Like other parts of Mughal Empire the intermediary zamindars held a significant position in the revenue administration as well as agrarian society of Mughal Gujarat. Though the intermediary position was not exclusive of the rights enjoyed by Superior and the Primary zamindars, it was, however, distinctly different from them. 1 Modern scholars have identified and discussed various holders of intermediary positions in different parts of the Empire. 2 Of them the desai, patel (muqaddam) and the ijaradar who find description in the contemporary sources, may be discussed as intermediary zamindars of Mughal Gujarat.

A - THE DESAI :

The desai who held a position identical to the chaud-

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hari of North India, finds frequent description in the official documents and other sources of information of the period. During the reign of Emperor Akbar the desais, according to the Mirat, were appointed in all the mahals of the subah by Raja Todarmal who is reported to have introduced them in the Mughal revenue administration. During the course of the seventeenth and the opening years of the eighteenth century desais are noticed in all the kharaji

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1. For the position of chaudhari, S. Nurul Hasan, Thoughts on Agrarian Relations, p. 32; Irfan Habib, Agrarian System, pp 231, 235, 252-5, 291-4; N A Siddiqi, op.cit, pp 17, 41, 90-1; Irfan Habib (op.cit, p 291) without citing any evidence in support of his contention, identifies desais with the chaudharis. But B.R. Grover opines that the desai can't be identified with the chaudharis as both of them find references in the contemporary sources. It may be clarified here that emperor Jahangir issued a farman (dt. 14th Mehrmah, Ilahi year, Baroda, 14, unindexed; Hereafter Baroda farman), appointing Trangdas and Kishandas as the chaudharis of pargana haveli Baroda. The Mirat too (i, pp 262, 287, 292) refers to the chaudharis. But on a closer view of the available evidence it would appear that each available reference to the chaudhari is found in the documents which were prepared at the imperial centre. The references in the Mirat appear only when its author cites imperial orders. On the other none of the available document which was prepared in the subah refers to the chaudharis, much less in addition to or alongwith the desais. Further, the Baroda farman's chaudharis Tarangdas and Kishan das - are listed as desais in the document entitled fahrist mawaze' taraf-daren desaiyan pargara haveli, Baroda, R No. 49, Pune. It seems the North Indian terminology penetrated, surreptitiously, into the drafting of the documents at the imperial court.

2. Mirat-i Ahmadi, Supplement; p 228.
sarkars of the subah. The imperial administration maintained, or else endeavoured to maintain desais in the zamindari makans of the ismis and the mahin-o kahin zamindars, evidently to keep a watch on their revenues.

The desai was an intermediary zamindar of pargana level. In the available documents they are described as the desai of pargana unlike the muqaddam who is identified with a village. In other cases the desai could be identified with a taraf i.e. portion of a pargana comprising a group of specified villages.

However the sway of a single desai's right did not necessarily extend to cover the entire pargana, for more than one persons could hold the desaigiri in one and the same pargana. Thus emperor Akbar had appointed Jewraj, 

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2. Please see also, Rasmala, pp 302, 340, 345-6, 353, 447, 456 and references in the following discussion.


5. Ibid.

Kishandas and Kalyan as the desais of pargana Mangrole (sarkar Soreth) in 1603. It is seen above that emperor Jahangir had also appointed more than one persons as the desais (chaudharis of the farman) in pargana havell Baroda. There are references available for the entire seventeenth and the opening years of the eighteenth century specifying more than one desais for one and the same pargana.

It will be however wrong to assume that the jurisdictional authority of every single desa, or for that matter every desai-family, was invariably confined to the limits of a single paragana. According to a parwana (1687) Govardhan Das, Bethldas, Dhanwi Rai and Raghoji held desaigiri in 34 parganas of sarkar Soreth, each of them enjoying a share of fourth in the rights consequential upon the position.

1. Parwana dt. 15 Rabi 11, 1012 AH containing reference to the imperial farman dt. 21 Rabi 1, 1012 AH, Junagadh, S C No.1025 and 1170 (mahal Balagam).

2. Junagadh, SC No.688 Ex. Nos. 8/3, 8/4, and 8/5 (mahal Junagadh); Ibid, SC No. 104 (mahal Sutrapara); Account, ff 163a, 167a, 169b, 173a, 174b, 183b, 203b, 210b, 213a, 214b, 218b, 223a, 230b, 241a. There was no pargana in the entire sarkar Ahmadabad having less than two desais. Moreover, the desaigiri so held jointly was generally shared by the members of the same family.

3. The document (dt. 1099 AH) specifies the parganas as under; Pargana havell Junagadh, parganas of Batwa, Medra, Oplota, Dehrawal, Ranpur, Baxra, Belkha, Jetpur, Lathi, Jhao, Gariadhar, Terwa, Bhimrad, Daulatabad, Rajkot, Dhak, Gondai, Sultanpur, Deoli, Kutiyan, Babra (i.e. Babaria), Mandvi, Palitana, Hastnichowk, Dharai, Porbandar, Navibandar, Dhatrod, Raigaon, Artacha, Mahokhed, Jagat and one more parguna name of which
would, thus, appear that the territorial jurisdiction of desai ranged between wide limits and, likewise, their social status and economic position too would be at variance from one another.

Since more than one persons could enjoy desaigiri in one and the same pargana, or group of parganas, at the same time, it necessitated divisioning of income, or else, the source of income itself. In some cases the territory under joint jurisdiction was held collectively and share of each of the desai in the benefits consequential upon the position was defined proportionately.¹ In other cases the territory was physically delineated, each such division (taraf) represented, though not necessarily, proportionate share of each desai who, in such case, was termed tarafdar i.e. holder of

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¹ Ibid. The share was expressed as 'a fourth, a fifth, a sixth (hissa-i chaharum, hissa-i panjum, hissa-i shamshum) etc. The jointly held undivided territory is termed majmua-i desaiyan and in this capacity the desai was designated majmueadar. In the available mortgage deeds which are bilingual documents, the desaigiri of the Persian text is termed majmueadari in its Gujarati version. S H Desai's Private collection, Junagadh document dt. 14th Zilhaj 1110 AH No. 14 (6)/14; Ibid, dt. ? Ramadhan. AH; Samwat era 1771, (1714AD) No. 14(6)/19.

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Desai's position was by and large hereditary. But the succession necessitated, every time, imperial approval. It has been suggested that the desai's succession was confirmed, as also the fresh appointment was made by the provincial authorities who issued necessary parwana to that effect. But the available evidence does not subscribe to B.R. Grover's view. Jeewraj, Kishandas and Kalyan were confirmed in the position of desai on usual basis (b'dastur-i sabiq) by virtue of an imperial farman issued by Emperor Akbar. Likewise Emperor Jahangir confirmed Kantha, son of Harjiwan desai in the desaigiri of pargana Uplota etc. and Tarangdas and other in the desaigiri (chaudhrai) of pargana

1. Account, f .82a. The villages of pargana haveli. Ahmadabad, sometime during Aurangzeb's reign were divided into seven tarafs in the following way: taraf Bethaldas (consisting 34 specified villages), taraf Mukanddas (33 villages), taraf Gopidas (15 villages) and so on. Village Patri Kochrab which was held jointly is described as 'majmua -i desaiyan'; Fahrist mawazi taraf- dar desaiyan, pargana haveli Ahmadabad, R No 42, Pune.


3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Junugadh, S C Nos. 1025 and 1170 (mahal Balagam), op.cit.
havelī Baroda by issuing farmans.¹

Likewise the parwana (1687) confirming Govardhandas and other in the desaigiri of 34 parganas as mentioned above, was issued in accordance with the imperial farman (b' mujib-i farman-i a'llshan).² It may, therefore, be seen that the desais were appointed and confirmed by the imperial centre. The provincial authorities issued parwanas as a matter of follow up action. The revenue department of the subah maintained pargana - taraf-majmua' - wise details specifying area of jurisdiction of each desai for official purposes.³

On every succession the incumbent had to offer tribute (peshkash) to the Emperor. The offering being a stipulated sum of money and described as peshkash-i sarkar-i wala was to be recovered on installment basis.⁴ In some cases exemption from paying the required peshkash-i sarkar-i wala could be granted by the Emperor.⁵ It may be pointed

1. The Baroda farman reads: chaudrai pargana Baroda b'aba-o ajdad mutalliq ast b'dastur sabiq, b'Tarangdas w awlad-l oo mugarrar o mufawwaz ba'shad., Junagadh, SC No. 389 Ex. No.2 ( Mahal Junagadh).
3. Account, ff. 17a, 82a.
5. Jahan-giri's Baroda farman, (op.cit.) grants the exemption; see also Account, 352a.
out here that the amount of peshkash thus offered differed from desai to desai and ranged between wide limits. Thus, for example, the desais of Viramgaon sometime during the opening years of the eighteenth century were to pay Rs.68386/9 annas and those of Piplod only Rs.550/-\(^1\). Taken as a denominator, the amount of peshkash suggests vast variations in the socio-economic positions of desais within their own group.\(^2\)

The desaigiri was most commonly held by the Nagar and Andrawala Brahmans who are reported to have "followed the professions in which penmanship" was required.\(^3\) Some of the desais also belonged to the Mehta and Khatiri castes.\(^4\) Members of these castes are found amongst the persons who went for higher education and were well versed in Persian during Mughal ages.\(^5\)

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1. Account, ff. 218b, 230b.

2. Please see also Ibid ff. 173a, 174b, 183b, 213a, 214b, 241a.

3. Tarikh-i Soreth (Junagadh MS) f. 23, SH Desai's private collection Nos. 14 (6)/14 of 1110 AH; Junagadh, SC No.780, Ex. No.4/3 (mahal Sutrapara); Rasmala, p 57.

4. Tarikh-i Soreth (Junagadh MS) f.23; Rasmala, p 57; The collector of Surat to Revenue Commissioner No.54, dt. 13th November, 1846; Report from NA Peddar, C.S., President of the Gujarat Watan Commission, No. 18/143, dt.19th April 1865.

5. M A Qureshi, Muslim Education and Learning in Gujarat (1277-1758), Baroda, 1972, pp 231-9, 253-6.
The *desais* occupied a leading position in the administrative set up of revenue machinery. The *desai* was basically responsible for effecting assessment and for fixation of *jama* in accordance with the rules and regulations. They were required to be well versed in the rules and regulation concerning revenues, the *destur-ul amals* and their application. The advice of *desai* was to be given due weightage in the affairs concerning revenues and allied matters. Assisted by the state officials and the *muqaddams* the *desai* had to visit every cultivated plot for the settlement of revenues. Services of *desai* were required in the settlement of revenues in such areas also as followed the system of *ghalla bakhshi*, known also as *bhagwatai*.

The *desais* also supervised collection of revenues which at the village level was effected by the *muqaddams* and state officials. Emperor Akbar had ordered the *diwan-i subah* to

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1. *Account*, f. 17b.
3. *Jahangir's, Baroda farman, op.cit.*
5. For example, the *desais* as pointed out earlier, were there in *sarkar* Soreth. From the period of Isa Tar Khan's period, the *sarkar* was put under the system of *bhagwatal*, *Mirat-i Ahmadi*, I pp 217-8; *Corpus inscriptionum Bhavnagri*, New Delhi; 1971, pp 47-9.
"collect revenues through the desais and muqaddams" both in khalsa and jagir lands. Likewise Emperor Jahangir had directed that the assessment and collection of revenues be effected with the approbation (b'istaswab) of the desais. The desais along with the muqaddams were to sign tamassuk undertaking the responsibility of collecting and remitting the assessed revenues. Moreover the desais had also to explain the cause of difference, if any, between the amount assessed and actually collected.

Functions of the desais were not confined to the sphere of assessment and collection of revenues alone. The desais had to maintain accounts also. According to the Baroda farman the desai was to maintain year to year detailed account of jama-o kharj of the area and furnish the same to the imperial centre(b'daftar-i khana-i humayun). The imperial court used to depute mace bearers to collect such

2. Jahangir's Baroda farman, op.cit.
3. Naql tamassuk for the period of Mukarramat Khan PC No. 63. Later on the British also noted that the desais were appointed to 'superintend the collection of revenues.' Mr. Asst. Collector Pyner's Representation on Balasinor, 1827; Bombay Gazetteer, II, pp 214-5.
5. Baroda farman, op.cit.
detailed accounts from the desais. 1 The desais along with the quanungos were also required to approach the Diwan-i Subah for submitting the awarjah, details of taqsim and mawazna-i dehsala. 2 In this enormous task of account-keeping the desais were assisted by their respective gumash-tas at village level. 3

The desais were also responsible for the advancement of the taqavi (agricultural loans) to the deserving raiyat and its subsequent recovery in instalments in accordance with the established practice. 4 The desais were, moreover, supposed to enforce the state regulations for trade and commerce. 5 They were also required to make 'sternous' efforts in 'promoting' the prosperity and the flourishing condition of the area and the 'welfare of the inhabitants'. They were also instructed to ensure that more and more land

1. Account, f 17a, The Mirat (I p.327) notes that Sheikh Muhammad Fazil, the mace bearer, came to procure the details of hsl-i hasil, of parganas and mawazna-i dehsala of the Subah sometime during Aurangzeb's reign. The nazim and the diwan had to make arrangements for reproducing desais because the jagirdars "practised indifference in producing the desais".

2. Account, ff 17ab, 180ab.

3. S H Desai's private collections, No.14 (6)/14 op.cit. The gumashtas were allowed a share out of the desai's income. Ibid; chaknama, dt. 10th Sho'ban 1111 AH, PC No.266.


5. Ibid.
was brought under cultivation and the *jins-i kamil* (cash crop) was increasingly cultivated.¹

There were, then, some other duties assigned to and still other performed by the *desais* on their own volition. Emperor Aurangzeb asked the *desais*, *sheths*, *quanongos* of every *chakla* in the city of Ahmadabad to point out ways for levying additional taxes assuring them a share in the income therefrom.² The *desails* were regarded as reliable witnesses by the zamindars for substantiating their plea before the State for regaining the zamindari lost to some miscreants.³

The *desails* of *pargana* Dholqa helped the *muqaddams* and the *riaya* of Chatrasan and other villages (*pargana haveli* Ahmadabad) in settling inter-village boundary dispute arising out of the changing course of river Sabarmati during Aurangzeb's reign.⁴ The *desails* of *sarkar* Soreth during closing years of Aurangzeb's reign reported to the *bakhshi* of the *subah* that the miscreants attacked and plundered villages finding the place without a *faujdar*. The *desais* were accordingly empowered to raise specified troops for meeting

¹. *Baroda farman*, op.cit.


the challenge. It was in addition to the customary staff of horse-men and foot-men which the desais were provided with for the proper discharge of the routine duties.

SHARE

The desais were hereditary recipients of a share in the revenues actually collected from the riaya. The share was given in cash at a specified rate out of the collected revenues and in the form of land grants. The share in cash was called 'dastur-i desai', 'desaigiri', haq-i desai' or majmuadari'. The lands given were described as 'pusaita' or pusita-i desaiyan.

According to the author of the Mirat-i Ahmadi Emperor Akbar determined the desai's share in 1590. Accordingly the desais were to get 0.25% of the revenues collected from the khalsa and jagir lands. During the reign of the same emperor half (1.25%) of the dastur was resumed by Khan-i Azam Mirza Aziz Kokaltash, then subedar. The same work notes that the desais were further deprived of the half (.625%) of the remaining half (1.25%) in favour of diwani and thus they were allowed 0.625% of the collected revenues.

3. For references please see discussion in the following lines.
revenues by way of *desaigiri*.\(^1\) Whether the same rate was applicable for the entire *subah* during Akbar's reign is not known. Emperor Jahangir's *farman* issued in favour of Kant-haji and other *desais* of *pargana* Junagadh (*sarkar* Soreth) allowed the *desaigiri* @ 5% i.e.; a rate much higher than the one granted by Emperor Akbar.\(^2\) The *desaigiri* for the *desais* of *pargana* Viramgaon and Dholqa (*sarkar* Ahmadabad) was calculated @ 1.5 percent during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb and later also.\(^3\) In the absence of detailed evidence it is difficult to ascertain if the rate of *desaigiri* was modified during post-Akbar period, or else different rates were simultaneously applicable in different parts of the *subah*.

Besides the *desais* were allowed to enjoy revenues of the *pusaita* lands which they held in addition to, and, over and above the *desaigiri* allowance discussed above.\(^4\) The

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2. *Junagadh, S C No. 880 (mahal Junagadh).*
3. *Account, ff 229b, 288a.*
4. According to Emperor Jahangir's *farman* (*Junagadh, SC No. 880, (mahal Junagadh)* the *desais* were to enjoy the *desaigiri* @ 5 out of every 100 *mehmudi* and *arazi-i pusaita*; *desaigiri* *pargana* *mazkurha fisad ki panj mehmudl-o arazi pusaita*; According to the *parwana* (1099 AH) issued to confirm Govardhandas etc. in the *desaigiri* cited above, the *desais* were to enjoy the *dastur*, the *pusaita* and *ina'm* possessions (*dastur-o pusaita - inam dehat*) as before (*b'dastur sabiq*). Cf, B.R.Grover, "The position of desai..." *op.cit.*
pusaita grants were actually held by them on the mainland as well as on the peninsular Gujarat.\textsuperscript{1} It is interesting to note that the pusaita lands were fragmented considerably in a large number of villages unlike the madad-i mash lands which were consolidated in specified areas. Emperor Jahangir’s farman speaks of the pusaita lands of Kanthaji and other desai in every, (dar har mawza) if not each village of the concerned parganas.\textsuperscript{2} According to a parwana (1723) the pusaita lands of Pragji, Jiwan, Ranchhod and other desais of pargana Junagadh were located, since some time past, in qasbah Delwara (60 bighas), villages of Mahta buzurg (55 Bigha), Amodra (45 bigha) Patri buzurg (15 bigha), Shekhwapur (30 bigha), Anjar buzurg (15 bigha), Dandi (15 bigha), Khajodra (25 bigha), Ver buzurg (15 bigha), Upodra (25 bigha), Sheikhjil buzurg (15 bigha), Sonkhera buzurg (15 bigha), Belkhar (25 bigha), Bahrampur (10 bigha), Chakher (10 bigha), Gangasar (50 bigha), Hansoj (25 bigha) and Una (50 bigha), thus in all 500 bighas of land were spread over eighteen villages.\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1} Jahangir’s Junagadh farman, op.cit; Junagadh, SC Nos.517, 519, 1054 (mahal Derawal): Account, ff. 182a, 202b, 409a.
\textsuperscript{2} Jahangir’s Junagadh farman, op.cit.
\textsuperscript{3} Junagadh, SC No.389, Ex. No.2 (mahal Junagadh).
In addition to their customary claims as discussed above the desais were also recipients of the ina'm and additional pusaita rights given as a special favour. Emperor Aurangzeb granted (1660) mawza Hanmethi (pargana Ranpur) to Dwarkadas desai by way of ina'm.\(^1\) The same emperor granted (1688) villages of Ojwai, Tonki, Uchde and Reshala in addition to mawza Hanmethi to desai, son of Dwarkadas desai by way of ina'm.\(^2\) The same desai also held the villages of Piparia (pargana Baxra), Tankatoda and Nehrawala (pargana Amreli) during the same period, however granted earlier by way of muaf\(i.\)

The same emperor also granted (1703) a well (chah) along with the land associated with it, by way of pusaita out of kindness (az rah-i-inayat) to Ajit Rai desai of pargana Mangrole (sarkar Soreth)\(^4\).

Besides, the desais were also given similar grants by the jagirdars and other state officials.\(^5\) Prince Muhammad Azam Shah who held sarkar Soreth in jagir\(^6\) granted (1700 AD) 50 bighas of barani and chahi lands in mawza Amodra by way

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1. Ibid, SC No.800, Ex. Nos.1,3, 7/5, (mahal Junagadh).
4. Ibid, SC No.194 (mahal Seel).
of inam-o pusaita to Malji and other desais of pargana Una (sarkar Soreth). The prince also granted them eight anna (neem rupia) as daily allowance (rozina) out of the revenues of the town of Delwara. Later (1704) the prince granted 200 bigha of chahi (irrigated) and barani (un-irrigated) lands to Mohanji and Nana Raghunath, desais of pargana Una as an act of benevolence (az rah-i inayat-o meherbani).

Though the pusaita lands were by and large held rent-free however in some part of the subah the desais had to share its revenues with the state. In a number of parganas of sarkar Ahmadabad the desais were not required to pay any part of the revenues accruing from pusaita lands to the state. But the desais of pargana Mundah (sarkar Ahmadabad) were required to surrender a half of the revenues of the lands during the kharif season to the state whereas the other half of the revenues expropriated from the raiyat was retained by them. The state made no such demand during the

1. Junagadh, SC No. 688, Ex No. 8/3 (mahal Una).
2. Ibid, Ex No. 8/5.
3. Ibid Ex No. 8/4; Ibid, S C No.517 Ex No.2 (mahal Derawal).
4. Dastur-ul amal (Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb and Muhammad Shah's reign), PC Nos. 22, 26, 51; Account, ff. 182a, 350a. These lands are declared as muaf (not assessed for paying revenues to the state).
There is evidence to show that the dastur and pusaita-i desaiyan were subject to the payment of a cess, called peshkash-i dastur-i pusaita which was levied by the Nazim-i subah. During the reign of emperor Aurangzeb (Mukhtar Khan's period of subedar) the cess on the pusaita was abolished and excluded of the jama also.

But the dastur-i desai was not entirely expropriated by the desais who had to offer an unspecified portion of it to the Nazim-i Subah throughout the seventeenth and the opening years of the eighteenth century. The offering called peshkash-i harsala, peshkash-i dastur-i desaiyan, peshkash-i nizamat of desais, peshkash-i desaigiri or simply dastur, was paid annually to the Governor of the province. Exemp-

1. Ibid.
2. Dastur-ul amal, for the period of subedar of Isa Tar Khan and Prince Dara's naib Ghairat Khan, PC Nos. 35, 58.
3. Ibid. After his succession the Emperor abolished it along with the other prohibited cesses (abwab-i-mam-nua) but it continued to from a part of the jama. Later, on the desais' request for its exclusion from the jama and stopping collections, was acceded.
4. Account, ff 173a, and Ibid, ff 164b, 167a, 169a, 175a, 203b, 213b, 216b, 218b, 223a; For its actual collection during the eighteenth century, Mirat-i Ahmadi, Supplement, pp 236-9.
tion from its payment could also be granted. 

It would thus appear from this discussion that a considerable part of the desais' share which varied from place to place, was taken away by way of peshkash-i sarkar-i wała and then as peshkash-i desaigiri. Even then, the net income of the desais must have been substantially large. More so, the sources of their income were not confined to the desaigiri allowance, pusaita lands and ina'm and mua'fi possessions. They had other means, both legal and illegal, for enhancing their income.

At times with his (official) position the desai felt tempted to misuse their authority to coerce the raiyat and make money. The desai of pargana Supa (sarkar Surat) were reported not to have made proper assessment and contrary to the practice had done only summary assessment on the villages based on part records in 1594. The desai had also illegally realized the village expenses (maiba) and arrested 22 persons. He had also omitted the assessment of his own cultivated lands. According to another parwana (1678) the desai of pargana Bisrai forced the raiyat of some villages

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1. Emperor Jahangir's Junagadh farman provides that (peshkash-i desāigiri ke sahib-i subah....migirafte marfu-ul qalam daniste).

to cultivate his own lands for himself. The muqaddam of one of the villages who happened to be a member of the desai's caste (birathri), also lent him support. Then the desai evaded assessment of his own cultivated lands. According to yet another parwana (1693) the desai of pargana Harsur (sarkar Ahmadabad) assessed the pusaita-i muqaddaman at full rates (amal-i bilmanasta) in violation of the amal-i dastur which provided for complete exemption of their pusaita lands from assessment.

The desais seem to have had some kind of relationship with the seths and mahajans i.e. the men of capital and money lenders. According to emperor Aurangzeb's farman (eighth regnal year) the 'seths and desais' of many parganas' of the subah did not allow other persons to purchase fresh food grains on its arrival in the mandis. They purchased good quality of grain and allowed the merchants to buy 'rotten and wasteful corn.' Moreover, they forced the

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1. Parwana, dt. 19 Safar, 1089 AH, R No.36, Pune.
3. Emperor Jahangir's Baroda farman asks the mahajans of Baroda to take note of the person appointed as desai. According to the Mirat, the gumashta of the amin-i jizyah had reported that the zimmis of pargana Mehmudabad did not pay jizyah for two years (1697-99) and they were bidding time for payment with the support of local desai and seths. Mirat-i Ahmadi, I, p. 339.
merchants to pay the price of good stuff. If the desais purchased lands, cattles and houses, the state granted them exemption from paying customary tax on such transactions. The desais contracted ijara rights and thereby might have made money. They are also reported to have collected prohibited taxes from a certain section of the riaya during Aurangzeb's reign. As such the desaigiri was quite a lucrative position and its possessors would have, naturally, enjoyed a respectable social position.

A few pieces of information casting light on some other activities of the desais and their relationship with other members of the ruling class are also available. Perceiving the rising strength of imperial power, Somji desai pursued the Gohel chief of Sehore to offer port of Ghoga by way of nazrana to Akbar when the Emperor conquered Gujarat. For this, Somji was rewarded by a grant of some villages and an increased allowance while the Gohel chief was allowed to retain his rights in all the harbours of Gohelwad. Later

5. JW Watson, "Historical Sketch of the town of Ghoga," The Indian Antiquary, op.cit, p 283.
6. Ibid.
during Shah Jahan's reign the desai of pargana Idar acted as an intermediary for bringing about a rapprochement between the Rathor zamindar of the place and the provincial authorities.\footnote{Rasmala, pp. 344-45.} Mehraji, an imperial desai at Lolyana (sarkar Soreth) made capital out of the strife ridden ruling family of Sehore sometime during Aurangzeb's reign. The desai succeeded in getting his son, Ranji Mehraji, appointed as a pattawat there.\footnote{Ibid, p 353. Ranji Mehraji's son, Damji, was also appointed in the same capacity there. He became very powerful and annoyed the then ruling chief, Bhao Singh who killed Damji. Ibid.}

The relations between the desais and other zamindars were not necessarily cordial all the time. The zamindar of Rajpipla had killed the imperial desai during Akbar's reign but had spared the qazi and the news-writer.\footnote{Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Supplement p. 233.} Likewise the zamindar of Cheharmandvi killed the imperial desai during the reign of the same emperor.\footnote{Sharif Khan Bharuchi's Letter, op.cit.} It has been mentioned above that the desai of pargana Supa and Harsur had encroached upon the privileges of the muqaddams by illegally realizing the village expenses and assessing the pusaita lands. The patel of Verawal (pargana Somnath-Pattan, sarkar Soreth)

\begin{enumerate}
\item Rasmala, pp. 344-45.
\item Ibid, p 353. Ranji Mehraji's son, Damji, was also appointed in the same capacity there. He became very powerful and annoyed the then ruling chief, Bhao Singh who killed Damji. Ibid.
\item Mirat-i-Ahmadi, Supplement p. 233.
\item Sharif Khan Bharuchi's Letter, op.cit.
\end{enumerate}
killed the desai for some unspecified reason sometime during Aurangzeb's reign. The deceased desai's son was therefore favoured with pusaita grant by the court and he continued to hold it during later years.¹

But, then, the desais seem to have maintained satisfactory working relationship with the jagirdars. Any reference suggesting differences between them is conspicuous by its absence. On the other the jagirdars and other local officials are reported to have favoured them with pusaita grants and ina'm which they made out of their jagir revenues.² The Mirat has also reported that the jagirdars "practised indifference in producing the desais" of their respective areas before the imperial officials deputed from the centre to collect revenue-records from them. The provincial authorities had, therefore to make special arrangements for ensuring the availability of the desais before the deputed person.³ It seems the desais had an inclination to

² Account, f.14a.
³ Mirat-i Ahmadi, l. pp 326-7, it may be pointed out here that the Mughal officials who established their independent principalities in the subah during the first half of the eighteenth century maintained the desais, assigning them high administrative positions under them. In their new capacity they were designated as 'diwan or karbhari', the incharge of affairs.
hold back the required information and were handed in gloves with the jagirdars.

The desais undertook some such activities which signify their socio-economic position and were meant to earn name and fame. Mahasom, the imperial desai at Ghoga, built a temple of Kalka-Mata in the year 1615.1 Mathuradas and Samaiji, desais of pargana Badnagar, built a stepwell for public use at the town of (pargana) Petlad (sarkar Ahmadabad) during the opening years of the eighteenth century.2

The desaigiri seems to have acquired the form of property before the close of the seventeenth century. It is not precisely known if the desaigiri could be sold and purchased. But it is certain that it could be mortgaged. According to a mortgage deed (May 1699) Mahadji, Madanji and Anandji, the sons of Ganpat desai of pargana Somnath-Pattan (sarkar Soreth) mortgaged their share in the majmue'dari (majmue'dari hissa khudha) with Gangaram, Damodar and Bhimji, sons of Ram Krishna - a physician (Tabib) for 252 mehmudis. The mortgagors (maraahoons) as per the stipulated


2. M R Majumdar, "A Triangular inscription on a stepwell in Petlad," Journal of the University of Bombay V No. 10, pt. IV, May, 1937, pp. 147-8. The stepwell was constructed during the subedar(1701-4) of Prince Azam who is duly mentioned in the inscription.
conditions, got entitled to enjoy the consequential rights and perform the 'related duties.\textsuperscript{1} Another document (Feb. 1700) records that a woman\textsuperscript{2} (\textit{musammat} named Kobra (\text??)) , wife of Gobindji (son of Sarangdhar) possessed a share in the desaigiri\textsuperscript{3} in pargana Somnath-Pattan (\textit{sarkar} Soreth). The woman-desai mortgaged her share for 350 \textit{mehmudis} with Damodar, the son of the same physician, Raikishan Nagar.\textsuperscript{4}

It would appear from the preceding discussion that the desaigiri was by and large held by educated members belonging to upper castes, particularly the Nagar Brahmans. The desais appear to be wealthy people having links with the men of purse. That the desais enjoyed a position of power and significance in the revenue matters and the ruling hierarchy is well evident. Whether they had an equally strong social

\begin{enumerate}
\item S H Desai’s private collection, \textit{rahn-namah} dt. 14th Zilhaj 1110 AH, No. 14(6)/14.
\item This is the only available reference to a woman holding desaigiri. Whether the right was purchased or inherited is not known.
\item The preceding and the present documents are bilingual one. The Gujarati version terms the rights thus being mortgaged as deshaigiri in both the documents. Whereas the Persian text in the first document calls it \textit{maju'me'dari} and in the following document names it the desaigiri. The two terms thus being used alternately as also interchangeably seem to have denoted the same rights. Both the deeds, it may be mentioned, were registered with the office of the qazi.
\item S H Desai’s Private collection, \textit{rahn namah}, dt. ? Ramadhan, 1111 A H, No.14 (6)/19. The Tabib was recipient of \textit{madad-i ma’\textit{sh lands also}}.
\end{enumerate}
The desais depended more on the administrative backing than on their social base which, in any case, does not appear to be as strong as that of the muqaddams.

**B - MUQADDAM:**

The muqaddam, also called *patel*\(^1\) was an important intermediary zamindar of village level. A leading member of the village community he acted simultaneously as the representative of the village under him and watch dog of imperial interests in the village.\(^2\) The position of *muqaddami* was hereditary and could also be bought and sold.\(^3\) In the Mughal Gujarat emperor Akbar is reported to have confirmed the *muqaddams* in their positions and accordingly accepted their share in the revenues.\(^4\)

The presence of *muqaddams* is noticeable in all the *kharaji sarkars* of the *subah* during the seventeenth century. From the

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1. **Baroda**, 27. The bilingual document describes the person named therein as *muqaddams* in its Persian text and *patel* in the Gujarati version. In another Persian document (*Ibid*, 57 and 83) the named persons are called *patels* (*patelan*). Please see also, Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, p. 129n1.


detailed list of the villages of paragana Kadi (sarkar Ahmadabad) it would appear that the muqaddams were there in both kinds of villages, the raiyati as well as the zamindari. They were there in the villages lands of which were divided on bantha-talpad lines and also in the ones areas of which were not likewise divided. Their presence is also noticeable in the zamindari makans, including the watan possessions of the zamindaran-i mahin-o kahin discussed in a preceding chapter [1(2)].

But it cannot be taken to mean that the muqaddam was necessarily there in each of the villages. Of 282 villages in paragana Kadi the muqaddams were there in 211 villages i.e. 74.8 per cent of the villages had their own muqaddams. The remaining villages, 72 in number and forming 25.2 per cent of the paragana were without a muqaddam (muqaddam nadard). As such the sway of muqaddam's right did not cover the entire countryside.5

Like the class of cultivators that mainly consisted of

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1. Account, ff. 309a-38a.
2. Ibid.
3. Account, ff 309a read with Ibid ff 311a, 314a, 315a and dehat-i paragana Kadi, PC No. 3 to 7.
4. Account, ff 309a -38a
5. Irfan Habib (Agrarian System, pp 128-31) also notes the villages without muqaddams.
the kameja (khudkasht) and the paikashat\(^1\) (uprawaria), the available documents speak of two classes of muqaddams also, viz; muqaddaman-i kameja and muqaddaman-i paikashata. In a dastur-ul amal of emperor Aurangzeb's reign rates of assessment have separately been furnished for the paikashta-muqaddaman for the pargana Pratil (Prantij), sarkar Ahmadabad.\(^2\)

The paikashta muqaddams are also referred to in the dastur of a newly founded (naw abad) village of the same pargana.\(^3\)

Another document specifying area statistics of the actually cropped lands in mawza Mahej (pargana haveli Ahmadabad) mentions the muqaddaman-i kameja amongst the various holders of land, however as a separate category of land holders.\(^4\)

The available evidence however does not help us to precisely ascertain if the muqaddams were themselves non-residents (pais) or there were separate muqaddams for the paikashtas, or both. It may also be mentioned that the

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1. The kamejas or the resident cultivators were the ones who held and cultivated the lands by themselves; the pahi, meant the peasant (raiyat) in one mauza and is subordinate to one zamindari and carries on cultivation in the zamindari of another zamindar*. For a detailed view, Satish Chandra *Some Aspects of Indian Village Society in Northern India during the 18th Century* (The position and Role of the khudkasht and pahi kasht* pp 245-56).


*muqaddams* were holders of lands in their own right, independent of the *muqaddami*. They could be the *khudkashtas* as also held lands which were cultivated by other cultivators (*muzarian*) of unspecified description.¹

The *muqaddami* was, by and large, confined to the most important section of the village community and the *muqaddams* were the superior members of the populace.² But the the *muqaddami* doesnot, by and large, seem to have been enjoyed by a single individual in a village.³ Excepting *mawza* Shahbāri (*pargana haveli* Ahmadabad) we donot come across any village which had only one *muqaddam*.⁴ From a document dated 1699 AD (1111 AH) it would appear that there were not less then Three *patels* in village Santhal of the same *pargana*.⁵

1. The *muqaddams* held lands in talpad (*raiyyati*) as well as in the bantha portion of a zamindar. *Mazruat-i-mawza* Khator, 26 R Y Aurangzeb, *P.C.* No.161; *Mazruat-i-mawza* Dhamanwan, 1140 fasili; *Mazruat-i-mawza* Mahej, 1146 fasili; *Mazruat-i-mawza* Majhol, 1151 fasili, *P.C.* Nos. 91,93; see also *P.C.* Nos 278-79 of 1709-10 A D.


3. In its description of the *muqaddams* of the villages of *pargana* Kadi the Account invariably suffixes the expression "and other" (*Waghaira*) after naming the *muqaddam* of a village. In case the work does not specify the name and simply puts the caste, it likewise puts them in plural - Rajputan, Baqqalan etc; see also Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, p 129.

4. For more references, please see discussion below.

5. *Yad-dasht girasia waghaira mawza Santhal amla pargana haveli* Ahmadabad, R.No.37, Pune.
Another document (1702 AD) specifies as many as nine muqaddams in mawza Deoli, pargana Chorasi (sarkar Surat). Evidently sway of each muqaddam's right would extend to a portion of the village, or else to a part in the revenues thereof. The situation, it may be postulated, would also lead to intensifying the muqaddam's hold over the raiyat.

As regard caste-composition of the muqaddam some valuable information is available in the pages of Account which furnishes detailed list of the muqaddams, their caste or community for the villages of pargana Kadi (sarkar Ahmadabad) for the first quarter of the eighteenth century. As mentioned earlier 211 of the 282 villages had muqaddams. The caste-wise composition of the specified 211 villages having muqaddams may be summarised as under:

1. Yad-dashat maqaddaman mawza, Deoli amli pargana haveli Ahmadabad, R No. 37, Pune.

CASTE/COMMUNITY-WISE BREAK UP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste/Community</th>
<th>Number of Muqaddams</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kunbis</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajputs</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baqals</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zannar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badfaro</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Muslims</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Muslims</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total (211=100)

It is thus evident that the cultivating class (kunbis) formed the majority (70%) of muqaddams in the pargana. The remaining positions were held by others, presumably the non-cultivating section of the society. Of them the Rajput-muqaddams enjoyed a predominant position. But their overall proportion (18.4 percent) in the muqaddami is significantly much less than their proportionate share in the

1. According the Lughat-i-Gujri 'Kunbi' was a Gujarati equivalent of al-muzare' i.e. the cultivator (p.229); The Rasmala (p. 542) also describes them as the most industrious cultivators of the region. This work don't specify their castes and they find description as cultivators regardless of their caste. It is also a well known fact that high caste Hindus did not cultivate lands directly with their own hands. Also see, Baden Powell Land System of British India III, Oxford, London, n.d, p.336.) who says that the kunbi is the most numerous land holding caste. They are "almost certainly a mixed race". But in the modern day Gujarat the 'Kunbi patels' are counted as Rajputs.
zamindari of the known villages in the same pargana. More significant to note is the presence of baqqals i.e. petty traders and money lenders, whose proportion which being 4.3 per cent is not very high. However it suggests the penetration of trading class into the ruling section of land magnats. The Charans & Bhats (badfaroshan), the Brahmans (zannardaran) and the Muslims had also made inroads but their overall proportion (3.33%) was, significantly, not very high. It is however evident that the muqaddami was not necessarily monopolised by any single caste or community and it seems to have been enjoyed by, relatively, a wider section of the society. Finally the majority of the muqaddami position being held by the Kunbis the differentiation between the muqaddams and the cultivators was not much wider and moreover both of them had, in their common positions as cultivators, identity of interests also.

The contemporary evidence does not help us to precisely ascertain if the muqaddami belonged to the castes that enjoyed predominance numerically or in terms of area of lands or both. The British, later on, noted that in the

1. Of 211 muqaddami villages we have definite information about the castes of zamindars of 154 villages. Of them (154) 140 (90.9%) were held by the Rajputs, five (3.5%) each by Muslims and the Bhats; one each (.65%) by Charans and Brahmans and two (1.3%) by the Kolis. Yad dasht dehat pargana Kadi PC Nos 3 to 7 read with Account ff 307b-8a.
villages of aboriginal tribes the patels belonged to one of the above tribes; in Koli villages a headman was usually a Koli. In other villages he was either a Kunbi, Rajput, Bhatela, Brahman, Malik, Muslim or a Salyed. 1

The present piece of information may also be utilised to ascertain relationship, if any, between the muqaddami and nature of the village i.e. zortalbi and the raiyati which is duly specified. Thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of villages:</th>
<th>Total No. = 282</th>
<th>Villages with muqaddam = 211</th>
<th>Villages without muqaddam = 71</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raiyati: Zortalab</td>
<td>Raiyati: Zortalab</td>
<td>Raiyati: Zortalab</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>282</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage: 96.1 | 3.9 | 98.1 | 1.9 | 90.14 | 9.86

The proportion of zortalab villages in the pargana being 3.9 out of hundred does not seem to be very high. Of the raiyati villages, 98.1 percent were the ones having muqaddams whereas the percentage of the zortalab village having muqaddams being 1.9 percent was relatively less. It is evident that the proportion of the non-muqaddami zortalab villages (90.14 per cent) was relatively high in comparison to the proportion of the zortalab villages which had muqad-

It is however difficult to suggest whether the presence of muqaddams influenced, or else was itself influenced by the feature of zortalbi. It is however evident that the zortalbi and the muqaddami were necessarily neither the corollary of and nor even consistent with each other.

As regard co-relationship, if any, subsisting between the caste of muqaddams and the zortalb it would appear that 75 per cent of the zortalb villages having muqaddams, were held by the kunbi muqaddams; remaining 25 percent were held by the Rajput muqaddams. It suggests that more Kunbi-held muqaddami villages were prone to the zortalbi. But when viewed in broader context, it would appear that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Muqaddam's caste</th>
<th>Kunbi</th>
<th>Rajput</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and the villages</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nature of villages: raiyati | zortalab | raiyati | zortalab
Number of villages: 145 | 3 | 21 | 1
Percentage: 97.08 | 2.02 | 95.45 | 4.45

The proportion of the Kunbi held muqaddami villages (2.02 per cent) was comparatively less than the Rajput - muqaddami villages. It may however be pointed out that the muqaddami and zamindari of the single zortalab village was held by different persons but both of them happened to be Rajputs.

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The available evidence may also be utilised to examine if the muqaddam was usually chosen from among the Primary zamindars and, for that matter the Superior zamindars also. The Account, as mentioned above, specifies 211 villages which had muqaddams. Of them 197 muqaddams have been duly named. The document entitled yad-dasht dehat-i pargana Kadi specifies banthadar (Superior and Primary zamindars) holding zamindaris in these villages. Besides, the Account also furnishes list of zamindars holding zamindaris in the same pargana during the same period of time. A comparative study of these sets of information reveals that none of the person holding muqaddami find description among the zamindars. Another document, though not dated however coming for the first quarter of the eighteenth century, specifies both the muqaddams as well as the girasias (i.e. Primary zamindars) of mawza Santhal (pargana haveli Ahmabad). Again, the girasias and the muqaddams appear to be

1. S. Nurul Hasan, Thoughts on Agraian relation, p. 31.
2. It is evident that the villages without muqaddams had zamindari lands. (Account, ff. 311a, 312b, 313a, 314b, 315a, 317a, 318a, 319a etc.). In these villages the muqaddami was not held by the zamindars also though they were very much there.
3. Yad-dasht dehat pargana Kadi, op. cit.
5. Account, ff 308a-8b.
different persons.¹ Similar information which is available for other parts also suggests that the zamindari and the muqaddami were held by different persons.² Nevertheless the possibility of muqaddams holding makan-i zamindari and giras rights may not be ruled out.³ In the light of the evidence cited above it would however appear that the muqaddami and the zamindari (i.e. Primary and the Superior one) were generally held by different persons. However the conclusion may not be pressed too far.

The available evidence though very limited in quantity and scope however suggests that the muqaddami and the desaigiri were generally, if not necessarily, held by different persons.⁴ The desaigiri of pargana Kadi was held by the persons who donot find mention among the duly named muqaddams of the pargana.⁵ Names of the muqaddams and the

1. Yad-dasht muqaddaman-o girasia waghaíra mawza Santhal amla pargana haveli Ahmadabad. R. No.37, Pune. The document names Detha, Rewa and Harkaran as the muqaddams; and Banji, Bheraji, Pethoji, Sahaji, Akrají and Jassaji as the girasias of the village.

2. Rasmala. pp 350-1, 431; SH Desai's Collection Nos. 14/1 (5); Baroda, 87 and 99.

3. Only two instances each showing the muqaddams as holder of a zamindari makan and giras lands are available. Account, f. 101b, P.C. No. 278.

4. Account, f. 17b.

5. ibid, f 308a read with ibid, ff 309a-36a.
desais also appear in the chaknamas. They are also duly named in a case of dispute on the inter-village boundary. In all these instances the two sets of persons were different people. But it may not be emphatically asserted that the desais and the muqaddams were invariably different persons for the documents sometimes add the suffix "and other" (Wghaira) after a duly named muqaddams and, or, desais or both.

The muqaddam in Gujarat, like elsewhere, was required to perform various duties as an intermediary between the state and the village under him.

The muqaddam, to begin with, was associated with both the stages of revenue collections, viz., assessment (tashkhis) and collection (tehsil). From Aurangzeb's farman addressed to the then diwan-i subah Gujarat it would appear that the muqaddam was to be associated with land survey, presumably to make it acceptable and preclude the possibili-

1. See, for example, PC Nos. 40 of 1040 AH and 286/41G/Bha. of 31RY Aurangzeb's reign; Baroda, 57, 83.

2. The two available documents (PC Nos 98 and 271) mention Mathuradas as the desai of pargana Dholga. The muqaddams of specified villages of the pargana were Kashi-das, Gangadas, Jeewa, Manohar, Keso, Banarsi, Bhaoji Lakha, Sobhji and Reewadas. Another document (PC No. 277), likewise mentions both of them. They are again different persons.
ty of complaints as had happened in the past. Detailed account of the surveyed lands was also to be prepared in cooperation with the muqaddams.

The dastur-ul amals appear to have been enforced through the muqaddams. Isa Tar Khan (1642-4) who is appreciated for his acts of "concilliation of the raiyat" is noticed to have furnished the detailed rates of assessment before the commencement of the sowing operation to the raiya through the muqaddams. Along with the assessees - cultiva-

1. Please see Aurangzeb's farman (text) dt. 25 Rabî I, 25 RY, Account, f 24a. The Mirat reports that during Akbar's reign Shahabuddin Ahmad khan had to 'survey the cultivable lands of pargana haveli Ahmadabad and other parganas a second time' due to complaints of the raiyat against the results of the first survey which was undertaken by Raja Todarmal. (Mirat-i Ahmadi, I, p.141.). The Account (f.23a) identifies the muqaddams as the complainants - muqaddaman pargana mazkur..... nalish namude ki raqba dehat dar zabi Raja Todarmal zyada amde ast). It seems muqaddams were not involved, at least effectively, when the first survey was undertaken.


3. Mirat-i Ahmadi, I, p.217. Prior to Isa Tarkhan's act of concilliation which are not duly specified, Azam Khan had successfully subdued the rebels. But he had paid "no heed to improve the condition of the raiyat" and, as a result the raiyat 'had taken refuge under zamindars (i.e. rebel ones) of distant places. (Ibid, I, pp. 215-6). Isa Tarkhan is reported to have introduced bhagwatai (ghalla bakhsi) as the mode of assessment and collection and put the affairs in right order. Whether the present act of issuing the destur and ganwat in the above mentioned way was an improvement on, or simply act of re-inforcing the established practice is not precisely known. Ibid, I, pp 215-7.

4. Dastur-ul amal (Isa Tar Khan's period of subedari), a naqil, PC No.41-5.
tors (muzarian) the muqaddams gave, before hand, their acceptance of the rates whereas the latter also undertook the responsibility to assess and collect the revenues as per agreement (ganwat). The muqaddams seem to have regarded the issuance of the ganwat through them as their privilege. For the administration, it would be an expedient way out.

Subsequent to their acceptance of the rates of assessment the muqaddams along the desai and revenue officials were involved in the fixation of jamā. Following it he undertook the responsibility to collect from every assessee, the revenues fixed in accordance with the dastur-ul amal (mawa-fiq-i dastur-ul amal) under the supervision of the desai. The muqaddams' involvement in the process of collecting revenues was, under the Mughals, made during the reign of Emperor Akbar who had asked the diwan-i subah to collect

1. Ibid.
2. Wajib-ul arz-i fidwi Metha, muqaddam mawza Faizabad urf Shahbari, P C No.38. It records: ganwat-o qawl o qarar b riaya - o muzarian ma'rfat banda az sarkar marahmat shawad.
3. The above quoted request is followed by the expression 'accepted'(manzoor ast). Another piece of information suggests that the work of assessment because of some disagreement on the rates of assessment, could not be carried on without active involvement of the muqaddams. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, p 104-5.
5. Ibid.
revenue 'with the consultation of desais and muqaddams. 1

Emperor Jahangir had also directed the muqaddams of
pargana haveli Baroda to collect revenues in consultation
with the desais whose appointment was to be taken note of by
them. 2 Isa Tarkhan's ganwat deed of Shah Jahan's reign
specified muqaddams' acceptance for collecting revenues. 3 A
tamassuk (1077 fasli/1669-70 AD) records that Rs.3,25,072/-
was assessed as the revenues on pargana haveli Ahmadabad for
the kharif season. The document reflects the desais and
the muqaddams undertaking responsibility of collecting the
revenues. 4 In the parts of the subah which followed the
system of bhagwatai the muqaddams saw that the harvested
crops were carried to the threshing-floor of the village and
heaped there properly until the state had taken, or assessed
its share. 5

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2. Baroda farman; Junagadh, SC No.880 (mahal Junagadh).
3. P.C. No. 41.
being held responsible for explaining the cause in the
fall in revenues, if any, the muqaddams were also
required to realize 0 Rs.2/- per bigha of such lands
which were tilled during the preceding year but left
uncultivated during the year in question.

See also P C No.63a wajib-ul arz, cited above.
Besides, the *muqaddams* were also required to extend area of cultivation and promote the cultivation of cash crops.\(^1\) The *muqaddams* enjoyed the right for allotting the cultivable waste to such ones as wished to till it.\(^2\) Also he persuaded the aggrieved cultivators (*kunbis*) to undertake cultivation at right time.\(^3\) He was also to make arrangements for preventing migration of the *riayats* from his village.\(^4\)

*Muqaddam*’s jurisdiction over the village was not exclusively confined to revenue matters.\(^5\) Though the state posted its own *swara-o-piyadah* in villages, the *muqaddams* could request for providing additional number of footmen to serve in the village under him.\(^6\) The British

\[^{1}\text{Please see tamassuk, ganwat deed and the wajib-ul arz cited in the preceding notes.}\]

\[^{2}\text{Geleynssen observed that " anyone who wants to cultivate any land goes to the headman of the village and asks for as much as he wants at place which suits him. This is rarely refused but always granted". Geleynssen, JIH, IV, pp 78-9 cited in Bombay Gazetteer, II, p 515 and 16. The chaks of the lands granted as madad-i ma’sh were also marked in consultation of and agreement with the muqaddams (b’ razamandi or b’ ittefaq).}\]

\[^{3}\text{Rasmala, p 544; Bombay Gazetteer, IV p. 147.}\]

\[^{4}\text{Rasmala, p. 544.}\]

\[^{5}\text{Ifran Habib, Agrarian System, pp 132-3.}\]

\[^{6}\text{Wajib-ul arz, op. cit.}\]

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also found that muqaddam was held responsible for any crime committed within or near his village and he was answerable for the track of all thieves. ¹

In his capacity as the chief representative of the village community the muqaddam seems to have played the role of village-host. As per the contents of the wajib-ul-arz referred to above the muqaddam had requested the state to grant him eight bighas of land by way of pusaita to meet expenses on the entertainment of respectable person (mard-i-abroo) and travellers (Kharj-i-musafir). ² Moreover the muqaddam also represented the village for settling the inter-village boundary disputes. ³

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1. Bombay Gazetteer, II, PP. 215 227; Ibid, VIII, 171-3. Also see Mr. Asstt. Collector Pyane's representation (1827, on Balasinor) regarding muqaddams' position in the Nawabi territory of Balasinor. According to it, the patel "collected rent from different cultivators, saw that the land actually in the possession of each cultivator agreed with what he ought to hold and bore the crops stipulated in the engagement, helped the tallatī (patwari) to make out the cultivator's agreement, encouraged fresh cultivators to resort to the village, brought its waste land under tillage and acted as an officer of the police.

2. Wajib-ul-arz, op. cit. It was accordingly granted.

3. PC Nos. 88 and 271. Accordingly to the British officials the patel 'governed' the village, 'managed' the village affairs and settled disputes. In religious and social matters he took the lead. He had the privilege of dignity and precedence on ceremonial occasions. Bombay Gazetteer, II, p 382; Ibid, kaira, p. 91; Baden Powell, Village community, pp 10-1; Land system, I, p.153.
Share:

The muqaddam like desal was entitled to a share in the revenues taken from the riaya as state's claim. Share of muqaddams was fixed at 2.5 per cent of the revenues collected from the khalsa and jagir lands during Emperor Akbar's reign. Since no change is reported during the subsequent days it would therefore appear that the rate remained unchanged. From the document reflecting actual revenue returns and disbursement thereof, it would appear that the muqaddam was not given the share out of the salami or pesh-kash extorted from holders of the bantha. His share was calculated out of the revenue proceeds from the taipad portion only. As such the muqaddam's interests were confined to the taipad i.e. his interests were not consistent with the bantha-dar.

Besides, the muqaddams also held pusaita lands which were assessed at concessional rates or were wholly exempt from paying revenues.

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2. See for the year 1682-93, Jama-o Kharj pargana Petlad, Sarkar Ahmadabad, fasl-i kharif... 1105 fasli R.No.29, Pune.

3. Ibid, If the portions of (taipad) lands were held as madad-i ma'ash the muqaddams enjoyed his share. P C No.60.
The *pusaita* possessions of *muqaddams* could be there in the *talpad*, the *bantha* as well as in the villages lands of which were not divided on *bantha-talpad* lines.¹

*Muqaddams'* karindas' nature of whose rights and obligations do not find description, are also noticed as holding *pusaita* lands beside *muqaddams*.² The *pusaita* lands were cultivated by cultivators (*muzarian*) of unspecified description. Since these cultivators are duly specified amongst the assesses³, it would therefore appear that *muqaddams'* entitlement was qualified and he does not seem to be absolute owner of lands held as *pusaita*.

As regard the revenue proceeds from the *pusaita* lands the state claimed a share, proportion of which could vary from time to time and place to place. The earliest available *dastur-ul amal* specifying rates for the *pusaita* lands of *muqaddams* dates back to *isa Tarkhan'*s period of *subedar* (1642-4).⁴ The *dastur* records the state's share as

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1. Please see *muzruat* documents, *PC* Nos. 161 (26th *R.Y. Aurangzeb*), 278-9 (1113 *fasli*, kharif), 93 (kharif 1136 *fasli*) and the ones available in R. No. 37, Pune, particularly for the years 1117, 1119, 1127, 1131, 1133, 1137 *fasli*.


less by one-third' (Sayoom hissa kam) i.e. two-third of the revenue was to be taken by the state and the remaining one-third was to be retained by the muqaddam. But later Prince Aurangzeb (1645-6) adopted harsh attitude, attaching whole of the revenues of the pusaita in favor of state. Later Ghairat Khan (1648-50) reverted back to the rates which were

1. Destur-ul amal of Shahzada Aurangzeb, FC No 51. As such the prince disallowed the muqaddams from enjoying any share in the pusaita lands. It may be added that the prince had, likewise, disallowed all the non-serving sections i.e. Brahmans, Bhatas, Charans, Kolis and others from enjoying any share in the pusaita lands. Ibid. His action which did hurt their interests must have annoyed the socially influential people.

The Mirat notes that subedar Aurangzeb "had collected a large number of servants for establishment of order and chastisement of rebels". Who the rebels were? It is observed that during his period of subedar "expenses were more than income" of the Nazim - (Mirat-i Ahmadi, I pp 219-21). Apparently because he had to maintain larger establishment of soldiers than was usually required under normal circumstances.

Aurangzeb stayed as subedar for less than two years (Ibid). Shaista Khan, the next incumbent "in spite of the mansab of 5000 sawars (2 x 3 h) and land revenue of an annual sum of 500,000 rupees for provision of 3000 sehbandi sawars... failed to chastise and punish the rebels and kolis of the subah in a manner he sought to have done." (Ibid, I, p 224)

Shaista Khan was replaced by Prince Dara who governed the subah through his deputy, Ghairat Khan. The khan restored the status quo ante and followed the desturs which were enforced under Isa Tarkhan. The khan ran the administration smoothly. He was replaced by Shaista Khan again. This time Shaista Khan managed the affairs well without facing difficulties similar to the ones he was confronted with earlier. Whether Aurangzeb and Shaista Khan (first tenure) had faced the problems and rebellions because of their harsh attitude towards the pusaita holders, is the question worth investigating into.
applicable during Isa Tarkhan's period of administration. 1
The same rates were kept up in the pargana haveli Ahmadabad
during the later period. 2 The muqaddams' pusaita in pargana
Mundah were assessed on bilmuqta(lumpsum) basis. 3 Muqaddams
of some villages in the same pargana paid the state an
amount which ranged between one to two and a half mehmudis
per bigha of the pusaita lands. 4 In some parts of sarkar
Ahmadabad they paid it @ one rupee per bigha. 5 In pargana
Bheel of the same sarkar the muqaddams enjoyed entire reve-

\[...\]

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2. Ibid, Nos 22-6, 28, 31, Account 409a.
3. Account, f. 339a
4. Ibid. f. 182a.
5. Ibid f 350a.
6. Ibid. f. 182a.
7. Mirat-i Ahamadi, 1 p 292.
chase of cattles and houses.\textsuperscript{1} Also they enjoyed exemption from paying a cess levied on the occasion of Holi.\textsuperscript{2} However, the paikashta - muqaddams were required to pay half a mehmudi per cow maintained by them.\textsuperscript{3}

Information casting light on the relationship between the muqaddams and other zamindars is hardly available. From the available evidence it would however appear that muqaddams could come into clash with the desais as well as the two could join hands.\textsuperscript{4} As regard their relationship with other zamindars two pieces of information indicating two different state of relationship are available. Thus Kanji, a Koli zamindar of Chunwal - a region noted for its recalcitrance killed the muqaddams of Detroj for he had refused to 'pay obeisance to Kanji', the Koli chief.\textsuperscript{5} But the Patel of Gariadhar rendered valuable assistance to the zamindar of the place against his opponents.\textsuperscript{6}

\begin{itemize}
\item[1.] Account ff 364a - 4b.
\item[2.] Ibid.
\item[3.] Ibid. The muqaddams were also required to bear the two-third cost of the qaba-i kotwal to be offered every year. Ibid. f 364a.
\item[4.] For references and details please see discussion under 'desais' in the preceding part of the chapter.
\item[5.] Rasmala, pp 430-31.
\item[6.] Ibid p 350.
\end{itemize}
From the preceding discussion it would appear that the 
muqaddam being a man of the village and member of its commu-
nity, must have been quite strong a person, more so because 
he was vested with such administrative powers which brought 
him into active dealings with and further placed him over 
and above the villagers in general.¹ Though they enjoyed a 
position secondary to that of the desais but within the 
respective villages of their possessions the muqaddams might 
have been much stronger than the former.

C - IJARADARS:

Ijaradar was also an intermediary who collected reve-
 nues accruing from a specified source, generally the land. 
By virtue of contracting ijara, the ijaradar was vested 
with the right of collecting revenues on behalf of the 
state, or its assignees for a fixed period of time. It was 
a time-bound non-hereditary contract-based position.² 

Important fact is that an ijaradar had to pay a "fixed 
amount in cash irrespective of the amount collected from the

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¹ The ballad, called "The koonbee's Grief" which was a 
favourite song of the kunbis' (cultivator's) women in 
Gujarat, records the resentment of the cultivators 
against the zamindars who "plunder us of the produce 
of our cows." But it does not speak against the patel 
who also finds mention in the song. Rasmaia, pp. 543- 
5.

² N A Siddiqi, op.cit, p.93; Irfan Habib, Agrarian Sys-
tem, p. 233.

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peasants. 1 The Mughal state did not regard *ijara* as a sound revenue arrangement and, therefore, disapproved of it. 2 However the practice crept into both the *khalsa* and the *jagir* lands during the seventeenth century. 3 Consequently there emerged a new intermediary position.

As regard the seventeenth century Gujarat the available information is insufficient to form a tenable view. It however suggests that the *ijara* was practised during the second half of the century. According to the earliest available piece of information coming for the 30th R Y of Shah Jahan's reign one Satidas Sahu 4 held *mawza* Sankhesh-

1. Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System*, pp. 233-4. Very similar to them were the *muqtai* who paid on their own lands a fixed amount 'periodically assessed' on the basis of 'a fixed rate of revenue per bigha'. The *bilmuqta* arrangement also signified a fixed revenue demand on the whole village', or a larger area. *Ibid*, p.233.


3. Irfan Habib finds it difficult to say how widespread the practice of *muqtai* and *ijara* was during the period. *Agrarian System*, p. 235. But N A Siddiqi opines that the *ijara* had become quite widespread in the course of the seventeenth century. But his view is not duly substantiated. N A Siddiqi, *op.cit.*, p.93.

4. Satidas (Shantidas) was the principal representative of the wealthy and powerful Swetambor Jain community of Western India. He was also receipient of revenue grants from Shah Jahan and Aurangeab as will be seen in the following chapter. *M S Commissariat, Imperial Mughal farmans in Gujarat* (Reprint), *Journal of the Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic society*, Vol. IX, Pt-1, July 1940, pp 12-7.
War 1 (pargana Munjpur) in ijara on the basis of sanads of the imperial court (asnadi-i dargaati) and the former officials since sometime in past. The sahu paid Rs. 1050/- inclusive of customary cesses, presumably on per annum basis to the jagirdars. The document further provides that the place be kept in ijara in Sahu's favour 'Intact In accordance with the (previous) practice and make no change or alteration' therein. 2

Another piece of information which is contained in the pages of the Mirat, is the farman of Emperor Aurangzeb (1676) dealing with specific situation in Gujarat. It appears that the practice of farming out lands to the chaudharis (desais) and muqaddams in the province was reported to the Emperor. It was pointed out that the practice led to the injustice and caused oppression of the raiyat. The emperor disapproved of the practice and issued an order to put a check upon it. It prohibited the practice of ijara in khalsa and jagir lands. The farman makes it evident that


2. MS Commissariat "Imperial Mughal farmans", op cit, Plate No. XIII.
ijara as a practice lay under official disapproval in general and in case the ijaradar happened to be intermediaries or the revenue officials it was disapproved strongly. Evidently the practice had penetrated both into the khalsa and the jagir lands and the revenue officials as well as the intermediaries contracted ijara rights.

Practice of levying fixed sums of money for a given duration on a village would not really have been much different from the one of giving the revenues on ijara. In this and broader sense of the term, ijara was practised even after Aurangzeb's farman prohibiting the practice outright.

From the hasil figures available for a number of villages of pargana haveli Ahmadabad it would appear that:


2. Jama mawazi', pargana haveli Ahmadabad, PC Nos.123-25; mawazna pargana haveli Ahmadabad, leaves Nos. 15, 19, 22, 44. The information for two or more consecutive years is available for 67 villages. No such fixed amount was realized from the remaining 52 villages for any number of years.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Amount of hasil in rupees and years of receipt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Churasma</td>
<td>3253/- 3253/- 3253/- 3253/- 3253/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darapur</td>
<td>1653/10 1653/10 1653/10 1653/10 1653/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lailapur</td>
<td>974/12 974/12 974/12 974/12 974/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andodra</td>
<td>167/14 167/14 167/14 167/14 167/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koba</td>
<td>1874/- 1874/- 1874/- 1770/- 1601/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kochrab</td>
<td>3749/- 3749/- 3749/- 3128/- 3220/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balhapur</td>
<td>471/- 471/- 471/- 496/- 506/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muzaffarpur</td>
<td>2461/4 2461/4 2461/15 2322/15 2300/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nawapura</td>
<td>2313/2 2313/2 2973/- 1453/- ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heerpu</td>
<td>189/11 189/11 150/- 150/- 125/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banodra</td>
<td>1562/8 1562/8 1787/8 1745/8 1150/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rahneb</td>
<td>190/- 1201/- 1351/- 1351/- 1351/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhamanwan</td>
<td>6815/- 6990/- 7068/- 6825/- 6825/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dantali</td>
<td>1746/- 1771/- 1771/- 1572/- 1572/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budhathal</td>
<td>2510/- 2585/- 2585/- 2549/- 2285/-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A fixed amount was realized from a number of villages, the duration of amount having remained fixed at the same figure, could range from two (sl. Nos. 9-11, 13-15) to five years.
Secondly the amount could be refixed. In such cases the volume of fixed-amount could be more than the one realized during the immediately preceding (Sl.Nos. 12, and 15) and the succeeding (Sl.Nos. 5, 6, 8, 10, 14 and 15) year. Likewise the amount so fixed, or refixed, could also be less than the ones realized during the immediately preceding (Sl.No.13) as well the succeeding (Sl.Nos.7, 9, and 11) years. Also different amount could be fixed for the same village but for different sets of years (Sl.Nos. 10 and 14). Also the amount fixed for the next time (Sl.No. 10 for 1094, 1095 fasli, Sl. No.14 for 1095, 1096 fasli) could be less than the one fixed and realized earlier (Sl.No.10 for 1092 and 1093 fasli; Sl.No.14 for 1093, 1094 fasli). Finally, some exercise in calculations appears to have been made before fixing the amount which therefore does not seem to have been settled arbitrarily.

But the point remains as to who paid the amount so fixed? The practice of realizing fixed revenues existed there though it might not have prevailed everywhere:

the information is available for 67 villages of which it is noticeable in the above mentioned 15 villages only.

From the preceding discussion it would appear that the jurisdictional authority of a desai extended to cover wider
areas as compared to that of *muqaddams*, sway of whose rights hardly extended beyond the boundaries of a village. However, the *muqaddam* having deeper roots in the village community commanded more power within his limited area of operation in his own right than a *desai* whose power base lay in the patronage extended to him by the Mughals. The *desai* emerges more as a representative of the Mughals whereas the *muqaddam* looks more closely associated with the community. Also the *desais* who were in direct communication with the centre also, seem to have developed better working relationship with the *jagirdars* as different from the *muqaddam* who emerge as espousing the cause of the revenue-payers. Similarly an *ijaradar*, an undesirable entrent imposed from above, seems to have had, in this capacity, no local power base.