluded with Poona.²⁶⁶ It seems that the English treated their relations with Fatehsing Rao as being separate from the Raghoba alliance. Fatehsing Rao attached himself with the English with the hope that they would bring an understanding with Govind Rao. He also made various territorial cessions to please them like the Bharuch revenues, villages of Koral, Batta, etc.²⁶⁷ Fatehsing Rao was ready to give 1/3rd of his possessions to Govind Rao to bring the struggle for authority amongst the Gaekwad to an end. However, Govind Rao was not satisfied. He withdrew his support to Raghoba and took to depredations.²⁶⁸ After much procrastination Govind Rao accepted the terms proposed by Fatehsing through Col. Keating and an accommodation was reached,²⁶⁹ though the Maratha sources inform us that he was not satisfied. He contacted the ministerial party. He was then assured of their protection and was induced to take an oath of

²⁶⁵ *GOB II*, Pp. 295-296.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.* Pp. 322-323.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.* Pp. 310 & 323.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.* Pp. 311-312.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.* P.320.

allegiance to the infant Peshwa.²⁷⁰ In 1776 the Treaty of Purandhar was signed and the Bombay authorities were required to disband Raghoba's army and deliver him to Poona.

The War with the Marathas was however renewed following the reports of the tripartite alliance in south between HyderAli, Nizam and the Marathas at Poona. The Poona ministers specifically demanded the relinquishment of Salsette and handing over of Raghoba to get out of the above anti-British alliance.²⁷¹ This was not acceptable to the English. With the recommencement of War in November 1779, General Goddard was assigned the duties of leading the British troops and he was given both political and military powers by the Governor General, Warren Hastings. It was suggested by Bombay President to befriend the Gaekwad chief, which would safeguard the northern possessions of the English territories.²⁷² Action was commenced on 3rd Jan 1780, with the English Chief of Bharuch taking control of the Peshwa's *parganas* of Ankleshwar and Hansot. The *kamavisdars* called for aid from Fatehsing Rao who did not seem to have responded.²⁷³ On 26th Jan 1780 the Treaty of Kundhela was signed between Gen. Goddard on behalf of the East India Company and Fatehsing Rao.²⁷⁴ Amongst other things Fatehsing Rao accepted the suzerainty of the British, which freed him completely from the tutelage of the Peshwa. It was further stipulated to share the territories

²⁷⁰ G.S.Sardesai, *Peshwa Daftar* no. 36, op.cit, P. 289.

²⁷¹ *GOB III*. P. 42.

²⁷² *Ibid.* Pp. 36-37.

²⁷³ *Ibid.* Pp. 57-58.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.* P.60.

in Gujarat with the Peshwa's possessions to the North of Mahi falling into Fatehsing Rao's share and the Gaekwad's share of the Surat revenues and other areas south of Tapi falling into the control of the British.²⁷⁵ Later, Ahmadabad was captured by the joint forces of Gen. Goddard and Fatehsing Rao.²⁷⁶ It was given to the charge of Fatehsing Rao. This acquisition manifested the superior position of the English in this part of the country. Goddard shrewdly confined his military actions to such areas as were the possessions of Fatehsing Rao and thereby protected the British areas of Bharuch and Surat from the effects of war.²⁷⁷ The theatre of war from now onwards turned to Konkan from Gujarat. By December 1780, however, peace was established between the Marathas and the English for tackling the rising power of their mutual enemy, Haider Ali in the South. The Treaty of Salbai was concluded whereby the gains made by the Bombay Presidency were lost completely. Fatehsing Rao reverted back to his previous status of vassalage to the Peshwa. In addition, he lost his share of Bharuch's revenues also. Bharuch was given as gift to the English by the *barbhais* in consideration of signing the Treaty of Salbai. The English in turn gave it to Sindhia as he was instrumental in bringing about the above agreement. With this, the ambitions of financial independence by Bombay Presidency and the Fatehsing Rao's dream of freeing himself from Peshwa's tutelage, both were ended. It was as much a loss to Bombay as it was to the Gaekwad. It could be gathered that Bombay's interests were sacrificed for the sake of the larger ambition of the English in India. However, this turn of

²⁷⁵ Ibid. P.56.

²⁷⁶ Ibid. P.66.

²⁷⁷ Ibid. P. 82.

events did not end the friendship between the Gaekwad and the Bombay Presidency. On the other hand an informal alliance was continued between the two. In fact the English Company became a third party to the political relations between the Peshwa and the Gaekwad through a clause in the Treaty of Salbai whereby the English reserved the right to interfere in the event of attempts to encroach on the territories of the Gaekwad principality by the Poona authorities. This was manifested when Fatehsing Rao died and Manaji Rao was appointed the regent in his place by Poona. Nana Fadnavis demanded the cession of Gaekwad *chauth* of Surat as a price for Manaji Rao's succession. At this time Charles Malet, the English resident at Poona, promptly intervened reminding the Poona administration of the above article. The matter ended there itself. Thus all these factors contributed towards cementing the relations between the Gaekwads and the Company. In 1802-03 Baroda applied for military help from Bombay to quell a serious internal disturbance, which led the English to establish their superior power at Baroda and thereby expand their hegemony in the rest of Gujarat as well.

BARODA

Baroda had become the seat of suzerain power in Gujarat under the Gaekwads. By the end of the Century, the Gaekwads along with the Peshwa were the accepted overlords in almost all the areas of the region. This chieftaincy expanded its power under Damaji Rao and

Fatehsing Rao. With the death of Govind Rao in 1800, however, the fortunes of this dynasty took low ebb. The internal dissensions mainly resulting from the factional fights and court politics created instability facilitating the interference of the English. The English East India Company, by this time had acquired a definite political character. The defeat and death of Tipu Sultan had added considerable influence to the position of the Bombay Presidency. They now saw the way to fulfilling their ambitions that were retarded by the Treaty of Salbai. The episode of the establishment of British superiority at Baroda is to be seen in this context.

On the eve of British interference in this chieftaincy there were mainly three powerful indigenous factions at Baroda, Kanhoji Rao, Raoji Appaji and the Arab *sibandis*. In September 1800 Anand Rao Gaekwad succeeded his father Govind Rao, on the latter's death. Anand Rao was of a weak personality. Therefore, the administrative management was taken over by Kanhoji Rao Gaekwad²⁷⁸, his illegitimate brother. He worked as a regent. Besides him there was one Raoji Appaji (Raoba) who was an influential minister under Govind Rao. He had his own ambitions. The third party was of the Arab Sibandis²⁷⁹ who were organized into groups and were in control

²⁷⁸ Kanhoji Rao is generally referred to as illegitimate in the English sources. However, strictly speaking he was not illegitimate. He was an offspring of Govind Rao's wife who was the daughter of a Koli chieftain. Amongst the Marathas such wives did not enjoy the same status as the Maratha princesses. Therefore, such an offspring also was not accepted as the rightful heir. Kanhoji Rao was an ambitious man and had rebelled against his father three times in his father's lifetime itself.

²⁷⁹ For a detail account of the role of the Arab Sibandis in the power politics of Baroda and the British Policy to oust them, see Rashmi Batchu, *The Arab Sibandis at Baroda and*

of all the city gates and forts of the Gaekwad kingdom. The Shroffs who defrayed their salaries in turn controlled them.

Kanhoji Rao upon assuming the reigns of the government, attempted to bring some semblance organization to the finances of the chieftaincy. A large part of the expenses was devoted to the maintenance of the mercenaries. Kanhoji Rao's measures were mainly aimed at reducing this expenditure. The Arab Jamadars, unhappy with this move, conspired and imprisoned Kanhoji Rao and placed him under the supervision of their own guards.²⁸⁰ In his place they brought Raoba to power as Diwan. Upon Raoba's assuming government he was confronted with the same problems. Ousting the Arabs was beyond his means. Firstly they were in control of all the forts and city walls including that of Baroda. Secondly, Kanhoji was kept under their control and could be used to replace Raoba if they wanted.²⁸¹ In the meanwhile Malhar Rao of Kadi had risen in rebellion. He was the uncle of Anand Rao and a minor Gaekwad chieftain. The Gaekwads of Kadi were a parallel line of the Gaekwads in Gujarat. Khande Rao, brother of Damaji Rao, had increased Gaekwad influence in the Central and North Gujarat as a deputy of Damaji Rao. Therefore, Damaji Rao gave him a jagir of Nadiad, Kadi and a few other places. He was required to pay an annual *nazrana* and be a vassal of Baroda. Malhar Rao was his son and successor. He had risen in rebellion in support of Kanhoji Rao and the force sent to tackle him under Babaji

²⁸⁰ *the British Policy towards them 1800-1803*, PIHC 68th Session, 2008, Delhi.
 GOB IV, P. 127.

²⁸¹ Ibid. P.22.

was defeated by Malhar Rao. He had taken the towns of Visnagar and Vijapur and it was reported that he was marching to take Ahmedabad as well.²⁸² The Arabs had refused to march against him, as it meant leaving Baroda. At this juncture Raoba asked for troops from the British, as even the Peshwa's troops were not on hand. Peshwa had farmed his revenues to the Gaekwad in 1800. Therefore whole of the region was then under the administration of the Gaekwads.²⁸³ Thus, to secure his own position as Diwan, Raoba invited the English to take control of Baroda, by ousting the Arabs.²⁸⁴

It was to quell the disturbance created by Malhar Rao that Alexandar Walker was sent to Baroda in January 1802. The formal reason of his visit was to offer condolence to Anand Rao on the death of Govind Rao. This visit, Walker explained, was delayed because of the delay in the grant of the Surat *chauth* and the *pargana* of Chikli by the Gaekwad government.²⁸⁵ Walker was given the charge of commanding the troops²⁸⁶ sent against Malhar Rao and was later made the first British Resident at Baroda. Upon their arrival, the British had to confront the Arabs who had become all-powerful. Two Treaties were concluded between the Company and the Gaekwads whereby the British were accepted as the paramount authority by Baroda. The first was signed on 8th March 1802 at Cambay between Raoba on behalf of the Gaekwad ruler and the English President of

²⁸² Ibid. Pp. 127-128 & 17.

²⁸³ Ibid. P.53.

²⁸⁴ Ibid. 32.

²⁸⁵ Ibid, P. 148.

²⁸⁶ Ibid. P.115.

Bombay, Jonathan Duncan²⁸⁷. In the 2nd article of this agreement it was stipulated to reduce the Arab sibandis through the cooperation of the British and to permanently subsidize from the Company a force of about 2000 sepoys and a company of European artillery and its proportion of lascars with an estimated expense of Rs. 65,000 per month. It was further agreed to keep this clause secret till the end of the Kadi rebellion.²⁸⁸ Another treaty was entered into on 6th June 1802 and the British were accepted as the paramount power at Baroda.²⁸⁹ It was agreed privately between the Company and Raoba whereby the English assured Raoba that the post of *diwan* would permanently reside in the latter's family. A Sanad was duly issued.²⁹⁰

In the armed action that followed, Malhar Rao was defeated and his *jagir* confiscated.²⁹¹ Later he fled to Saurashtra and continued with his rebellious activities against the Gaekwad administration. With the end of Kadi rebellion, Walker and Raoba together disbanded the Arab Sibandis of Baroda²⁹² and the British authority was firmly entrenched in Baroda. In 1805 a single treaty called the Definitive Treaty was concluded between the two in place of the multiple treaties signed earlier. This made the alliance more definite and firm. With the establishment of the British power over Baroda the British were

²⁸⁷ Ibid. P.281.

²⁸⁸ Ibid. P.281.

²⁸⁹ Ibid. P. 410.

²⁹⁰ B.A.Gupte (ed), *Selections from the Historical Records of the Hereditary Ministers of Baroda*, Calcutta, 1922, P.35.

²⁹¹ *GOB IV*, P. 376.

²⁹² This episode has been treated in detail in the last chapter.

placed in an advantageous position to extend their direct influence in the rest of the region as well.

SAURASHTRA AND NORTH-EAST GUJARAT

The Marathas, Gaekwad and Peshwa, were jointly the accepted overlords of the various chieftaincies in Saurashtra and North-east Gujarat regions.²⁹³ These principalities were liable to pay an annual tribute *khandani* to the overlord. However this tribute was not easily forthcoming and the Marathas had to carry out annual expeditions called *Mulkgiri* to collect the same. The amount of the tribute was decided according to the resistance power of the tribute paying party. The more powerful principalities always paid less. It was also a question of honour with these principalities to not pay the tribute. By

²⁹³ The North-east region of Gujarat consists of several small principalities generally referred to as *Mewasi* because of the recalcitrant nature of the inhabitants. It mainly consists of the Rewa-Kantha, Mahi-Kantha, Sabar-Kantha, etc areas, each under a specific administrative agency during the British rule. Lying to the extreme north-east corner of the Bombay Presidency, the Mahi-Kantha was bounded on north by Sirohi and Mewar, on the east by Dungarpur, on west by Lunavada and Kadi district and on the south by the Rewa Kantha states of Lunavada and Balasinor. It included the major principalities of Idar, Rehvar, Vatrak-Kantha, Sabar-Kantha, Bavisi and Kotasani. J.M.Campbell (ed), *Bom.Pres.Gaz- Mahi Kantha*, vol-V, Bombay, 1880, Pp. 355-356.

Rewa-kantha is referred to the areas lying on the banks of the river Narmada, but it also includes an irregular band of territory passing north from Narmada to Mahi. Bounded on the north by Dungarpur and Banswada, on the east by the sub-divisions of Jhalod and Dohad in Panch Mahals and parts of Khandesh, on the south by the Gaekwad territories and the Mandvi sub-division of Surat and on the west by Ankleshwar, Bharuch, godhra, Kalol and parts of Kaira. Larger principalities in this area consisted of Chhota Udepur, Devgarh Bariya, Sunth, Lunavada and Balasinor. J.M.Campbell (ed), *Bom.Pres.Gaz-Rewa Kantha*, Vol. VI, 1880, P. 1.

Saurashtra region was generally referred to as Kathiawad in the British sources, although a distinction is also made between various provinces '*prants*' of Saurashtra by Alexander Walker while dealing specifically with this subject. *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, op.cit.

the agreement of 1752 the tribute due from these areas were equally divided between the Peshwa and the Gaekwad. Even then, their respective territories were minutely interspersed. Since Fatehsing Rao's time the Peshwa's share of the tribute of Mahi-Kantha was given in Ijara to the Gaekwads.²⁹⁴ Since 1800 whole of the revenue of the Peshwa in Gujarat was assigned to the Gaekwads. Thus, effectively the Gaekwads were the sole overlords of the region. Therefore it was easier for the British to expand their base here.

Alexander Walker considered the British interference in Saurashtra immediate to the establishment of their influence in Baroda. The reason for this was an application by the Kathi chiefs of Cheetal, Jasdan, Jetpur, Kondla, etc. in 1803 seeking English protection. This came as a result of the activities of the Bhavnagar chief expanding his territories at the expense of the Kathis. Bhavnagar chief, Wakhatsing had undertaken these activities since the last years of the 18th Century when he had emerged as a powerful ruler in the vicinity. This proved to be disastrous to the Kathis. In addition, the Jam of Nawanagar also had started making fresh levies on the Kathis. The Kathis were thus on the brink of extinction. The British were perceived as a bigger power capable of protecting them against their mightier neighbours. Thus, the Kathis applied for British protection.²⁹⁵ In addition the Raja of Morvi (Morbi) also sent his *Vakil* to Walker at Baroda seeking English intervention in his quarrel with the Raja of

²⁹⁴ *HSBSR II*, Lt. 13, P.158.

²⁹⁵ *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, P.64.

Malia. Earlier Walker had sent his agent Moulvi Mohammad Ali to Saurashtra to gain information on the state of affairs. The Moulvi informed Walker of the apprehensions of all the principal chiefs, especially the Jam of Nawanagar, regarding the English interference in their internal affairs. He tried to dissuade the Morbi Raja from taking such a step.²⁹⁶ At the same time the other concerns of the Company authorities made them decline further action in this quarter.

In 1804 it was proposed by Walker to begin the policy of extending English influence in Saurashtra. A proposition was sought to be made to all the tribute paying chieftaincies. The ones who accepted were to receive protection while the ones refusing were to be chastised.²⁹⁷ In the division of the territory so possessed, the Company was to have all the forts and seacoast of Saurashtra, while the Gaekwad was to be assigned territories of the same value in the interior.²⁹⁸ A British establishment in Saurashtra was deemed of great importance for the sake of checking the piracies that were injurious to the commerce of Bombay. The possession of the Coast would also have enabled them to extend their commercial and political influence to the mouth of Indus.²⁹⁹ In addition, the Kaira district, consisting of the *parganas* of Dholka, Dhanduka, Gogha, Ranpur, etc, passed into the British hands from the Peshwa in 1803 through the Treaty of Bassein. There was a need to safeguard these areas from the

²⁹⁶ Ibid. P.68.

²⁹⁷ Ibid. P.199.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Ibid. P.509.

neighbouring turbulent chiefs of Kathiawad. These were the border areas. It was decided to arrange for the Gaekwad's rights first and that of the Peshwa's later as doing both at the same time would have alarmed the chieftains.³⁰⁰ This was later to create problems between the Company and Peshwa.

The British interference in this region was in the nature of mediation and arbitration. The instrument for the above was the revenue settlements. The Mulk giri expedition conducted annually by the Gaekwad armies was cumbersome and costly. In order to avoid this as well as to further their own interests it was thought expedient to arrange for the revenue settlements on a permanent basis and receivable through the British authorities. In August 1807, Col. Walker, jointly with the Gaikwad government, sent letters asking the Saurashtra chiefs to send their *Vakils* to the English camp in Goontoo (also written as Goondoo in the sources) in Morbi principality to settle the Mulk giri payments.³⁰¹ These settlements were perpetual in nature but the Amount of revenue to be collected was subject to change and was made for 10 years known as Decennial settlements. *Fail zamini* and *Ad Zamini* were taken from each chieftain ensuring regular and timely payment. In addition, *Sankla Zamini* was also taken which made the chieftains mutually responsible for each other.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Ibid. P.200.

³⁰¹ *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, Pp.76 & 78.

³⁰² Ibid. P.98. For the meaning of the different types of *Zamini*, see 'Securities' in the second chapter.

The *Nawab* of Junagadh and the *Jam* of Nawanagar offered some resistance to these settlements. The Raja of Malia was chastised by the English troops and the fort of Malia was destroyed by Walker to show the military strength of the British.³⁰³ Just when the British troops were camping at *Goontoo* for carrying out the settlement, the Jam of Nawanagar acquired the fort of Kondorna. The background of this was that the Raja of Porbandar had a considerable number of Makrani sibandis in his employment. In a dispute with the Arab Sibandis and the Raja, the Makranis around 800, left Porbandar and took the fort of Kondorna under their control. The Jam of Nawanagar bought the fort by defraying the arrears of salaries due to the sibandis.³⁰⁴ The intervention of the British troops in favour of Porbandar made the Jam relinquish the possession of the fort. The British in return obtained half a share of the revenues of the port of Porbandar in 1809.³⁰⁵ The chief of Nawanagar resisted the attempts of the British even after this. It was only after the show of strength by the British in 1714 that Nawanagar yielded.

After the demise of Nawab Hamid Khan of Junagadh, Gaekwad's *Naib-Diwan* Vithal Rao got the whole of Amreli with British aid by way of *nazrana*. This was following the increase in influence of the Arab *Jamadar*, Umar Mukhasan and his faction in the *darbar* of the new *Nawab*, Bahadur Khan and the lowering of Diwan Raghunathji's power at Junagadh. Earlier the Gaekwads had only

³⁰³ *GOB VII*, P. 570.

³⁰⁴ *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, Pp.140-141.

³⁰⁵ *GOB VIII*, P.350.

1/3rd share in the revenues. In 1812-13 the Gaekwads took over the entire *pargana* and also built a fort there.³⁰⁶ In addition, the *pargana* of Kodinar was also given to the Gaekwads.³⁰⁷ In 1815-16 Jamadar Mukhasan attempted to hurt the Nawab physically, because of which captain Ballantyne³⁰⁸ had to take action and oust him and his men from the town. The Nawab, in gratitude, waived off his right to Zortalabi³⁰⁹ from Dhandhuka, Ranpur, Gogha and Dholera in 1817.³¹⁰ In 1821, through an agreement, the Nawab authorized the English to collect his Zortalabi throughout the province and retain one-fourth of the amount collected as expenses for the same. Sundarji Shivji, a Khatri horse trader, who enjoyed much influence with Captain Ballantyne and brought about above agreements, was made the *diwan* of Junagadh with British support.³¹¹

The general nature of revenue settlements was that an agreement was made with all the chieftains whereby (a) they were not to provide asylum to any thief, Bharwatia (outlaw), or a rebel of the sarkar; (b) no depredation to be carried out in the Sarkar's or company's territories and merchants and travelers were to be protected, and (c) no forcible possession of lands was to be made.³¹²

The British and the Gaekwad made these settlements arbitrarily and the Peshwa was not consulted. As the share of Peshwa's revenues

³⁰⁶ Ibid. Pp.343-344; *Tarikh-i-sorath*, P.82.

³⁰⁷ Ibid. P. 344; Ibid. Pp. 209-210.

³⁰⁸ British agent for Saurashtra.

³⁰⁹ Junagadh's Zortalbi is similar to Marathi *Khandani*.

³¹⁰ *Statistical Account of Junagadh*, pp. 54-55.

³¹¹ Ibid. P.55.

³¹² *Walker-Selections XXXIX*, Pp.110-111.

in Gujarat was farmed out to the Gaekwad and its term was to end in 1814, no immediate problem was faced by the British in 1807-08. However, the British were able to bring about a temporary arrangement empowering them to collect the revenues of the Peshwa as well. There were still loopholes left in the agreement concluded by Elphinstone but the interests of the British were safeguarded for the time being.³¹³ Hence, the problem of negotiation would have come after the end of the decennial arrangement i.e., in 1817-18. By then, however, the Peshwa was defeated decisively and his possessions, in Gujarat as elsewhere, were taken over by the Bombay Presidency. With this, the problem of Saurashtra tribute settlement also ended.

The effective arrangement of the Revenue Settlements in Saurashtra and its benefits to the British prompted its adoption also in Mahi-Kantha in 1811-1812. Lieut. Col. Ballantyne was deputed to induce the chiefs of this area to accept the Company's protection. Bacha Jamadar of Baroda, the commandant of the Mulkigiri forces in Mahi-Kantha, joined him. Decennial settlements similar to Kathiawad were made here as well with regard to the claims of the Gaekwads.³¹⁴ In 1817-18 the last Peshwa Baji Rao was defeated and the office of Peshwa was abolished. With this, Peshwa's rule in Gujarat also came to an end and his territories passed into British control. Through another agreement reached with the Gaekwad Chief on 3rd April 1820,

³¹³ *GOB IX*, Pp. 53-56.

³¹⁴ J.R.Kelly (ed), *Selections from the Records of Bombay Government XII, Mahee Kantha*, New Series, Bombay, 1856, p.6.

the British gained the sole management of the Kathiawad and Mahi-Kantha revenues.³¹⁵

In 1800 The British East India Company abolished the Nawabi of Surat and the Nawab was pensioned off. The office of Chief and the Council was replaced by three different departments, that of a Revenue Collector, a Judge and Megistrate and a lieut. Governor for Law and Order.³¹⁶ In 1802 the Gaekwad share of Surat was given to the British and that of the Peshwa in 1803 through the Treaty of Bassein. In 1803 the British also came into possession of Bharuch from Sindhia. In case of Kutch the Treaty of subsidiary alliance of 1819 made the British overlords. The British had become absolute paramount power in Gujarat by 1820

³¹⁵ Ibid. P.7.

³¹⁶ *Bom. Pres. Gaz. Vol. II, Surat*, op.cit., P. 154.