The position and role of intermediary zamindars underwent a discernable change during the first half of the eighteenth century. The available evidence suggests that two stages of revenue arrangements, viz; assessment and the collection, by and large intermingled with each other. Accordingly the position of the intermediary zamindars who were associated with the process of assessment and collection of revenues affected and in turn was affected by the emerging pattern which is well reflected the way the state demand was fixed and realized. Though the emerging process and pattern of change is well marked, it does not seem to have been uniform all through the region as also for both the intermediaries - the desai and the muqaddam.

Before studying changes and highlighting the position it seems worthwhile to briefly outline the developments which relate to the process of assessment and collection of revenues, the main sphere of activity of intermediary zamindars.

Declining administrative control over the countryside coupled with increasing recalcitrance and accentuation
of the centripetal forces rendered the working of revenue machinery quite difficult. 1

To allow its officials to combine powers, financial and executive, into one hand partly appears to be the imperial response to meet the challenge at local levels. 2 The attempt which seems to have met with some success initially does not appear to have proved a long lasting solution. 3 Particularly from the opening years of the fourth decade of the eighteenth century, these officials increasingly failed in the most basic task of effecting assessment and collection of revenues. 4

1. For increasing recalcitrance and activisation of the centripetal forces please see Chapter VII, Introduction to the present study & Chapters II and VI.

2. For details and references please see Introduction and Chapter II above; also see please Mirat-i Ahmadi; II pp. 48, 94, 103, 105-7, 117, 145, 147, 165-6, 188, 192-3, 257, 264, 284.

3. For the success please particularly see Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 94, 165 and also Ibid II, p 6 read with yad-dasht pargana Dholqa, op. cit, FC nos 14-7. But such officials also resorted to exploitation of the riaya. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 94, 105.

4. These officials had to apply force for effecting assessment and collection (Mirat-i Ahmadi, II pp. 50, 165-6). It has been pointed out earlier that the strength commanded by them was increasingly found insufficient to meet the challenges faced by them. To cite few instances of their incapacity to perform the basic duties: Himmat Dil Khan, the patrolling faujdar-amin and amil of pargana haveli. Ahmedabad failed (1733-34) to effect assessment and collection of revenues; Jawam­mand Khan Babi could not effect assessment (1732-33) in the parganas under his charge; Safdar Khan Babi (1732-33) too "was not able to assess" revenues in the pargas­nas under his charge* Ibid II, pp. 105, 107, 172, 186;
Particularly from the fourth decade of the eighteenth century the very process of effecting assessment seems to have undergone a radical change. In the first place the expeditionary forces led by the Governor, or some other strong military commander came to effect assessment. Thought the expeditions were led even earlier, the Mirat speaks of the first such expedition which was led for the "assessment of parganas" in 1722 under the then Nazims' command. The Nazim who moved around various parts of the subah reached Patan for assessment and collection of revenues. Later on (1727) Mubariz-ul mulk is also reported to have led military expedition for the assessment and collection of revenues, beside the tribute from zamindars. During the subsequent

...Continued...

Also see please *ibid* II pp 246-8; *Ahwal-i Gaekwad* MS. NO. 129 (By anonymous), Apparao Bhol Nath collection Ahmadabad, ff. 12-13; Rai Gobindas Kayath, MS No. 105 *op cit* ff 37, 43-4 47.

1. *Mirat-i Ahmadi* specifies the expeditions which were generally led even earlier but for a different purpose--making administrative arrangements, establishing order, collecting *peshkash* from the noted recalcitrants and taking punitive actions and preventive steps. *Ibid.* I pp. 324(1688) 325(1690), 326(1691), 330(1694)381(1707) 383 (1708), 387 (1711), 394 (1712). 396 (1712-13), 397-98 (1713), 407 (1714), and passim.


3. *Ibid* II p 46

4. *Ibid* II p 93
years every Nazim had to lead expeditionary forces for the "assessment of mal-i wajib from "maiguzars", beside collection of peshkash at the "time of harvesting season". It thus shows that the local machinery of revenue administration had failed to carry out its duties, obviously in the face of opposition put up in the countryside. It may particularly be mentioned that the Nazim had to visit "every pargana " for assessment purposes. 

Secondly, the other zamindars, on a large scale, emerged as intermediaries between the villagers and the state. The banthadaran as pointed out elsewhere occupied talpad and raiyati lands. The Mirat states that "whenever the Nazim of the subah leads an army the banthadaran who utilize talpad present by way of peshkash worthy of that place" (i.e. talpad and bantha). As such the holders of bantha not only changed the nature of revenues from mal-i wajib to peshkash but also stepped into the shoes of the

1. Ibid, II, pp 98-9 (1727), 110 (1729), 243-44 (1736), 246-47 (1737), 248 (1738) 257 (1739), 258 (1739-40), 262 (1740-41), 265 (1741), 279.


3. For a detailed view please see discussion in the Chapters II and VI.

4. For details please see discussion in Chapters II and VI.

intermediary zamindars.\(^1\)

Thirdly, the basis of assessment (i.e. capacity to pay) also appears to have been replaced by the capacity to extort. The Mirat observes that the Nazims led military expedition to capture revenues, the amount of which was determined "in accordance with his own strength and the exigency of the situation".\(^2\) It may be appreciated with reference to the timings of leading expeditions (i.e. at the time of harvesting season) which would indicate that the earlier practice of calculating the state's share at the time or soon after the sowing season had, apparently been abandoned.

Thus the power of state to collect revenues increasingly deteriorated. It has been discussed in the introduction that the productivity of the soil had not eroded but the volume of the revenue-receipts reaching provincial capital dwindled and each Nazim from the period of Sarbuland Khan onward was confronted with the difficulty of the paucity of funds. Further the revenues of pargana haveli Ahmadabad

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1. But it was not invariably the case. There were villages in pargana haveli Ahmadabad where the banthadarans had not been able to bring whole area of the village under their control. Thus see for instance, Mazraa'at documents for the villages bof Balad (1141 \(fasli\) Palri kochrab (1142 \(fasli\) Taraf Rakhyal buzurg (1143 \(fasli\) Taraf Nazriat (1144 \(fasli\) Taraf Daryapur (1144 \(fasli\) R No 21 Pune Rakhiyal Khurd (1143 \(fasli\)), Runhasan (1137 \(fasli\) Dantyal (1148 \(fasli\) Dantiyali; (1149 \(fasli\) ) Khoranj (1153 \(fasli\) ) R Nos 22, Pune.

dropped to Rs. 2,34,734/- in 1727 and then to Rs. 49134/- in 1743 from Rs. 507134/- in the year 1714.  

Another set of information indicates a fall in the area actually cropped in mawza Rakhyal buzurg, (pargana haveli Ahmadabad) between the years 1717-18 and 1742-43 for which the information is available.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years cropped area (Rabi and kharif)</th>
<th>Total years cropped area</th>
<th>Total revenue receipt</th>
<th>Rise(+) and fall(-) in cropped area base year = 1717-18</th>
<th>Average amount/ bigha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1717-8 673-10 4827 4</td>
<td>100 100</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1718-19 630-7 4722 2</td>
<td>93.6 97.9</td>
<td>7.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1721-22 703-18 2401 0</td>
<td>104.6 49.8</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1729-30 411-0 2023 0</td>
<td>62.6 41.9</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1742-43 359-0 668 0</td>
<td>53.3 13.7</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Mawazna subah Gujarat fis sinwat sarkar Ahmadabad, paragana haveli 1122 fasli to 1135 fasli; Yaddasht jamabandi dehat pargana haveli Ahmadabad, 1151 fasli amal Renkoji Pandit. The last document furnishes income of the villages under Marathas and other titled the same way furnishes details of income of the villages under Momin Khan, the Mughal Subedar. P.C.  

2. Mazruat mawza Rakhyal buzurg. pargana haveli Ahmadabad. fasli-i kharif 1126,1127,1130,1148 and 1151 fasli, P.C. Nos 110-29, 135; Ibid for fasli-i rabi for the same years R.No 37 Pune; Mawazna subah Gujarat fis-sinwat sarkar Ahmadabad, pargana haveli Ahmadabad 1122 to 1137 fasli; Jamabandi dehat pargana haveli Ahmadabad, fasli-i kharif-o rabi 1148 fasli; yaddasht mal-i wajib, Rakhyal buzurg 1151 fasli P.C.
Barring 1721-22 the area under actual cultivation fell every year so much so that it fell by 46.7 percent in 1742-43 as compared to the year 1717-8. But the fall in the cropped area may not be taken on its face value. It is because of the fact that the recorded information was furnished by the muqaddam for the last two years (1729-30 & 1742-3) and not by the patwari who furnished the same for the first three years.¹

But, then, the volume of revenues actually received also fell by 86.3 percent in 1742-3 as compared to the year 1717-8. Also the per-bigha revenue collection which (calculated by dividing the amount by the area) comes to Rs. 7.16 per bigha (1717-8) fell to Rs. 1.81 per bigha only. Since no change in the crop pattern is noticeable, it may be taken to mean that the state's power to collect revenues even in the villages which were located in close proximity to the seat of provincial power, had deteriorated considerably i.e. the hold of the zamindars, and in the present and similar cases other intermediary zamindars, had considerably increased on the sources of revenue. The evidence in hand is too limited to indicate a general trend. However it suggests

¹. For a view of muqaddam stepping into the patwari's and desai's shoes please see discussion under 'Patel' in the following pages.
a sharper deterioration in the amount of revenues as compared to the noticed fall (even if the figures are taken on their face value) in the area under actual cultivation.

Not that the intermediary zamindars passed under the authority of the banthadaran who had forcibly occupied the talpad lands. The state itself superimposed over and above them another intermediary, the ijarahdar.

Ijarahdars:

It has been noted in the previous Chapter that the ijarahdar exercised contracted rights over a specified source of revenue for stipulated period of time. Ijarahdar's income depended on the difference between the amount actually collected and the amount paid, the latter i.e. the contracted sum, generally happened to be a fixed amount which was determined in advance.¹ During the period (1700-50) some significant changes are noticeable in the role and position of ijarahdars.

In spite of remaining distasteful to the reigning emperor, the practice of farming revenues did continue

During the period. Though specific information about the practice for Mughal Gujarat is not available for the first two decades of the century, the ijarahdari however seems to have been practiced even during these years. From the available information it would appear that ijarah came to be contracted on a larger scale, particularly during the third and the fourth decade of the century.

During the period new sources of revenues such as imposts on fords and passages, tax collection office of miscellaneous duties (city of Ahmadabad), offices of zakat, faujdari and mahal paibaqi in addition to land revenue (khalsa and jagir) inclusive of peshkash from zamindars came to be contracted by ijarahdars.

1. It is reported that strict rules and regulations for transacting business in all departments were disregarded since the reign of Jahandar Shah. Under his successor the entire administration was thrown into confusion. Continuation of ijarah on a much wider scale in the empire during the early years of Mohammad Shah's reign is attested by Nizam-ul mulk's proposal (1721) requesting the emperor to abolish the practice. But Wazir's scheme could not materialize and the practice continued even during rest of period. Muntakhab-ul Lubab, pp. 378-80; Sahih-ul Akhbar, Elliot and Downson, VIII p. 315; Irvine, Later Mughals. p.375 NA Siddiqi op.cit pp. 93-8.

2. According to the author of Mirat-i Mustafabad "the places situated far off the head quarter (of sarkar Soreth i.e. Junagadh) were farmed out" even during this period. ibid p. 379.

The *ijarah* was usually contracted for a specified duration but sometimes no such time limit was imposed. In view of the nature of source of revenue the *ijarah* could be contracted on daily basis, for a crop season and a year which, if agreed to, could be renewed for another term.

A significant development of the period is that the adherence to the terms and conditions came to be depended on the relative strength of the contracting parties. Maharaja Abhay Singh (1733) terminated the *ijarah* contract with Momin Khan before its expiry as the *ijarahdar* had invited his displeasure and, therefore, the rights were transferred to another *ijarahdar* on similar terms and conditions. The Maharaja's naib however failed to force another *ijarahdar* to surrender his rights which he continued to enjoy even after the expiry of the stipulated period. Similarly Sher Khan

1. The faujdar of Dholqa (Sarkar Ahmadabad) is reported to have given away villages on *ijara* to girasias in perpetuity (*b'tariq-i istamrari*) as a result "fertile places went into their possessions which implied sale to them". (*qiryat-i jeed b'tasarruf an ha raft k' dar ma'ni farokhtan bud.*) *Mirat-i Ahmadi*, II p 97.

2. Office of miscellaneous duties was farmed out on daily basis, Jawanmard Khan Babi held a few parganas only for a year. Some other parganas which were held by one noble in one year, were farmed out to another the following year. For the same and similar references, please see *Mirat-i Ahmadi*, II pp.103,106-7,115,141,167,183-4.


4. *Ibid* II pp 192-93
Babi managed to retain the office of Naib-faujdar (Sarkar-Sareth) which he held by way of ijarah against the wishes of the faujdaijarahdar at imperial court.¹ One of the ijaradars, relatively a weaker person (peshkar), who failed to pay the contracted amount due to losses suffered by him, was imprisoned by the Subedar.² But Safdar Khan Babi, a strong noble of the region successfully disregarded (1734-35) the terms of contract. He did not pay the contracted sum and escaped any action against him.³

Territorial boundaries of ijarahdars ranged between wide limits. Extending from a specific source of revenue of a given place, or a portion of village, it could cover an entire village, group of villages, a pargana, group of parganas and even an entire sarkar.⁴

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1. Ibid II p 102
2. Ibid I pp 107-8
3. Ibid II pp 167, 172, 186; Mukhtasar Tarikh-i Gujarat, f. 83; Ahwal-i Gaekwad, f. 13. Safdar Khan Babi had on his own volition withdrawn before the expiry of the term, thus terminating the contract on his own.
4. Faujdar of Dholga had given villages on ijarah; Jiwan Chughal, a Seth & money lender, had acquired parganas of Dholqa, Bharuch Jamusar and Maqbulabad on ijarah; Jawanmard Khan Babi, Momin khan and Safdar khan Babi contracted ijarah nights which extended from a single pargana to a group of paraganas. Mirat-i Ahmadi II pp 56 97 107 135 145 167 172 183-4 186 192-3; Document entitled mauziat-i ijarah pargana havell Ahmadabad fasl-I kharif-o rabi R.No. 21 Pune; Ibid R No 31.
Excepting Jiwan Chughal, a seth who had contracted ijarah for four parganas (1725) the ijara rights over vast tracts seem to have been contracted by influential nobles of the region holding the offices of Mutasaddi of port (Port officer), faujdar and naib-faujdars and commanding power.\(^1\) Initially the members of mercantile class like money lenders, businessmen, petty traders also contracted ijarah rights over the revenues accruing from the sources situated in and around Ahmadabad.\(^2\) But the girasias, patels and some other zamindars appear to be more numerous among the ijarah-dars, exercising the rights directly as ijarahdar or else, as sub-ijarahdars.\(^3\)

The income of the ijarahdars depended on the difference between the amount contracted (or paid) and actually col-

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1. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II pp 50 103, 107, 116, 135, 145 167, 172, 183-4 186; Ahwall-i Gaekwad, f.13; Mukhtasar Tarikh-i Gujarat, f.83

2. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II pp 56 97 141 145 PC No 279 Rasmala p 9; Mirat-i Mustafabad, p 136 Yaddasht-pargana haveli Ahmadabad ijarahdaran (1727) Pune R.No 37

3. Yad-dasht : pargana Petlad, R.No 57 Pune; Yad-dasht - ijarahdaran, Sarkar Ahmadabad R.No.67 Pune. On peninsular Gujarat the zamindars are reported to have acted as sub-ijarahdars ; Leading superior zamindars like the ones of Bhaonagar and Chhahayan contracted such rights, towards the south of Ahmadabad (on main land Gujarat) desias were found to be the main beneficiaries of the practice. Rasmala pp 402-4 Mirat-i Mustafabad pp 123 136 152 451; Bombay Gazetteer VII, pp 147 294 Ibid (Kaira) p 89 Gazetteer of Bhavnagar p 87; Baden Powell, Land System III pp 286-7.
lected.1 The ijarhdar would therefore endeavour to maximise the collections and, or minimize the remittance for making profits within the logical limits. Since the available sources do not specify the amount it is hardly possible to form a tenable view. But the fact that the same person could contract ijarah rights repeatedly suggests that the ijarah-dar must have made profits. According to the works of later date the desais who had contracted ijarah right in southern Gujarat were found in a state of opulence.2 Some patels in the same region were found to have lost their positions to the ijarahdar-desais who had stepped into the shoes of village headman.3 Some desais and the patels later on claimed ownership rights over the lands which they had continuously held on ijarah.4 In pargana Dholqa ijarahdars seem to have virtually turned into land owners.5 As regards the impact of the ijarahdari emperor Aurangzeb had observed that "tyranny and oppressions are caused to riaya in various

1. N.A. Siddiqi op cit pp 93-4
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid, ll 57, 215-16, 484, 486.
5. Mirat-i Ahmadi ll p 97
ways*. 1 But the nature, extent and magnitude of the oppressive acts are, however, not known.

But, then, the ijarahdari was not necessarily a profitable job for all the ijarahdars and for all the times. A peshkar of a Mughal noble retained the ijarah rights after his master's death. He "failed to pay the amount" and was consequently imprisoned. 2 Jawanmand Khan Babi also ran into deficit towards Naib-Subedar Bhandari's men. He too failed to pay the contracted amount. He was therefore obliged to undertake the responsibility of paying salary to the soldiers of the naib-subedar's establishment. The Babi chief tried to extort money from the Rathod zamindar of Idar for liberating himself of the burden but failed miserably and could not absolve himself of the responsibility. 3 Similarly Safdar Khan Babi "fearing and foreseeing heavy losses" withdrew his hands from the parganas he held on ijara. He too escaped any action. 4

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1. ibid II p 292. For a different view, see The Risala-i Zira't in Harbans Mukhia's Perspectives on Medieval History, Vikas, 1993, pp. 272,277-80
2. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II p 107-8
3. ibid, II pp 167, 172; Mukhtasar Tarikh-i Gujarat f 83. Ahwal-i Gaekwad, f 13; Mirat-i Mustafabad, p 242.
Causes of reported losses suffered by the leading *ijarahdars* may be tentatively suggested on the basis of available evidence. The *peshkar-ijarahdar* was not powerful enough to effect collections presumably due to his inability to force the revenue-paying sections of agrarian community to surrender the state's claim.¹ Jawanmard Khan Babi too had not been able to collect revenues, presumably due to his inability to subdue the concerned section of society for paying revenues under the prevailing situation.² Likewise Safdar Khan Babi failed even to assess the claim under the prevailing circumstances and particularly due to Maratha disturbances in and around the *parganas* held by him on *ijarah*.³

After the two leading nobles of the region had suffered losses (1734-35) any reference to the Mughal officials in regard to contracting *ijarah* rights is conspicuous by its absence in the available sources. Their inability might have served as an eye-opener for others also. Moreover, the failure of officials- turned-*ijarahdars*, the strong and obvious representative of Mughal administration, further

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1. *Mirat-i Ahmadi* II p 107
2. *Ibid* II pp 167, 172; *Mukhtasar Tarikh-i Gujarat*, f, 83
3. *Mirat-i Ahmadi* II p 186
attest to the increasing inability of the administration in
dealing with the zamindars and the revenue paying sections
of the agrarian society.

From this discussion it would appear that the state
along with its official-ijarahdas was losing control over
the sources of revenue. The administrative apparatus gradu-
ally lost its organizational cohesion and effectiveness
which, for all practical purposes seem to have ceased to
exist. As a corollary of these developments the established
intermediary zamindars, the backbone of Mughal revenue
machinery, came to assume different a position which came to
be determined by their ability to survive the vicissitudes
and manage their affairs in their own right. In the follow-
ing pages an attempt is made to ascertain the emerging
position of the established intermediary zamindars in the
above discussed context which, to a great extent, speaks of
general changes that had been taking place in their posi-
tion.

The desai:

It has been discussed in the preceding Chapter that the
desai was basically associated with the task of revenue
assessment and also required to superintend the revenue-
collection with the active assistance of muqaddam who com-
manded influence at the grass-root level. The desais, by
and large, were associated with the state and their main source of strength lay in the support the administration extended to them. Generally they belonged to the educated section of such upper castes which do not seem to have wielded arms.

The very fact that military expeditions had to be led for effecting assessment of revenues indicates that the desais position had been rendered ineffective. Since the revenues came to be determined 'in accordance with' the Nazim's 'strength' and 'exigency' of situation the position of desai would appear to have turned all the more meaningless. Besides, many Superior and the Primary zamindars had successfully captured raiyat and talpad lands and thus established their hold over the raiyat whose affairs otherwise, fell within the desais jurisdiction. In their attempts many a zamindars emerged as intermediaries thus replacing the desai by the authority of their own. ¹ The available evidence suggests that a number of desais territorial jurisdiction shrank and even within the curtailed area of jurisdiction, their authority was rendered ineffective.

The available evidence suggests that some of the desais proved instrumental in the zamindar's endeavours to extend their sway. The Rana of Porbandar is reported to have

¹ For details please see discussion in Chapters II & VI.
'bribed' the desai of pargana Mangrole (Sarkar Soreth) so as to get the latter's consent for the occupation (1725) of Madhopur - a dependency of Mangrole.¹ The desai of Junagadh had also assisted one Kunwar Vibhaji of Gondal in his attempt at taking possession of Bhajarvada (pargana Junagadh) in the year 1735.² The desais of Idar had helped the Rathod brothers, Anand Singh and Rai Singh in their endeavour to establish their personal rule at Idar.³ The desai of Bhaonagar assisted zamindar of the place in his moves for capturing Mughal lands around his possession.⁴

It may however be pointed out that the desai did not necessarily lose his position in such territories which passed into the control of the zamindars.⁵ Possibly the desai of such territories might have come to enjoy a subordinate position under the occupant zamindars.

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1. Tarikh-i Soreth, f 97
2. Ibid., f 103
3. For details and references please see 'Raja of Idar', Chapter VII below.
4. J.W. Watson. "Historical Sketch of the town of Ghoga" pp 284-5. The town of Mangrole was first captured by the Marathas who were later on expelled by the qasbati soldiers. Finally it was occupied by the nawab of Junagadh. The desais however continued to enjoy their share all through these years. Tarikh-i Soreth, ff 52-3.
5. Tarikh-i Soreth, ff 59-60; Junagadh SC No 1042; (mahal Seel).
But, then, all the raiyati areas were not occupied by
the zamindars. The mazruat documents testify the continuity
of the raiyati lands outside the sway of the banthadarans.¹
Later the Marathas as well as the British found talpad lands
which had remained outside the control of the holders of
bantha lands.²

But in the areas which continuously remained under the
direct control of the provincial authorities the desais gave
way to the muqaddams. According to the Account, services of
the desais and the amins were dispensed with by the muqad-
dams who themselves, for all practical purposes, acted as
the assessment authorities in their stead.³ The muqaddams,
moreover, disallowed the desais to prepare and maintain the
accounts which were to be furnished to the office of diwan-i
subah and the imperial centre.⁴ Besides, the competent
desais who were well versed in rules and regulations of the

¹ Please see, for instance mazruat documents for the
villages of Khoranj (1123 fasli), Rakhyal buzurg (1121,
1126, 1127, 1130, 1148, 1151 fasli) Mahej (1146, 1149
fasli), Nawagam (1147 fasli) Bajhol (1151 fasli). PC
Nos 91, 93, 101, 110-30, 137-51, 153-9, 162-64, 205-18.

² For references and details please see Chapter VI below.

³ Account ff 17a-7b It states that muqaddam-i parganat
khudra amin qarar dade w anha ra dar salah kar-i tashk-
his muattal karde and. During the post 1735 period
references to the desais in ganwat deeds disappear.
Naqi ganwat az qarar, dt. 24 Jamadi i, 28 R.Y. (Muhammad
Shah), PC No. 64.

⁴ Account, f 17b
state died and desaigiri in many places came to be held by incompetent persons, presumably by some new entrants. The desais failed to furnish accounts of revenues to the administration. A number of them could not get the desaigiri allowance and therefore they failed to pay the peshkash-inizamat and peashkash-i sarkar-i wala which stood in arrears almost against each of the desai of Sarkar Ahmadabad during the third decade of the eighteenth century. As such the desais appear to have lost their positions to the muqaddams at village level, particularly within the areas which could be retained by the Nazims under their direct control.

It may, however, be seen that the desais did not suffer similar setbacks everywhere. As per the evidence available for the nawabi territory of Junagadh the desais continuously enjoyed the desaigiri, pusaita lands and ina’m positions.

1. Ibid f 17a.
2. Ibid f 17b Instead the information were furnished by the muqaddams. Yadashht haqiqat mawza Rakhyal khurd bamujib Navisanide Udai Karan muqaddam PC No 136
3. Account.f. 17a; for further details Ibid ff 174b 203b 213a, 214b, 218b, 241a, 274b 299b.
4. The desai of Viramgaon held the position of ‘madar-i kar (chief of affairs) and his wishes were honoured in making appointments in the pargana. According to the Mirat 'dis-affection existed between the desai and Jawanmard Khan, the faujdar. As the desai was madar-i kar, the administrative matters became chaotic. The naib subedar, therefore, appointed Sher Khan as naib faujdar because 'he was in concord with desai. 'Mirat-i Ahmadi, pp 16, 166-7.
session which were granted to them from Akbar to Muhammad Shah and later on renewed by the Nawabs who also added extra favours. Similarly works of later date speak of their continuity in the nawabi territories of Bharauch, Radhanpur, Palanpur and Balasinor (Barasinwra).

The available evidence also suggests that some of the desais not merely managed their survival out of the fluid state of affairs but also made fortunes.

Some desais contracted ijarah rights. Dayanat Ram desai (pargana haveli Ahmadabad) contracted the desaigiri and pusaita rights of another desai for a sum of Rs 41/ on annual basis for two fasli years 1138 and 1139 (1730-31 and 1731-32). Some other desais of the same pargana held mawza

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1. Beside the references (Junagadh SC) cited in Chapter III under desai and in Chapter V under ina'm please also see Junagadh SC No 1042 (mahal Seel) SC No 688 EX (8/8 mahal Una) SC NO 1195 ex 1 (mahal Babariawar) SC No 148 EX7 and 780 ex 4/3 (mahal Sutrapara) SC No 393 ex 12/4 and 369 (mahal Junagadh) SC No 1124 mahal Kutiyana.

2. Register (Jild) "Karparbhari" at Nawab's house Radhanpur. Bombay Gazetteer II pp 484-6 Mr. Asstt. Collector Pyne's Representation (1827) on Balasinor; Indian Economist, p.212; Bombay Govt Revenue selection III p 649 In the nawabi lands of Radhanpur and Palanpur the desais held the charge of revenue affairs and they were designated as karparbhari Gujarati version of Persian expression madar-i kar, the chief of affairs.

3. P C No 279

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Tirwara and Faridabad (1729-31) in *ijarah*. 1

The *desais* in *pargana* Viramgaon appeared to have withheld the revenues of the villages under them sometimes during the *Subedar* of Ghaziuddin Khan. The *Subedar* is therefore reflected to have collected *khichri* instead. 2 The *desais* in some parts of *sarkar* Surat (which later on constituted the *nawabi* of Surat) remitted revenues as and when forced to do so. 3 Later on the British also noted that the *desais* in (the *nawabi* territory of) Balasinor *exercised the functions of the *patel*. 4 Some of the *desais* of *pargana*

1. *Yad-dasht haqiqat dehat pargana haveli Ahmadabad dehat-* i *ijarah* R No 37 Pune. Regarding the period 1760--1810 the British observed about south Gujarat that *desais* were more than a Government Servant and were established as *ijarahdars* and had divided villages amongst themselves and all were called *desais* *Bombay Gazetteer* 11 pp 57 215-16; The *desais* of *pargana* *Idar* and *Viramgaon* came into clash with the *qasbatis* of the place presumably because both of them acted as *ijarahdars*. *Rasmala*. pp 345-47. See also *English Documents*, p 8; *Tarikh-i Soreth*, f.54; *Mirat-i Ahmadi*. 11 p 114.


3. *English Documents* p 15 In this region the Marathas had acquired predominant position and the *desais* seem to have aligned themselves with them.

4. Mr Asst Collector Pyne's *Representation* (1827) on Balasinor. In Surat region many a *desai* had also grabbed *patelship*. According to the British findings the *desais* at times found the *patels* incapable of paying the arbitrarily enhanced government demand. Then the *desais* advanced credit (*manoti*) to the peasantry at exorbitant rates of interest and thus put aside the agency of *patel* between themselves and the peasantry. The *patels* were forced to sell out the *majmua* lands the symbol of their headship. *Bombay Rev Sel* III p 649; *Indian Economist*, p 212 It must however be kept in mind that the English disliked the *desais* from the very
haveli Junagadh (Sarkar Soreth) turned "muqtai" and paid a fixed amount to Maharaja Ajeet Singh, the Subedar. The desais of pargana Mangrole (Sarkar Soreth) paid 75000 mehmudis presumably on the non-zamindari lands of the pargana under them during the Subedar of Mulzuddawla.

Some information regarding the desai's relationship with other zamindars is also available. It has already been pointed out that the desais of Mangrole and Junagadh had helped the Rana of Porbandar and Vibhaji of Gondal against the imperial cause. But the desai of Viramgaon misrepresented the case of Arjun Singh, the zamindar of Wadhawan (pargana Viramgaon) before the subedar. The desais of Idar had attempted to reinstall the ousted zamindar at the gaddi sometime during second decade of the eighteenth century. The desai of Bhaonagar mediated between the (nawab) mutasaddi of Surat, Subedar of Gujarat, Marathas and faujdar of

beginning of their rule in the region.

1. Peshkash docs PC No 31 cf ibid PC No 13 Later on the British noted that desais in pargana Bharauch claimed the rights and position of 'zamindars'. The investigations conducted by them revealed that desais had utilized their position as 'man of capital and government servants to bring into their hands large areas of valuable lands'. Bombay Gazetteer 11, pp 484, 486.

2. Peshkash Docs, PC No. 33; cf. ibid, PC No 16.


4. Rasmala, p 346
Junagadh and Rawal Bhao Singh. The desai also assisted the Rao of Sehore in the foundation of the town of Bhaonagar and managed to obtain a grant of certain rights in the port of Ghoga.¹

There is evidence to show that the desais did not lend support to the Marathas, though it was not invariably the case. The desais of Baroda did not help the Marathas in the realization of revenues when ordered by a Naib-Subedar Hamid Khan to do so.² Likewise the desais of Surat region (1735) were imprisoned by the Marathas on the ground of their non-cooperation with them.³ The desai of Viramgaon had first put up armed resistance against the Marathas on his own volition but when he lost trust in the Mughal Subedar he helped them capture the place.⁴

The desais appear to have made money by levying taxes and making encroachments. According to a complaint received by the Marathas (1753) the desai of pargana Bulsar (Sarkar Surat) expropriated revenues of the villages which Sadat

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1. J.W. Watson, "Historical sketch of the town of Ghoga" pp 284-85
2. English Documents, p 3
3. Ibid p 15
4. Later on he expelled the Maratha garrison from the town and occupied the place for himself. For references and details please see discussion below.
Khan, a Mughal jagirdar, held in his jagir.\textsuperscript{1} The desai of pargana Baroda levied salami from the madad-i ma'sh possessions in the area.\textsuperscript{2} It seems the desais tried to make use of their position if and when it was found feasible.

Some of the desais amassed considerable amounts of money. Rawal Bhao Singh of Bhaonagar plundered the wealth and confiscated property of the desai who had grown very wealthy.\textsuperscript{3} Ratan Singh, Naib-Subedar under Maharaja Abhay Singh "since long had in view" Udai Karan desai's "wealth and riches". He is reported to have always waited for an opportunity to confiscate it.\textsuperscript{4} Sunder Wagji desai of Bulsar (Sarkar Surat) possessed not less than 13 domestic slaves (gharchi ghulam), a few villages and certain bighas of lands.\textsuperscript{5}

While the desais of some places protected and promoted their interests by rendering assistance to others, the desai

\textsuperscript{1} Selections From Satara Raja and Peshwa Diaries, II Balaji Baji Rao Peshwa, II pp 118-19

\textsuperscript{2} Historical Selections From Baroda State Records I (1724-68) p 121

\textsuperscript{3} J W Watson op cit pp 284-5

\textsuperscript{4} Mirat-i Ahmadi II pp 166-7

\textsuperscript{5} Selections From Satara Raja and Peshwa Diaries II p 194
of Bairamgam (Viramgaon) acting independently laid foundation of his dynastic rule as a Superior Zamindar. The desai cashed upon the disorderly situation created by Maratha presence in the subah and utilizing his own sources of strength turned from the desai of pargana Viramgaon into the Thakur of Patdi.

Bhao Singh, the desai of pargana Viramgaon, was a wealthy and influential person holding a key position in the affairs (madar-i kaar) of the pargana. Ratan Singh Bhandari, deputy Nazim of the subah, with an eye on desai's wealth, deputed a special faujdar to bring the latter to Ahmadabad. While coming to Ahmadabad he came to know of Bhandari's intentions and with the cooperation of the sure-

1. Viramgaon was a pargana of sarkar Ahmadabad. It mainly consisted of the possessions of Jhala Rajputs and the Kolis. The town is situated in the north of Ahmadabad.

2. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II p. 116. Bhao Singh's family Kavda Kunbi by caste is said to have come from Champaner, settled at Viramgaon in the 16th century, first as patel and afterwards under Aurangzeb as desai rose to the wealth and importance. Bombay Gazetteer, IV, pp 348, 354n. According to Mirat-i Ahmadi, (II, p.64) the populace of Viramgaon while Rengoji put armed pressure, arranged on the advice of Udal Karan, the desai that the place should buy off the enemy with a payment of Rs. 3,50,000. The desai had, however, with much foresight secured from the people a contribution over and above what was required for the Khandni (the security money) and with the help of that surplus a fortification was built around the town for its protection. Strangely enough, Marathas did not take possession of the place at that time.

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ties (bandharis) he secured his release. The next year (1733), Ratan Singh appointed a Marwari as the faujdar of Viramgaon in place of Sher Khan Babi. But Bhao Singh distrusting the Marwari, sent a secret message to Damaji Gaekwad at Dholka, inviting him to take possession of Viramgaon.

The Maratha chief was admitted to the town while the qasbatis who were opposed to the desai and had also killed Udai Karan Desai, father of Bhao Singh, were driven out. During the following months, in the year 1734, Ratan Singh Bhandari, Naib Nazim laid siege to the city but he failed to capture it.

In the year 1740, Bhao Singh finding the Maratha garrisons troublesome, engaged a body of Arabs and Rohillahs and expelled the Marathas. The gates were closed and provisions and war materials were collected for the city's defence. Rangoji and the then Nazim Momin Khan having agreed to a

2. Ibid., II p. 186 also Ibid., II p. 116. Salabat Muhammad Khan was deputed by the Nazim to investigate the death of Udai Karan who had been murdered by a qasbati. But the Khan died of cholera on route to Viramgaon. No action, even subsequently, was taken against the qasbati who like at Idar were at dagger’s drawn with the desai.
3. Ibid., II, pp. 188-9; Commissariat, History of Gujarat, II, p. 452.
4. Mirat-i Ahmadi (II, p. 261) states that "Bhao Singh was tired of the rascality of a batch of Marathas".
joint investment of Viramgaon proceeded with their forces to that town and the siege began. After a month's progress, Momin Khan left for collecting peshkash from the Subah. Rangoji had to carry on the operation alone. Meanwhile, the Arab and Rohilla mercenaries of the desai made demands for the arrears of their pay and Bhao Singh, being unable to satisfy them immediately, and fearing their desertion thought it advisable to bring the matter to an end. It was agreed with Rangoji that the fort of Patdi with several dependent villages on the Rann of Kuchh would be handed over to him while the town of Viramgaon with the rest of the pargana was restored to the Marathas.\footnote{From the year (1740) Patdi came under the Patidar family of the desai of Viramgaon where he ruled as Thakur.\footnote{Mirat-i Ahmadi, II pp. 261-2; Bombay Gazetteer, V, pp. 348-54; M S Commissariat, History of Gujarat, II, pp. 452n and 474.}}

It may be seen that the desai who held a key position (madar-i kaar) in the affairs of Viramgaon and had defended the town even from the Marathas was forced by Ratan Singh Bhandari to befriend the ones i.e. Marathas, whom he had regarded as enemies. Again, as he could not pull on well with his new ally and the prevailing state of affairs per-

\footnote{M S Commissariat, History of Gujarat, II pp.452 and n, 474. The rule of desai is reported to have lasted for 200 years or so.}
mitted him, he turned against both, the Marathas as well as the Mughals. The desal purchased the services of mercenaries and put himself in a bargaining position. As a result, he was allowed to establish his authority at Patdi, a place though fertile but not as strategic as the town of Viramgao.

It would thus appear that the effect of changing political milieu had not been similar on all the desais of the region. Generally the areas which were carved out as nawabis from the Mughal empire and the areas wherein they had come to enjoy Maratha confidence, the desais appear to have managed their survival and putting the power of purse and their official position to effective use, they made fortunes. In these regions the desais also acquired patelhood. But in other areas where the Mughal authority had weakened and was not replaced by the Marathas or else by strong noble, the desais suffered set backs, particularly in the central parts of Gujarat and generally at patel’s hands.

The Muqaddam:

Some significant changes in the Muqaddam’s position vis-à-vis Mughal administration and the village community are discernable during the first half of the eighteenth century. The muqaddams' main strength lay more in their being the men of the village community than in their semi-official posi-
tion. In their capacity as representatives of village community they acted as check on and assisted the desais, amils and amins in the sphere of assessment and collection of revenues. With a decline in the administrative control the position of desai and the state officials', was rendered vulnerable which the muqaddams seem to have capitalized on for combining the rights to assess and collect revenues into their own hands. But the pattern of change was not uniform everywhere and at all times. Many a muqaddam suffered substantially in his power and position at the hands of other zamindars. In the following pages an attempt is made to highlight the changes which originated or acquired momentum during the first half of the eighteenth century.

It has been discussed in the preceding pages that some of the desais acquired patelhood in addition to holding desalgi on in the southern parts of Gujarat - the region which formed part of the nawabis of port towns and also where the Marathas' control was firmly and finally established relatively from an early date. Also the patels seem to have suffered in the areas which passed out of direct

1. For the nawabi areas please see discussion under Nawabs of Surat, Bharuch and Khambat, Chapter VII below; for Maratha dominance see discussion under Struggle for Supremacy, Introduction to the present study.
Mughal authority and were occupied by the zamindars.¹ For want of detailed information it is difficult to ascertain the Muqaddam's position in the areas which other zamindars had come to occupy. In all probability the muqaddams lost their independent position in these areas but appear to have continued in a subordinate position.²

Some piece of informations indicating the muqaddam's sufferings at the hands of state officials are also contained in the pages of the Mirat-i Ahmadi.

The muqaddams and villagers of Dabhali lost everything, including their lives on account of a quarrel which took place (1721-22) between them and the Subedar's army due to 'transgression of some vagabonds' in the army. The Subedar put the village to fire and killed every one of them, so much so that 'there did not remain any trace of population. The Muqaddam's effort to avert the clash went in vain.³

The muqaddams and the riaya of pargana Dholqa had to face 'rascality' of the amil-faujder. Alongwith the riaya

¹. For the details of encroachments Chapters II and V.

². As per the contents of the Kunbi song which was sung by the wives of cultivators (Kunbis) the muqaddam (mukhi) of the village used to call on the zamindar in connection with assessment and collection of revenues in the company of village patwari, known as tallati in Gujarat. Rasmala pp 543-5. Also see Mirat (II.p.94) for the revenues being paid by the zamindar himself during the Subedari of Sarbuland Khan.

³. Mirat-i Ahmadi II pp 44-5
they protested against the oppressive official before the Subedar (1726) Mubariz-ul mulk Sarbuland Khan. The muqaddams and riaya of pargana haveli Ahmadabad abandoned their villages and fled into jungles (1728) in protest against the amil-amin-faujdar who seems to have demanded more revenues than due. 2

In the instances cited above the muqaddams' sufferings seem to have been linked with their position as representative of the village community. But the muqaddam of Padra (pargana haveli Baroda) had to save his skin from Maharaja Abhay Singh whose greedy eyes had fallen on his personal wealth. 3 The muqaddam of Nadiad was arrested by the Subedar (1743) who badly needed money and suspected that the muqaddam had enough money. 4 Likewise the muqaddam of Vasa (Baso, pargana Petlad) lost his wealth and life at the hands of the Subedar's men who had grown jealous of his wealth and emi-

1. Ibid II p 94. The work does not elaborate the 'rascality' of the official.

2. Ibid II p 105. Though the oppressive official was replaced by another person who conciliated them by effecting proper assessment. But the Subedar came with an additional demand of Rs. 10,000/- even though there was no scope for an addition on the pargana. The demand was met forcibly. Ibid II p 106.

3. Ibid II pp.143-4

4. Ibid II p 284
Some other muqaddams also suffered as they refused to co-operate with the Marathas. During (the defacto Subedar') Hamid Khan's period of administration muqaddams of some places in south Gujarat were imprisoned by the Marathas for their refusal to pay the revenues demanded by them as ordered by the Khan. 2

The evidence cited above though limited in quantity and scope however indicates that the muqaddam's was not a docile leadership for they did not obey command all the time. It would further appear from the following discussion that muqaddams strengthened their own hold over the countryside in consequence of their apparent endeavors to remove the watch dog of imperial interests in the villages, presumably with the support of their own power base.

It has been submitted above that the assessment of revenues gradually came to be effected by the expeditionary forces. Such a course of action seems to be the outcome of increasing and increased defiance on the part of intermediary zamindars, whether encroachers or legitimate, or both. Available evidence suggests that the muqaddams were amongst the defiants.

1. Ibid. II pp 505-6
2. English Documents pp 3, 15.
Commenting on the general situation prevailing during the fourth and fifth decade of the eighteenth century, the Account states that the muqaddams of villages have ousted desais from their respective possessions. Besides they are also reported to have assumed the positions of amin and effected assessment on their own.\(^1\)

Though the evidence casting light on the ways the muqaddams grabbed the positions is not available.\(^2\) However it seems that having lost the effective administrative backing the amin and desais failed to stand in their own right against the muqaddams who seem to have enjoyed support of the villagers under them.

Besides assuming the power to assess revenues in their own right the muqaddams also assumed the powers of desais' gumashtas (agents) who were there to prepare and furnish detailed accounts at village level for furnishing the same.

1. Account f 17b For details showing muqaddams as assessment authority please see discussion in the following lines.

2. The muqaddam of Nadiad was assigned the task of assessing and collecting various illegal exactions in pargana haveli Ahmadabad (1739-40) without acquiring any other designation under the immediate authority of the Governor. Mirat-i Ahmadi II p 260. Later on one Pania a muqaddam is noticed as holding the position of amin in pargana Petlad. Ibid II p 441.
to the desais for onward transmission. Many a muqaddam refused even to furnish the accounts which had thus come to be prepared by them. The muqaddams, it appears made a conscious effort to deprive the state of the knowledge of actual details of cultivation in the villages. But at times by stepping into the patwari’s shoes and furnishing the details under their own authority, the muqaddams seem to have endeavored to replace him and place themselves as a direct link with the state.

1. Account f 17a. Some muqaddams are noticed as furnishing accounts in actual practice. Muhammad Iraj, faujdar-amin of Dholqa is reported to have produced muqaddams and desais for submission of accounts before Sarbuland Khan. (Mirat-i Ahmadi II p 94). Muqaddams of Petlad are also reported to have presented themselves for inspection of accounts when the same Subedar was leading a military expedition. Ibid II p 107. See also Ibid II p 259. Later on the British found the village patwaris (tallati) working under the authority of village headman. Bombay Gazetteer (Kaira). p 80.

2. Account f 17a

3. The mazruat documents for pre-1720-21 period mention the patwari as the source of furnishing the same but during the post 1721 period muqaddams are mentioned instead of the patwari PC No 132; mawza Balad (1141 fasli), Palri Kochrab (1142 fasli), taraf Rakhyal buzurg (1142 fasli), taraf Nazriat (1144 fasli) taraf Daryapur (1144 fasli) R No 21, Pune. But it was not invariably the case. Patwaris also continued to do so; Rakhyal Khurd (1133 fasli), Runhasan (1137 fasli), Dantyal (1148 fasli), Dantiyali (1149 fasli). Khoranj (1153 fasli) R No 22 Pune. Keeping in view the changed attitude of the villages toward the state they had come to be categorized, noted the Britishers, into refractory (mehwas) and semi-refractory (rasti mehwas) villages. They found the proportion of the rasti villages much less than the rest in Kaira region. Bombay
From the discussion in the preceding lines it would appear that the muqaddams made a successful bid to grab all the powers of the state pertaining to the assessment of revenues. Another piece of information, an amal-i dastur (1745-46) brings to light yet another significant feature in the same regard. The dastur, as usual, records rates of assessment of land revenue and other exactions at customary rates. The document however specifies that the rates of assessment were furnished by Banarsi muqaddam of mawza Palri Kochrab to the provincial office, a fact of singular importance, for the rest of the available dasturs were furnished other way round. But being it a lonely available piece of information any inference may not be pressed too far.

There is evidence to show that muqaddam's emergence as over-powerful persons in villages seems to have led to the discontinuation of the state's well established direct contact with the peasantry which, though not invariably, appears to have passed under their authority. The documents pertaining to assessment of revenues for a number of villages of pargana haveli Ahmadabad virtually present him as

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Gazetteer (Kaira) p 81.

a unit of assessment with no reference to relevant details which were taken under the seal of the Subedar Rs 801/- were determined (muqarrar namudeh) as the revenues inclusive of abwab and other state demands in lump sum (bilmuqte) on Dev Karan and other muqaddams of mawza Behrampur for rabi and kharif crop seasons together for the entire fasli year 1154/1745-46 (hama jeht sal-i tamam). The muqaddams were required to remit the sum in instalments (b'mujib iqsat dar sarkar dakhil namayand). Likewise Bhavanidas and other muqaddams of taraf Daryapur were asked to remit Rs. 801/- determined the same way for the two crop seasons together for the same year. Similarly Jhanji, Goridas, Jiwanji Bhupatji and Mohanji, muqaddams of mawza Goha were informed that a sum of Rs 2171/- has been fixed as state demand in lump sum (hama jeht) for rabi and kharif seasons of 1154 fasli (1744-45) for the whole year (sal-i tamam). In the same way muqaddams of many other villages were informed of the amount so fixed

2. Naql az qarar batal b muhr Nawab Jawanmard Khan Bahadur 19th Ramadhan, 29 Ry Muhammad Shah PC No 79/A.
3. Not titled, date not specified, PC No. 79/J
and were ordered to remit the same to the Government. It would therefore appear that the state fixed the amount on the village, or a part thereof and demanded the same from the muqaddams who were apparently left free to decide with the cultivators as to how much each one was to pay.

But then muqaddams do not emerge as the only assesses and the only ones held responsible for remitting the revenues determined in the above mentioned manner. According to a parwana (1746) the Subedar assured Rabhji and other Rajputs alongwith Ranchhod and other Kolis (girasias) beside the muqaddams Gobindas and Shankardas and others that he would deal, exclusively, with them, and not trouble any other for the apparent purpose of paying revenues. Similarly another parwana (1746) issued by the Subedar gives same assurance to the girasia of Sankhej beside the muqaddam. Like these girasias there were others too who continued to be assessed directly by the state as will be seen below.

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1. Naql ganwat qarar batai, dt 11th Shahwal RY 29, Muhammad Shah, Taraf Nazriat, PC No 263b, see also please Ibid, PC No 263a, dt 10th Shawwal; see also similarly entitled documents for the fasli years 1149, 1151, 1152, 1155-9, fasli(1761-65), for villages of pargana haveli Ahmadabad, R No. 21 Pune. All these documents do not refer to the crops or the cropped area as also the muqaddam's acceptance also is not reflected.

2. Naql parwana bandhari, dt 17th Rabî I RY 29, Muhammad Shah PC No 79/E.

3. Ibid dt 3 Ramadhan, RY 29, Muhammad Shah, PC No 79/F.
One Thangl, a Kunbi of mawza Tajpur (pargana haveli Ahmadabad) was to pay Rs 8/- 'bilmuqte yekrami' (in lump sum, all the state demands compounded together) for both the crop seasons of the year 1746-47. The muqaddam of the village was likewise required to pay Rs 751/- the same way, obviously on behalf of the other cultivators of the village. ¹ Similarly the muqaddam of Rakhyal buzurg was to pay Rs 301/- fixed the same way. The bilmuqte muzarian of the same village were to pay @ Rs. 1/- per bigha on the cropped area during the two crop seasons of the same (1158 fasli) year (1740-50). ² Then we come across the bilmuqte kashta, pai-bilmuqte kashta in mawza Balad (pargana haveli Ahmadabad) for the first time in 1149 fasli 1740-41. ³ The bilmuqte kashta were likewise required to pay a fixed amount which was determined on the basis of area under cultivation at a flat rate with no reference to the crops actually

1. PC No 236 (1155 fasli) read with qistbandi mawza Tajpur, 1155 fasli R No 21 Pune.

2. Qistbandi mawza Rakhyal buzurg, fasl-i rabi-o kharif 1156 fasli, R No 38 Pune. The mazruat documents available for earlier years for the same village and cited on the preceding pages do not refer to the bilmuqte muzarian. Obviously they emerged sometime between 1137 and 1157 fasli i.e 1728-9 and 1740-41.

3. Qist bandi mawza Balad. fasl-i Kharif-o Rabi, 1149 fasli R No 22 of Ibid for fasl-i kharif 1131, 1137, 1139 fasli; Ibid for fasl-i rabi for 1132, 1135, 1137, 1139 fasli, R No 22. In this village too the bilmuqte-kashtas appear to have emerged sometime after 1139 fasli.
raised. The *bilmuqte kashtas* appear to be the stronger section of the peasantry that could maintain its direct communication with the state in their own right, independently of the *muqaddams* who were obviously not in a position to subdue each of the cultivators of the village. Besides, the *girasias* (in the available cases, the *banthadaran*) also stood in their own right. Apparently the *muzaddam's* increased hold over the village remained confined to relatively not so strong a section of the community.

The state was not necessarily confident of getting the amounts which had been assessed or fixed on the *muqaddams* and therefore, it procured sureties, called *ma'i-1 zamini* for ensuring remittance of the revenues. Interesting fact in this regard is that the guarantor, in each of the available cases, happened to be a Bhat (*baad farosh*).²

The state demanded a summarily fixed amount (which, as pointed out earlier, declined every next year) from the *muqaddams* who seem to have developed positive apprehensions

1. *Qistbandi mawza* Balad, *fasl-i kharif-o rabi*, 1149 *fasli*. The *bilmuqte kashtas* were to pay @ 2/- per bigha on 350 bighas of land i.e. Rs. 700/- only. No amount of revenue is reflected against rest of the *muzarian*

2. *Qistbandi dehat-i pargana* haveli Ahmadabad, *fasl-i kharif-o rabi*, 1160 *fasli*, R No 21 Pune; *Awarja jama wasulyabi dehat pargana* haveli Ahmadabad, *fasl-i kharif*, 1167 *fasli*, R No 22, Pune. For the Bhats' interest please see discussion below.

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1. References for the original sources of the *bilmuqte kashtas* and *muqaddams* and their respective duties and responsibilities are provided in the footnotes. These sources include various records and legal documents related to the period in question. For instance, *Qistbandi mawza Balad* is a reference to a record of land transactions and payments made by the villagers to the state. The specific details of the *bilmuqte kashtas* payments are provided in the footnotes, including the exact amounts and conditions under which they were paid.

2. The references for the *girasias* and *banthadaran* are also included in the footnotes. These individuals were responsible for the administration of the villages and were likely to be intermediaries between the villagers and the state. The details of their roles and responsibilities are also outlined in the footnotes, along with their specific duties and interactions with the *muzaddam's*.
against the authorities who could, as they actually did\textsuperscript{1}, come with additional demands. According to a document (not titled, 1744-5) which specifies the amount fixed as state demand on the \textit{muqaddams} for the year 1154 \textit{fasli}, the state gave a promise (\textit{gawl}) and, for reinsuring its word furnished surety (\textit{bhandari}) to them to the effect that nothing like \textit{bewra} (a cess) would be levied and that no addition to the amount settled already would be made subsequently. In view of this guarantee the \textit{muqaddams} were advised not to have any doubt and carry on cultivation.\textsuperscript{2} Another document (1744) issued under the \textit{Subedar}'s seal records that the \textit{batai} had been settled as the mode of assessment of revenues on the crops raised by Kameja and the \textit{paikashta} cultivators of \textit{mawza} Ghayaspur for the year (1744-45) and that the same had been settled with the \textit{muqaddams}. The document adds that nothing in addition to the agreed share would be demanded. To make the promise worth believing, it is added that word of \textit{sarkar} is the word of God\textsuperscript{3}! Yet another document, a \textit{parwana-i bandhari} likewise communicates the settlement of the mode of assessment as accepted by \textit{muqaddams} of \textit{mawza}.

1. For details and references please see discussion under Introduction and Chapter VI.

2. \textit{PC} No 79/J For details about \textit{bandhari} please see discussion in Chapter VI.

3. \textit{Naql ganwat az qarar batai}, dt 24th Jamadi I, 28 RY Muhammad Shah \textit{PC} No. 64.
Aslali (paraga na haveli Ahmadabad) and assures that bewra etc. would not be demanded. In order to make his word credible the Subedar furnished two persons as sureties (bandharis). To mention yet another instance of similar nature, the Subedar (1746) assured the muqaddams of mawza Behrampur that no addition would be made to the already settled amount for the whole year and the sureties were likewise furnished to ensure that the word would be honored. It shows that the muqaddams had not only lost trust in the Subedar's word and credibility which apparently stood eroded, but also they had grown strong enough to force the Governor to furnish sureties which, otherwise, were like mal-i zamini, given by them. Since the muqaddams of paraga na haveli Ahmadabad, the seat of provincial power, could extort guarantees from the Governor himself and were to pay obviously a nominal sum (total revenue receipts of the state declined) the situation persisting elsewhere may be assumed to have been equally good for them vis a vis the state.

It would appear from the evidence cited above that muqaddams were pragmatic enough to make necessary adjust-

1. Naqil parwana bandhari b'muhr., Jawanmand Khan Bahadur, dt. 22 Rabi II RY 29 Muhammad Shah PC No 79/D

2. Ibid, dt 15th Ramadhan, RY 29 Muhammad Shah, PC No 79/C, see also Ibid dt 19th Ramadhan PC No 79/A. For the similar guarantee given to the Primary zamindars, Chapter VI below.
ments within the community\(^1\) and respond accordingly to the state authority. They seem to have kept a watch on the changing political milieu, paying revenues to the one who commanded sufficient strength in the immediate vicinity of their possessions.\(^2\) The defiance on their part and their bargaining power vis-à-vis the state appears to have increased with the passage of time as would be borne out by the evidence cited below.

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1. The *muqaddams* too were not necessarily at peace with each other. One Badridas of mawza Asarwa (pargana haveli) Ahmadabad represented that his father, one of the *muqadams* of the village, had died due to the troubles inflicted by his compatriots. Badridas was also evicted out of his possessions by the same *muqaddams*. He therefore approached the *Subedar* through the *muqaddams* of mawza Rakhiyal buzurg PC No 85 of 1148 fasli/1739-40.

2. Renkoji, a Maratha chief defeated his rival Maratha sardar and the Mughal faujdar failed to resist him. Realizing his growing "impression" the *muqaddams* of round about place "came to him on their own" for settling the revenue matters. *Mirat-i Ahmadi* II p 175; *Ahwa-i Gaikwad* i 14; *Tarikh-i Maratha dar Gujarat* i 4. Later on with the successful march of Momin Khan II against the Marathas the "*muqaddams* on witnessing this state of affairs" 'learnt a lesson' and came for assessment of revenues gave hostages and (thereby) protected and defended their lives' and property *'Mirat-i Ahmadi* II p 449. The *Mirat* further observes that when Momin Khan's armies met success after success the *Mugaddas* "came foreward at all places." *Ibid* II pp 451-2. But the *Muquaddams* of Petlad acted more wisely for they 'satisfied' the Marathas as also agreed to pay 'with willingness to Momin Khan, a portion of revenues'. *Ibid* II pp 451-2. Once the situation started changing and Marathas pressed Momin Khan hard the *muqaddams* who had submitted before the Khan 'became anxious about evil consequences and future of their own' and therefore changed side *Ibid* II pp 504.
The *Muqaddams* used to attend the office as and when summoned during the earlier period. From the documents termed *tamassukat-i hazir zamini* it would appear that the *muqaddams* would not like to attend the office until and unless a proper guarantee was extorted from them. According to the earliest of such available (1729) documents one Ram Singh, a Bhat of Baroda stood surety undertaking responsibility of producing Ramdas, Bhagwatdas, Kesoji, Premji and other *muqaddams* of *mawza* Khawa (paragana Kadi) before the *faujdar*. Similarly Dewraj, a Bhat of *mawza* Dhamanwan, is reflected (1744) as undertaking similar responsibility on behalf of Tarangdas, Harsendas, Manohar and other *muqaddams* of *mawza* Heerpur. From the 27 Ry of Muhammad Shah many documents of the type are available. In each case it is invariably a Bhat who is recorded as having undertaken the guarantee.

If the Subedar extorted guarantee for ensuring their availability, the *muqaddam* too turned bold and strong enough

1. To procure *hazir-zamini*—a guarantee to ensure availability of the person guaranteed—from the *muqaddams* appears to be a development of the period under review.

2. *Baroda* 99, *Dt* 20th Jamadi II 1142 AH


4. *Yad-dasht* tamassukat hazir zamini dehat pargana haveli Ahmadabad R No 37 Pune; Awarja hazir zamini 26 *RY* Muhammad Shah *Ibid*
to demand similar bandhari which could accordingly be provided. According to a solitary piece of information Jawanmard Khan, the governor, issued a parwana-i qawl-o bandhari in favour of Khanji and Banarsi muqaddams of mawza Sankej (pargana haveli Ahmadabad) assuring them that the sarkar would not interfere in their (unspecified) affairs. The parwana which seems to have been issued to summon them to the provincial capital and remove doubts (barai rafai' waswas) furnishes sureties (bandhars) to ensure their safe conduct to and from the place they were to present themselves. It seems the muqaddams apprehended ill treatment(?). That is why they demanded and got guarantees.

The muqaddams of some places came to be regarded as recalcitrants and treated the same way. The author of the Mirat mentions that reliable sureties were procured by the authorities but he identifies the Kolis or Rajputs as rebellious people, the ones who were to furnish such sureties. From a tamassuk-i hazir zamini-o fa'il-i zamini (1729) it would appear that the muqaddams of mawza Khawa (pargana Kadi) were also obliged to furnish sureties ensuring their proper conduct along with the Kolis and Rajput- girasias of the village. The documents reflecting for the first time a

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1. Naqil parwana qawl-o bandhari, dt. 3rd Ramadhan RY 29 Muhammad Shah
muqaddam as furnishing such a surety mentions Ram Singh, a Bhat acting as guarantor on his behalf. According to another document (1743) Lakhoji, a Bhat of mawza Kaloli undertook responsibility of right conduct of Narharidas Gopi and other, muqaddams of mawza Basonj (paragana haveli Ahmadabad) beside Rajputs and Kolis of the village. Likewise Raghodas Bhat of mawza Gotlej stood as fa'il zamin for Ranchhod and other muqaddams of the same village during the same year. There is a series of documents reflecting the muqaddams during 26th RY of Muhammad Shah as furnishing fa'il zamin who as per the available documents, invariably happened to be Bhats. It therefore seems that the state had to lean

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2. Yad-dasht of afaa'l-i zamin dehat pargana haveli Ahmadabad 8th Jamadi II, RY 26 Muhammad Shah

3. Tamassukat-i fa'il zamin dehat pargana haveli Ahmadabad, RY 26 Mohammad Shah, R No 33 Pune

4. Ibid Tamassukat-i fa'il zamin dehat pargana Kadi, R No 37 Pune; Tamassukat pargana Dholqa, sarkar Ahmadabad, R No 25 Pune. The muqaddams could also be assigned the duty of watch and ward (Chowki-o pehra) within their villages along the Kolis and others. Naql parwanajat, 20th Ramadhan, 20th RY Muhammad Shah PC No 79/f.

5. Further information about the Bhats, their strength and interests in serving as sureties is not available in the contemporary works. Later on the British also found out that the Bhats' services as sureties were generally required for connecting the mehwasi (i.e. zortalab) portion of the society with the government. Their strength lay in the belief of considering their person sacred and the threat of self-immolation could easily change the patels' mind who otherwise faced the threat
heavily on the assistance even of such *muqaddams* who were in the state of constant rebellion and distrusted the authority. To manage them the state's dependence on the feeble authority of Bhats all the more speaks of its helplessness.

*SHARE* The share of *muqaddams* in the legal sense of the term seems to have remained unchanged.¹ There is evidence showing that the *muqaddams* continued to enjoy their *pusaita*

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...Continued...

of being declared outcaste. The British too could not enquire into *the legality of their acquisitions (of lands, zamindaris and other privileges) from the horror of self immolation* which they threatened if it were attempted. Hamilton Walter *Op cit* I pp 609-11; Treaties VI p 5 & n; *Rasmala* p 340

The Bhats interest to act as sureties also finds reference in British works. They are observed to have got a fixed percentage of the revenues in case they acted as surety. Some of them were found to have charged as their remuneration upto 25 percent of the assured amounts. The British also noted that some of the sureties had been able to acquire lands, zamindaris and other privileges. Hamilton Walter *Op cit* I pp 609 641 *Rasmala* p 404 Bombay Gazetteer II pp 148 388 496 *Ibid* IV pp 48 146; *Ibid X*, pp 147-8. For them getting state's favour please see discussion under revenue grantees Chapter V below

¹. *Mirat-i Ahmadi*, as pointed out in the preceding Chapter speaks of fixation of their share during Akbar's reign. No change in the approved share is noticeable in any of the available sources for the later period.
lands\(^1\) as well as got fresh favours from the state.\(^2\) In actual practice their income must have been much different from the approved share. Because they would also appropriate the difference, in many cases, between what they actually collected from the peasantry and the amount paid to the state that fixed the revenues in lump sum. More so they encroached upon, as pointed out above, the positions of desais and amins and thus removed the administrative checks and acquired, relatively, a free hand. But because of non-availability of relevant information the position of their share in the villages where they suffered setbacks may not be ascertained.

The muqaddams managed to procure high administrative positions like those of faujdar, amin and incharge of affairs (madar-i kar) at pargana level.\(^3\) They must have made

1. Please see, particularly as representative examples the mazruat documents for mawza Aslali (1128 fasli), R No 21 Pune; mawza Mahej (1146 fasli), mawza Khatwara (1149 fasli) PC Nos 101b 162-64; mawza Adalej (1151 fasli), R No 22 Pune; dastur-\(\_\) amal dt 21 Shawwal, 1174 fasli, PC No 67.

2. In addition to the grants which they continued to hold as discussed in Chapter III above, please also see the following evidence pertaining to the grants made in favour of them during the period under review. Junagadh, SC No 225 of 1155 AH (mahal Junagadh); parwana dt. 17 Zilhaj 1156 AH; in favour of Banarsidas muqaddam of mawza Aslali (pargana haveli Ahmadabad) granting mawza Bastra by way of ina'm, R No 46; Mirat-\(\_\) Ahmadi II p. 316.

3. Mirat-\(\_\) Ahmadi, II pp 144-45, 441; Ahwal-\(\_\) Gaekwad i S.
effective use of the high positions for serving their personal interests. The muqaddams were involved in the assessment and collection of illegal exactions like bewra and khichri along with the authorities.\(^1\)

It is however not known if they were allowed any portion out of the collected amount.\(^2\) But the muqaddams acquired other sources of income also.

The muqaddams contracted ijarah rights. As per the information contained in the document entitled 'yad-dasht-i jarahdaran'\(^3\) considerably a large number of muqaddams in the parganas of Kadi, Birpur, Besainagar and Dholqa (Sarkar Ahmadabad) held ijarah rights in the villages of their respective possessions.

There were, then, the muqaddams who appear to have acted as sub-ijarahdars. Momin Khan, the faujdar held pargana Petlad in ijarah during the year (1144 AH) 1731-32 AD. The

\(^1\) Mirat-i Ahmadi II p 260; Amal-i dastur dehat pargana haveli Ahmadabad, mawza Kochrab, dt 1145 fasli PC No. 27; Qistbandi dehat pargana haveli Ahmadabad, mawza Muzaffarpur, R No. 21 Pune; yad-dasht qabulliyat-i bewrah, 1151 fasli, RNo 33 Pune.

\(^2\) But the muqaddams appear to have got something in return. Mirat-i Ahmadi II pp 260, 316 Ahwal-i Gaekwad ff 31, 36.

\(^3\) Yad-dasht-i jarahdaran Sarkar Ahmadabad (for the parganas of) Kadi, Birpur Besainagar and Dholga 1134 fasli R No 67 Pune. In all 107 villages in the parganas were held in ijarah by them. The document specified the villages and the muqaddam ijarahdars with no other informations having been furnished
available document reflects the Khan as *ijarahdar* of the *pargana* whereas a number of *muqaddams* are mentioned as holding villages on *ijarah* of the same *pargana* during the same year.\(^1\) Apparently the *muqaddams* might have been allowed to hold *ijarah* rights in the villages which seem to have been sub-farmed out by Momin Khan, the *ijarahdar* of the *pargana*.

Evidence suggests that *muqaddams* also made money by subduing holders of the *madad-i ma'sh* grants. According to a *parwana* (1737) of Momin Khan (1737-43) the *muqaddams* of *mawza* (Taraf) Rakhyal buzurg had occupied *madad-i ma'sh* land belonging to one Sehuprasad during the period of Naib Subedar Ratan Singh Bhandari declaring that the grant had been resumed by the government. The *muqaddams* were therefore ordered to release the lands and pay back the revenues appropriated by them.\(^2\) According to an *arzi* (1751) *muqaddams* of *mawza* Kodra had been imposing Rs. 150/- on the *madad-i ma'sh* grants of a Saiyed on annual basis for sometime past.\(^3\) According to another *parwana* (1752) *muqaddams* of yet another *mawza* levied Rs. 151/- from the *madad-i ma'sh* lands of the

\(^1\) Yad-dasht *pargana*—Petlad *ijarah*, *ijarahdar* Momin Khan *faujdar-i pargana* dt 19 Muharram 1144 AH, R No 57.  
\(^2\) *PC* No 71, dt 19 Rabi I, RY 20, Muhammad Shah  
\(^3\) *Arzi*, dt 15th Muharram 1163 AH, R No 22 Pune.
family of some Saiyeds.¹

For a proper appreciation of the way the muqaddams acquired wealth and rose into eminence during the periods of turmoil and chaos, and of the Mughal and Maratha attitude towards them the available evidence may be mentioned in some detail.

Dala, muqaddam of Padra (pargana havell Baroda) was 'very wealthy' and desirous of assuming the position of chief of affair (madar-i kar) of Baroda by furnishing sureties (bandharis) of eminent nobles of the region with whom he obviously maintained good relations. On the other Maharaja Abhay Singh, then Subedar (1730-37) wanted to arrest him and confiscate his wealth. But the muqaddam was shrewd as also strong enough to procure sureties, which he did before presenting himself before the Subedar when summoned. The Maharaja could not lay hand upon him in the presence of sureties. He therefore decided to take the muqaddam into the fort of Baroda where he regarded him 'as an esteemed kind of confection and flyless honey'. But the muqaddam got suspicious and fled to his place. Having thus placed himself in security and obviously beyond the Subedar's effective reach the muqaddam told the Maharaja that if he appointed man of the headman's choice as Naib faujdar there would be stable

¹. Parwana, dt 23 Jamadi I, 1163 AH, R No 22 Pune.
income otherwise not. Helplessly the Subedar had to leave the position of faujdari in muqaddam's hands. 1

Dala seems to have enjoyed support of Kolis of Baroda region. According to the Mirat as the Maharaja practiced breach of promise with Dala and then failed to capture fort of Dabhoi the Kolis became 'arrogant' and attacked the Subedar's camp. The muqaddam on the other approached the Marathas and helped them capture Baroda fort. 2 He had obviously no trust in the Mughal Subedar and had to ensure his safety.

Similarly the muqaddam of Nadiad rose high in position and acquired eminence which were apparently disproportionate to the status of a village headmen. During the period of Momin Khan's Subedari (1737-43) Balidas, the muqaddam acted as chief negotiator on Momin Khan's behalf in his dealings with the Marathas. 3 Besides, he assisted the Subedar in the task of levying beura and fines on the rlaya of pargana Nadiad. 4 At the provincial capital he acted 'as guide to

1. Mirat-i Ahmadi II pp 144-5.
2. Ibid II p 145 167 Tarikh-i Maratha dar Gujarat f 5; Ahwal-i Gaekwad f 12-3.
3. Mirat-i Ahmadi II pp 260, 284 The muqaddam also represented the Subedar in his dealings with the Marathas Ibid II pp 300-1, 316; Ahwal-i Gaekwad f 36
4. Mirat-i Ahmadi II p 260; According to Ahwal-i Gaekwad (f.5) Balidas was also amin of the pargana.
other officials for imposition of bewrs on all villages of pargana havellī and is reported to have appointed amils in the pargana and recovered illegal imposts. ¹

Balidas was duly rewarded for the services he rendered to the Mughals and the Marathas. He is reported to have received amounts of money and regards from the Mughal Subedar and the Marathas sardars. ² He was granted a few villages by way of ina'm in lieu of services (b'sigha-i khidmatana) which he rendered to the Mughal Subedar and the Marathas. ³ He was wealthy enough as to present 100 asharfīs on the occasion of a marriage at the Subedar's place. ⁴

In the light of the preceding discussion it may be seen that there were muqaddams who suffered substantially in terms of their share and position at the hands of other

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¹. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II p 260; Ahval-i Gaekwad, i 31.
². Mirat-i Ahmadi II p 316
³. Ibid.
⁴. Ibid II p 260 Around the time (1757) Momin Khan II captured Ahmadabad, Pani, the muqaddam of mawza Waso rose to new heights of power. He was assigned the position of amīn of pargana Petlad. He had also acted as go-between for Momin Khan in his dealings with the Marathas. Later he was entrusted the responsibility of keeping a watch on the fortification of Ahmadabad. He is said to have recruited 1000 soldiers, attacked the Marathas out-posts and thanas, carried deprivations into Maratha possessions and collected revenues. He was suspected of amassing wealth by the Mughal nobles who imprisoned and then killed him Ibid II pp 441-504-6.
zamindars. But a considerably large number of them gained in power and position. Their over all hold over the villages vis a vis the imperial administration had increased considerably. Their hold over the villages was undermined and contested by other influential sections of the village communities rather than by the imperial administration which seems to have yielded before them and accepted fait accompli.