CHAPTER VIII: CONCLUSION.
The Gaekwad rule in Gujarat from its formative years
starting from Pilajirao to the last powerful ruler Fatehsingrao I, a period extending from 1720-1789 has been studied. This period is of significance as in the earlier phase the Gaekwads had to do lot of spade work and create a ground in order to establish themselves in Gujarat. Starting as mere subordinates to Dabhades, they had to prove their merits and capabilities to become independent rulers of Gujarat state at a later date. They had to overcome many odds created by the Mughal rulers in the initial phases in order to achieve the goal. The internal family quarrel amongst the Gaekwads in the later phase and the constant interference of the Peshwas to exercise their superiority made their task difficult. Another important party which emerged during that period was the English who were the major claimants in the territorial acquisitions and economic gains in Gujarat. This party in later years, as history reveals proved to be the predominant power who not only ruled Gujarat but the whole country at large. The English made frequent alliances with Peshwa and Gaekwads suiting their interest. With all these problems during that period the early Gaekwads successfully came out of the mess. Fatehsingrao could finally establish himself as a powerful ruler in Gujarat maintaining simultaneously good relation with the Peshwa as well as with the English.

Geographical situation of Gujarat has been of significance
The strategic situation of its sea ports viz. Surat and Khambhat...
(Cambay) made these area quite vulnerable. Even in Mughal times these places were kept under direct supervision of the trusted Mughal lieutenants. Gujarat was considered as a peaceful prosperous state during the Mughal rule. During the rule of later Mughals, Aurangzeb specially, developed a considerable distrust in his officers. He had also an intolerant policy towards the hindus. He, in a grim determination to reduce the Maratha power and to subdue the Deccan states created lot of bloodshed in the country and destroyed the peaceful life of the people. Inspite of all these efforts he failed miserably to achieve his purpose. His officers were unable to check the Maratha activities. They were at times sternly warned by the Emperor for not controlling the Marathas. The Rajput chiefs from the adjoining parts of Gujarat along with local inhabitants, Kolis and Bhils joined hands with the Maratha chiefs to fight against the Mughal rule in a hope to establish themselves independently. The Maratha rulers were lured to include Gujarat into their fold because of its strategic importance. They tried to exercise considerable influence in the state. By the time Shahu succeeded the Satara throne, imposition of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi had become a regular practice.

During the early part of the eighteenth century the Mughal power disintegrated considerably. The major conflicting parties who were trying to establish themselves in Gujarat were
the Senapati, his officers and the Peshwa. They wanted to
have rights in the collection of Chauth in Gujarat. Both
Senapati and Peshwa had personal conflicts in which each of
them wanted to assert their importance although both were the
officers appointed by the Chatrapati of Satara.

The Marathas started their incursions for the collection
of revenues in Surat as early as 1664 and in Kathiawad from
1711 onwards. 'Mulukgiri' expedition became an annual feature.
Khanderao Dabhade had established his authority to collect the
tributes in Gujarat and Kathiawad. He was granted this authority
by Chatrapati Shahu. Khanderao Dabhade had authorised Damajirao
Gaekwad I, one of his trusted officer to collect the tributes
from Gujarat on his behalf. Thus the Gaekwads came in the
picture in the Gujarat history.

Brief review of the events leading to the establishment of
the Gaekwad rule in Gujarat.

The Gaekwads came originally from a village named Davdi
near Poona. One of their ancestor was a patil of a fort in Bhor.
The Gaekwads in the early part of the eighteenth century lived
under the banner of Khanderao Dabhade as his subordinates. The
Marathas in those days were making incursions to collect tribu-
tes from Gujarat. Kadam Bande and Khanderao Dabhade, the two
chiefs of Chatrapati Shahu carried out these incursions separa-
tely. Damajirao I and later Pilajirao assisted Khanderao Dabhade
in these activities. Khanderao Dabhade assigned Pilajirao
to carry out the incursions in Gujarat from Songadh where he made a fort which later became his headquarter. The activities of Dilrajirao were independent from those of Kadam Bande who was carrying out the raids from Navapur.

The Mughals appointed Viceroy in Gujarat in quick succession to suppress the activities of this rising power of the Marathas. A number of skirmishes took place at intervals between the Viceroy and Senapati Dabhade in which the Mughals usually had to retreat. One of the Viceroy, Sayyad Hussain Ali tried to settle the dispute over the collection of tribute in Gujarat by negotiations rather than by force. Terms for the collection of tributes were settled with the Marathas. It was promised by Sayyad Hussain Ali that he would get the terms approved by the Mughal Emperor at Delhi. Accordingly, Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath and Khanderao Dabhade proceeded to Delhi to get the approval from the Mughal Emperor, which was partially granted by Mohammad Shah.

The grant of rights to collect tributes from Gujarat by the Mughals indicated the decline of Mughal hold from the province and a beginning of the rise of Maratha power in Gujarat. During the absence of Khanderao Dabhade for about two years when he was at Delhi, Damajirao I made successful incursions alone in Gujarat and collected the revenues annually. This authority to Damajirao to levy tributes in Gujarat was received from Chatrapati Shahu.
Decline in the Mughal power at Delhi prompted some of the ambitious Mughal viceroys to raise their head against the central rule. Nizam in an attempt to establish himself as ruler independent came in conflict with Sayyad Hussain Ali. Damajirao I got an opportunity to show his merit. He and Khanderao Dabhade supported Sayyad Hussain Ali in the battle which was fought at Balapur in Berar. Although Sayyads lost the battle but Damajirao fought bravely. This earned him the title of 'Shamsher Bahadur' from Chatrapati Shahu and Damajirao I was elevated to 'second in command' in Dabhade's army. Damajirao I tried to strengthen the position of Gaekwads in Gujarat. But his death in 1721 left his ambition half way.

After the death of Damajirao I his worthy nephew Pilajirao took the lead in putting Gaekwads on a more firmer footing in Gujarat. Starting his career as a messenger under Khanderao Dabhade he proved his merit by carrying out the orders of Dabhade creditably well. He was also promoted gradually to the same position as his uncle, Damajirao I, the second in command in Dabhade's army. His notable successes included incursions into Surat Attavisi collecting handsome tributes. He created good relations with the local tribes of Kolis and Bhils and small chiefs around Baroda and its neighbouring areas. These local chiefs had the ambition to become independent from the Mughal rule. They were frustrated with the Mughal administration. Pilajirao had a foresight into all these problems and
while representing Senapati Dabhade he with the backing and good will of the local people could consolidate his position in Gujarat. He may thus be considered as founder of the Gaekwad rule in Gujarat.

During Shivaji's time the post of Senapati and that of Peshwa in his court of ministers had equal significance. But Peshwa after the accession of Shahu gradually took all powers and post of Senapati was left in the background. This was the origin of the discontent to Dabhades. Khanderao Dabhade as well as Pilajirao were not able to reconcile the rising powers of the Peshwa.

Pilajirao wanted to establish an effective rule in Gujarat. Frequent changes in the appointment of viceroys in Gujarat by the Mughal Emperors helped Pilajirao to strengthen his position. In place of Nizam, a new viceroy, Sarbuland Khan was appointed. Thus there was a conflict between the previous viceroy Nizam and the new viceroy for getting the hold over the province. Pilajirao and Kadam Bande took advantage of this situation. By helping Hamid Khan, the deputy of Nizam to oust the deputy of the new viceroy he could secure the rights to collect the Chauth of Gujarat. The credit for it goes to Pilajirao for his diplomatic association with Hamid Khan. With the grant of Chauth to Pilajirao and Kadam Bande it became evident that the Mughal authority was further declining in Gujarat and the
Marathas were gradually coming up as rising power in the province. Besides the collection of Chauth from the various districts of Gujarat, assigned to them separately by Hamid Khan, both Pilajirao Gaekwad and Kadam Bande had started carrying out extraction of extra money by way of 'Khandani' in those districts. This was causing an unrest in the area. The viceroy was not able to check these activities of the Maratha chiefs. He wanted a lasting solution of the problem and so tried to negotiate with Pilajirao for a settlement regarding collection of tributes from Gujarat.

Peshwa Bajirao came to know of these developments regarding grant of Chauth to Pilajirao and Kadam Bande by the Mughal viceroy. He wanted to collect the tributes himself thus trying to exert his hold in Gujarat affairs. He argued that Senapati Khanderao Dabhade had been authorised by Chatrapati Shahu to collect the tributes of Gujarat. Pilajirao was acting on behalf of Dabhade and hence the tribute should go to Chatrapati through Peshwa. On this issue a conflict took place between Pilajirao and Kadam Bande on one hand and Peshwa's agent Udaji Pawar sided by the new viceroy Sarbuland Khan on the other hand. This was the beginning of the open conflict between Peshwa and Gaekwad. Peshwa took an advantage of aligning with the ruling viceroy Sarbuland Khan who had already come in conflict with Pilajirao due to his activities in Gujarat.
Pilajirao successfully laid a siege at Dabhoi and a battle took place near Watrak. Finally Udaji Pawar had to leave, strengthening further the hold of Pilajirao occupying Baroda and Dabhoi along with the right to collect the Chauth and the Sardeshmukhi of those places. Skirmishes continued with Peshwa even after that. Finally it resulted in a civil war fought at Dabhoi in 1731 between Senapati Trambakrao Dabhade and other Maratha confederates to suppress the interference of the Peshwa.

The Mughal Emperor was also unhappy over the grant of tributes to Pilajirao. Abhai Singh was appointed the next Viceroy in place of Sarbuland Khan to meet the situation. Peshwa Bajirao, already in conflict with Pilajirao, promised to help Abhai Singh to protect the territories from the depredations by other Maratha chiefs. Chatrapati Shahu wanted to settle the differences of the Peshwa and the Gaekwad but his powers vested in Peshwa could not bring about the desired effect. Differences between Pilajirao with Peshwa continued as before.

Pilajirao's strength increased further in 1731 when Chatrapati Shahu appointed Yaswantrao Dabhade as Senapati. He being minor, Pilajirao was nominated his "Mutaliq" along with an additional honour of a title of Sena Khas Khel. This became a distinctive title in the family of Gaekwads and each successive Gaekwad ruler got this investiture from Poona durbar.
while ascending the throne. Pilajirao, then with additional resources of Senapati at his disposal, consolidated his position still further. He was holding Baroda, Songadh and Dabhpi and had full cooperation of local populace of Kolis and Bhil. Abhai Singh could not control the rising power of Pilajirao and hence with a pretence to enter into final settlement, treacherously got Pilajirao stabbed in this meeting thus bringing an end to the great founder of Gaekwad cause in Gujarat.

It may be observed that Peshwa as well as the Mughals were feeling embarrassed by the steep ascendancy of Pilajirao. They could not check his command in the province. Even after getting him killed treacherously, they could not bring the desired effect of diminishing Gaekwad influence. On the contrary Damajirao II came out with still more influence in Gujarat. The set back caused by assassination of Pilajirao in 1732 was temporary. His son Damajirao II took the plunge in the battle to establish the Gaekwad rule in Gujarat. Abhai Singh induced Umabai Dabhade to come to a settlement regarding collection of tributes in Gujarat. But the collection of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi in the province remained with the Gaekwad as before. Damajirao with the help of an old ally of Pilajirao, the Desai of Padra and Mahadji could recapture the territories from the Mughal's possession, which had been captured during the turmoil that followed after Pilajirao's death. Thus in 1734, Damajirao could get back Baroda which remained under the rule of Gaekwad family till the state merged with Indian Republic. Damajirao
was appointed Umabai Dabhade's agent in Gujarat to succeed Pilajirao and was authorised to collect the tributes from the province.

Damajirao during his tenure expanded the Gaekwad dominions considerably. He alongwith his deputy Rangoji occupied Viramgam, a very important acquisition, thus taking a command to a road that led entry to peninsula of Kathiawad. Damajirao settled the Chauth of Ahmedabad with Ratan Singh Bhandari. He consolidated the collection of revenues in most of the parts in Gujarat. In 1735 he could settle with the Nawab of Surat the collection of revenues in Surat Attavisi on friendly terms and later settled terms with Nizam in 1741, securing shares in the revenues from Broach, Jambusar, Dahejbara and Koral districts. He was the man who exercised the effective control over the land. He gradually increased his area of jurisdiction in the collection of tributes and settled amicably these matters with Momin Khan I too. In order to expel the marwaris, and Ratan Singh Bhandari Momin Khan I offered Damajirao II additional cession of half the revenue of Gujarat excepting the city, pargana and haveli of Ahmedabad. In the meantime Ratan Singh Bhandari came to know of this alliance and offered Damajirao better concessions than what were offered by Momin Khan. In negotiating this way Damajirao could again bargain with Momin Khan and could secure additional advantages in the grant of revenues from the city of Ahmedabad. Later he successfully secured a joint control of the city of Ahmedabad. Thus with all these efforts Damajirao II
by 1743 could secure a peaceful right to collect the revenues from major places in Gujarat. Thus Damajirao could hold the rule in the midst of great scramble for power. He expanded the Maratha dominions considerably and brought fortunes of the Gaekwad family to a very high pitch.

After the death of Chatrapati Shahu in 1749 the conflict which had started during Pilajirao's time between Damajirao and Peshwa became still deep. They had a number of skirmishes and finally in 1751, Peshwa's forces overpowered Damajirao and Dabhade. Damajirao asked for terms of settlement with Peshwa who was all the time demanding half the share in Gujarat territories. Damajirao avoided definite settlement, on a plea that he was a subordinate to Dabhade and had no powers to decide regarding cession of the territories. During these talks Peshwa kept Damajirao and his sons under strong guard and confinement. In the meantime Peshwa sent Raghunath Rao to occupy forcibly possessions of all the settlements of Damajirao in Gujarat. Raghunath Rao could not manage affairs alone in Gujarat and thus Damajirao's assistance was again needed in Gujarat. In this way Damajirao was released and in 1752 a formal treaty between Peshwa and Gaekwads was signed by which whatever Damajirao II and Dabhade had acquired by their joint efforts had to be divided between Peshwa and Gaekwad. Thus inspite of rising power of Damajirao II, subordination of Gaekwads to Peshwas could not be ruled out. Although
A partition treaty was signed and outwardly Gaekwad reconciled with Peshwa but from the inner heart Damajirao II could not enter into confederacy with the Peshwas. In accordance to this treaty Damajirao II became the sole Maratha representative in Gujarat, and the claims of Dabhade over Gujarat were totally abandoned. Damajirao II had to pay huge arrears of the tributes which were due since the times of Pilajirao; had to cede half of his dominions to Peshwa and further had to yield similar half in his all future conquests.

This was a political gain of the Peshwa over the Gaekwad. After partition treaty they jointly captured Ahmedabad and had to share a joint rule. Earlier Damajirao had shared the rule at Ahmedabad with the Mughal viceroy, this time it was with Peshwa, a reversal of the same old position.

Damajirao showed obedience to Peshwa, complying all the orders during Peshwa's expeditions. But he was never reconciled in all these warfares as he was not the main person to be benefitted. Inspite of not being the sole beneficiary in the territorial gains, still Damajirao showed his valour in future conquests to suppress the enemies of the Marathas. While Damajirao was busy in these military activities his sons Fatehsingrao and Govindrao collected the revenues. Damajirao II showed his merit in the war with Nizam and helped Raghunath Rao in his success. He was honoured by a title of Sena Khas Khel
in 1765 in recognition of his victory over Nizam.

After the death of Damajirao II in the year 1768, a dispute arose regarding the succession of 'gaddi' in the Gaekwad's family. Sayajirao claimed for succession on the ground that he was the eldest son of Damajirao II while Govindrao claimed that he was the son of the seniormost wife of Damajirao. Sayajirao was supported by Fatehsingrao. He was the younger brother of Sayajirao and was most capable. Being younger to his brother he had no claims of his own but his support to Sayajirao was with one intention and that was, his elder brother being a man of weak nature, virtually he would be the ruler. Govindrao was supported by his uncle Khanderao whose backing was because of Peshwa's support to Govindrao.

The succession dispute between the two brothers was another set back in the Gaekwad history. It created a crack in their own power and gave an opportunity to the foreign powers to interfere for their economic and territorial gains. Inspite of all this Fatehsingrao came out successfully from all that mess. English territories were in the neighbourhood of Gaekwad dominions. So they could not afford a fight with their neighbour. Considering Fatehsingrao more powerful they did not want to enter into any conflict with him.

After the partition treaty Peshwa secured the right for approval of the appointment of successor to Baroda 'gaddi'.
Govindrao took the advantage of being present at Poona and so secured the right of succession for himself. Raghunath Rao sided Govindrao, as he was not sure of his control over Sayajirao vis-a-vis Fatehsingrao who seemed to be more powerful and shrewd. It is evident from the course of subsequent events that Fatehsingrao acting as regent to Sayajirao took practically all the decisions in the policy matters in the name of his brother who actually was the ruler but his name remained in the background. Peshwa Madhavrao I knowingly passed the succession right of the throne and title of Sena Khas Khel in favour of Govindrao. Civil administration of the state, on the other hand was given to Sayajirao and Fatehsingrao. This decision was taken to weaken the strength of the Gaekwads. But charge of civil administration of the state gave ample scope to Fatehsingrao to strengthen his position at home.

In 1770 Fatehsingrao made a bid to influence the Poona court for succession in favour of his brother Sayajirao. On the intervention of Nana Phadnavis and Ram Shastri the two influential ministers of the Poona court, Sayajirao obtained the sanction of a lawful successor to Baroda 'gaddi' with the title of Sena Khas Khel. Fatehsingrao was made the regent of the state.

In 1773 Raghunath Rao got the Peshwawship after the death of Madhavrao and the murder of Narain Rao, as he was the only
person in the direct lineage. He changed the order in favour of Govindrao, who was given the right of 'gaddi' again. On getting the reins Govindrao started to acquire Gaekwads possession by force with the support of Raghunath Rao. Govindrao wanted to have a hold over Songadh. But his move was foiled by Fatehsingrao, in consequence he moved towards Baroda and surrounded it. By 1774 Govindrao had expanded his jurisdiction in Padra and contiguous parganas of Baroda. Fatehsingrao was having his hold only in Baroda, Patan and some districts of Kathiawad.

Just in 1774, the events again turned in favour of Fatehsingrao. Madhavrao II was born in 1774 and the Poona ministers declared their loyalty to the young Peshwa who was ceremoniously installed. Sayajirao was siding the ministerialist group and so could once again succeed to get the succession rights of gaddi for himself.

It would be seen that the period of ten years from the death of Damajirao II in 1768 till Fatehsingrao became the legal heir of the 'gaddi' in 1778, had been a period of great scramble for power in the Gaekwad history. It was definite that Peshwas were asserting their superiority by passing orders of succession. But there in Poona Court too the Peshwa and his uncle Raghunath Rao were having an internal conflict amongst themselves for the Peshwaship. When Raghunath Rao
became Peshwa he sided Govindrao and on the contrary when the ministerialist group were in power they passed order in favour of Sayajirao. Due to these confusions in the succession orders, the Gaekwads could not consolidate their power. On the contrary their energies were diverted in fighting among themselves in a bid to hold their own territories and not allowing it to go into the hands of the other brother. The English took advantage of this disarray and started siding to Govindrao or Fatehsingrao as it suited to their interests. Whatever might have been the consequences of this conflict in these ten years, the English gained a lot of territories in Gujarat and were the main beneficiary.

The foreign powers took the advantage of the conflict between the two brothers, Govindrao and Sayajirao. After Madhavrao II became the Peshwa, Raghunath Rao fled from Poona and took shelter with Govindrao. Govindrao had by that time gained considerable advantage over Fatehsingrao. In a bid to get the hold of the administration of Baroda, Govindrao asked the help of the English. Raghunath Rao tried to secure it for Govindrao and in turn offered to cede to the English the revenues of Broach. Till then Broach revenues belonged to Gaekwads but Raghunath Rao promised it to English on behalf of Govindrao. These promises were made to English on two assumptions. Firstly if Raghunath Rao became Peshwa he could give the rights at that time and in case Govindrao gets the
occupation of Baroda with the help of the English, then also Broach revenues could be ceded to English.

The English tried to bargain with Raghunath Rao for their support. But the Poona court who was supporting Fatehsingrao, in the meantime sent an army to help Fatehsingrao in claiming back all the Gaekwad possessions from River Mahi to Songadh. Govindrao and Raghunath Rao were badly defeated and both fled towards Khambhat (Cambay). This victory of Fatehsingrao over Govindrao made the English also to change their attitude. They never wanted to risk their interests by displeasing Fatehsingrao. On the other hand English also thought that since Govindrao is attached to Raghunath Rao, he may prove to be a better neighbour and would not harm English settlements which were in neighbourhood of Baroda. Since Fatehsingrao was having hold of Baroda with a strong support from ministerial group, it was not in the interest of the English to leave Fatehsingrao un-neglected as such.

English tackled Fatehsingrao diplomatically convincing him that Raghunath Rao may become Peshwa any time and signing the ministerial group at that time may prove disadvantageous to him and tried to mediate in settling the affairs. The English interest lay only in collection of revenues from Broach and other pargana irrespective whether Govindrao or Fatehsingrao secured possession of Baroda. Fatehsingrao seemed to be indifferent about the mediation at that time.
In the meantime ministerialists and Fatehsingrao had a great set back. They were defeated in 1775 by the joint forces of the English, Raghunathrao and Govindrao in the battle of Arras. Govindrao and the English wanted to take advantage of this setback and so were eager to reduce Baroda as early as possible. Since ministerialist were losing ground Fatehsingrao thought it prudent to come to terms with the English and Govindrao for which he was not very keen earlier.

The diplomacy of Fatehsingrao in settling terms with the English and Raghunath Rao indicates that Fatehsingrao had one goal in mind. His association with Poona ministers was only a stepping stone to the coveted sovereignty in Gujarat. In 1775 a treaty between Raghunath Rao and Fatehsingrao was made. The English mediated in the treaty. Good offices of Col. Keating on behalf of the English could bring about a settlement between the two. By this treaty English gained a few more districts, viz. Chikli, Variav and Koral in addition of the possession of Broach. Govindrao was to get one third of Gaekwad dominions. Due to the passing of the Regulating Act of Parliament in 1774, concurrence to all such effects were to be taken by the English from the Governor General at Calcutta. The Governor General Warren Hastings did not approve of this treaty although English gains were considerable. Inspite of treaty being annuled English did not relinquish the charge of those place, which were ceded to them.
Warren Hastings never wanted at that time to come in conflict with Poona Government so he interfered in the matter and advised the English Governor at Bombay to come to a settlement with Poona court. Subsequently a treaty of Purandhar was signed between English and Poona Government in 1776 which brought peace in the area. But as Fatehsingrao's objectives were not honoured, after the treaty was signed Fatehsingrao claimed that Poona court has no right to cede Broach district and territories which were under him. He wanted the district back from English. On the other hand the English contended that these dominions were received by them for bringing about the mediation. Finally Gaekwads could not recover these districts.

Poona Government, in order to subdue the claims of Raghunath Rao who had the English support wanted an assistance of Fatehsingrao. In recognition to this support, Fatehsingrao got the title of Sena Khas Khel in 1778 and Poona Government recognised Fatehsingrao the lawful owner of Gaekwad dominions in Gujarat. On getting the official succession again a demand was made by Fatehsingrao for restoration of Broach revenues ceded to English by the Peshwa.

Bombay Government all the time were pleading to Governor General for siding Raghunath Rao in their interest of territorial gains and secretly were trying to put Raghunath Rao as Peshwa in the Poona court. Hastings realised the advantages
of it and tried to help him to gain powers. Poona ministers were having dissensions among themselves but still they resisted the English in installing Raghunath Rao at Poona. At Vadgaon the English had to surrender and came to a compromise to return back all the Maratha territories acquired by them since 1772. Later Col. Goddard was authorised to settle terms and made alliance with Fatehsingrao who was consolidating his powers slowly. The English were trying to persuade Fatehsingrao to break his alliance with the Poona court. They promised him to secure a full independence from Peshwa provided Fatehsingrao entered into an alliance with English. Peshwa was apprehensive of Fatehsingrao changing any moment to English side. English settled with Fatehsingrao by signing the treaty of Kundila in 1780. By this treaty, English had a few more territorial gains. Fatehsingrao was promised the Peshwa's share of territories in Gujarat. The English further promised to defend Fatehsingrao against all foreign enemies and against any offensive attack of Peshwa.

The signing of this treaty at Kundila between English and Fatehsingrao was considered a good diplomacy of Fatehsingrao. Even though he was friendly with Peshwa still he chose to be an ally of English. The reason being simple Fatehsingrao wanted to be independent from Peshwa's subordination and his successors would be free from paying any tribute to Peshwas.
After the treaty of Kundila, the next move of Fatehsingrao was to capture the possessions of Peshwa in Gujarat with the help of English. Simultaneously another effort to reinstate Raghunath Rao at Poona was made by the English. The Peshwa thought of a compromise; hence the treaty of Salbai was signed in 1782 between the English and Poona court, Fatehsingrao being a party to it. Fatehsingrao gained nothing by this treaty. He had to forego Ahmedabad but the treaty of Salbai had the desired effect of a peaceful rule of Fatehsingrao till his end. Fatehsingrao tried to consolidate his rule and introduce reforms. Fresh skirmishes stopped. Fatehsingrao maintained good relations with English. Peshwa too did not interfere in his affairs afterwards till his death.

Thus Fatehsingrao could achieve the goal of consolidating the Gujarat state by having an effective rule without any interference with Peshwa. He had full cooperation with English. Peace and tranquility prevailed in Gujarat till his death in 1789. Diplomacy and shrewd politics paid dividends to this powerful ruler of Gujarat who could achieve an independent rule in Gujarat which his ancestors cherished.

Gaekwad and the Peshwa

The political problems of the Maratha rulers during the period arising out of the strifes between Shahu and Tarabai was to establish a well regulated internal administration in Maratha territories including Gujarat. They had to restore
peace after the civil war. Their aim was to lay a foundation of a stable administration. The problems were too baffling to be solved by Shahu. Thus the incapability of Shahu combined with the ambitions of the Maratha chiefs paves the way for the Peshwa to rise to the situation.

The rise of the Peshwa's power is attributed to the political unrest in the Maratha State during that period. They could rise to the occasion and extricated the state out of this internal confusion, thus achieving considerable power. Balaji Vishwanath is considered the founder of the house of the Peshwa and by his own efforts made the office of the Peshwa hereditary to the family. He paralysed the power of his colleagues of the council of ministers (Ashtapradhan) Khanderao Dabhade the Senapati was one of them. The Peshwa in order to attain supremacy undermined the authority of Dabhade.

Peshwa tried to subdue Gaekwad's authority also by constant interference in his affairs. The interference of Peshwa dates back from the times of Pilajirao. With the gradual weakening of the central authority at Satara, Peshwa could secure the independent authority for administration from Chatrapati Shahu. The undermined position of Senapati led to direct conflicts between the two most important officers of the Maratha empire. Gaekwads were working under the banner of Senapati. Thus they
were obedient to Senapati and they too did not like Peshwa's supremacy.

Gujarat and Baglan were under the authority of Senapati Dabhade, who authorised his lieutenant Gaekwad to operate in Gujarat on behalf of him. After the death of Trimbakrao Dabhade in 1751, his successors were not competent enough to manage their affairs. This provided the opportunity for Gaekwads to establish their hold over Gujarat. After 1731 though Gaekwad were under Dabhades, yet they held their independent authority to collect the revenues from Gujarat.

Bajirao tried to suppress the power of Gaekwad. He interfered in the collection of revenues in Gujarat and exerted that the collection should go through him to Chatrapati. Furthermore he allied with the Mughal Viceroy Abhai Singh to suppress the rising power of Pilajirao, who was subsequently assassinated. Peshwa Bajirao had asserted that Gaekwad was under his subordination.

Further conflicts between Damajirao II and Peshwa increased after the death of Chatrapati Shahu. Peshwa became more powerful and hence started again directly interfering into the Gaekwad affairs. Subsequently the partition treaty of 1752 with Gaekwad abandoned the Dabhade's claims in Gujarat. Then the Gaekwad became the sole authority of all the territories in Gujarat.
Inspite of the partition treaty being signed between Peshwa and Damajirao, the latter did not like the subordination to the Peshwa, but outwardly a reconciliation was there. Gaekwad was not gaining much in the conquests as they had to share it with Peshwa. Moreover they had to pay a handsome share in all the collection of revenues. Thus an internal dissatisfaction persisted between Gaekwad and Peshwa as the former's independent authority was undermined.

Raghunath Rao had revolted against his nephew Madhavrao I for securing half the share in the dominions of the Peshwa. He had been ambitious later on to get the Peshwaship when Madhavrao II succeeded as Peshwa. This internal conflict in the family weakened the Peshwa's power.

During the succession dispute between Govindrao and Sayajirao Peshwa took advantage of his right in the matter of giving recognition to the succession. When Rathunath Rao assumed powers for a short while he promoted Govindrao's Gaekwad's cause. The Poona ministers were in favour of the succession of Sayajirao. The conflict between Poona ministers who were pursuing the cause of the infant Peshwa Madhavrao II, and Raghunath Rao created more confusion in Gaekwad succession in which finally Fatehsingrao succeeded in 1778, putting an end to the dispute.
The Peshwas are held in high esteem for extricating the Maratha sovereignty from confusion during the most critical period. This may be a fact, yet they cannot escape criticism of weakening the Maratha empire by personal selfish interests. In order to gain their supremacy, they tried to subdue other powerful chiefs of the Maratha empire. The other chiefs could have contributed in the expansion and consolidation of Maratha rule in whole of the country. The Peshwa had shown their ego for attaining power for themselves and thus weakened the Maratha power instead of strengthening it.

**Gaekwads and the Mughals in Gujarat:**

By the time Aurangzeb ascended the throne, the Mughal empire had expanded considerably. Aurangzeb too extended his rule farther south in Deccan. It was becoming unmanageable for him to have an efficient hold over all the territories he won. During that time the Maratha power under Shivaji was coming up and consolidating its position. Aurangzeb tried his might to curb the rising power of the Marathas but he could not succeed effectively. The reason may be attributed to the fact that during the last days of Aurangzeb's regime the Mughal administration was deteriorating, and the Mughal officers were also unable to check the Maratha activities because they never got the timely aid from the centre. In spite of the fact that central rule at Delhi did not provide the timely aid, these officers were chastised for not controlling the rising Maratha power. In
The Mughal administration in Deccan provinces including Gujarat was in the most confused state. Till the Mughal rule was on its rise these officers did not try to raise their heads against their sovereign. But when Mughal power declined considerably by the time Mohammad Shah acceded the throne, the Mughal chiefs in Deccan provinces and Gujarat started their efforts to become independent. In the west by that time Gaekwad had made an entry into Gujarat and they were trying to establish themselves. In order to suppress the rising Gaekwad power, the Mughal rule at Delhi made successive changes of the viceroys in Gujarat. These viceroys played a shifting role in the game of power politics. As these viceroys were not getting the required assistance from the centre, they had no alternative but to suppress the Maratha activities in Gujarat by peacefully settling the affairs with them. They authorised them to collect the Chauth of Gujarat. The decline of the Mughal power is indicated by allowing the Gaekwads to collect Chauth, the one fourth share in revenues of Gujarat.

The Mughal viceroys always tried to take advantage of the internal dissensions among the Maratha chiefs. When Dabhade and Gaekwads power rose considerably in Gujarat, the Mughal viceroys tried to suppress it by making alliance with the Peshwa, who seemed to be more eager than the viceroy himself. But none of such measures could check the rise of the Gaekwad's power in Gujarat. In 1737, the Mughal viceroy, forced by the
circumstances, had to submit and agree to share equally the revenues and the government of Ahmedabad with Damajirao Gaekwad II. By 1752 the Mughal authority was completely disintegrated in Gujarat by the joint efforts of the Gaekwad and the Peshwa. Though a last effort to reestablish the Mughal authority was made by Momin Khan II in 1756. But the attempt was foiled by Damajirao II and Peshwa, thus establishing a Maratha authority in the province, in place of Mughals.

Gaekwads and the English in Gujarat:

The province of Gujarat from the early times occupied an important position in the history of India. As early as in the times of Mughal Emperor Akbar, Portuguese first settled in Surat and carried out the trade. A century later after the arrival of the Portuguese, the English came to India and landed in Gujarat.

The English settled in India and initially confined their activities to trade only. In the beginning they were not interested in the game of establishing an empire. Gradually they established in three Presidencies viz. Bengal, Madras and Bombay. In the beginning the three Presidencies acted independently with each other receiving the separate commands from the Company's Board of Directors from England. The Presidencies of Madras and Bengal had achieved much success in establishing their hold in those regions. Thus a sort of rivalry prevailed
in the Presidency of Bombay, English wanted to increase their hold in the western part of India too. The rising power of Marathas especially the Gaekwads and the Peshwas in the western part of India foiled the English ambitions of establishing their hold in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

The English believed that unless the Maratha power is subdued their hold in this region would not be possible. With that idea in mind the Bombay Presidency, jointly with their Bengal counterparts, tried to suppress the ruling Maratha power. By this time the English influence had established at Surat, and they had their business houses (factories) at other places also in Gujarat. They had all the time tried to undermine the Maratha supremacy in the western part of India and for that solicited help from their counterpart in Bengal.

English gradually changed their designs and besides the trade ambitions tried to acquire territories in the western coast of India. By 1759, they could achieve the castle of Surat from the Mughal Emperor. The decline of Mughal power helped the English to establish gradually in other adjoining parts of Gujarat. They also got hold of Broach from the Nawab in 1772. With the expansionist tendency of the English their policy with the Marathas also changed. In 1759, for the first time the English agent was sent to Poona with a view to settle the differences. This was a diplomatic move of the English to have their final designs to mature at a later date.
By the times of Damajirao II, the Gaekwad power had increased in Gujarat to a great extent. By the middle of the century a settlement had been made for sharing the territories and revenues between the two, removing the hold of Dabhades and the Mughal governors from the Gujarat scene. The English had territories adjoining to the Gaekwad territories as such their policy was to keep diplomatically good relations with Gaekwads.

During the succession dispute after the death of Damajirao Gaekwad II, English played a significant role in the politics keeping their interest of consolidating their own powers. The English assumed importance in the conflict and tried to side Raghunath Rao who had in alliance with Govindrao. The rising power of Fatehsingrao was always in their mind and they never tried to antagonise him. The treaty of Kundila between Fatehsingrao and English is an example of their good diplomacy.

The English had created a goodwill with Fatehsingrao, this is evident from the last part of Fatehsingrao's rule where it is reported that he had always good relations with the English and never came into conflict with them. The treaty of Kundila had a dual benefit. Fatehsingrao could consolidate his position and was getting complete independence from the Peshwa, while the English could carry out their designs peacefully in their territories without the interferences of
Fatehsingrao. The subsequent treaty of Salbai between Peshwa and English in 1782, could bring tranquility to Fatehsingrao to consolidate his position. Thus the English initially followed the policy of noninterference when they were interested in trade only, later during succession dispute by the policy of 'balance of power' and concurrently keeping in mind their territorial acquisitions.

Thus in concluding the present study it may be stated that although to begin with, the Gaekwads came to Gujarat as military commanders representing the court of Satara, yet they assumed the role of de facto rulers in Gujarat from the very start. Later on the Gaekwads tried to consolidate their position and power by increasing their territorial acquisitions to form a fully organised rule in Gujarat. What was initiated by earlier Gaekwad viz. Pilajirao and left half way due to his assassination was partially completed by Damajirao II and fully achieved by Fatehsingrao I who established a consolidated rule in Gujarat. Thus these Gaekwads laid the foundation of what was known to be Baroda State which finally merged with the Republic of India after Independence.