CHAPTER-VII

NEW ZAMINDARIS - SOME CASE STUDIES

The complex forces let loose by the wars of succession, economic crisis, Maratha pressure and constant convolutions at the imperial court as well as provincial politics determined the political behaviour of many of the nobles of the Subah. The explosive impact of these forces aroused the daring hopes of ambitious military adventurers to carve out independent principalities for themselves.

In their bid to retain and perpetuate delegated position, power and a hold over revenue some of the Mughal nobles and officials strove incessantly and the efforts of some of them met with success. As a result the first half of the eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of a number of petty "states" carved out of the Mughal empire by the Mughal nobles and officials themselves. Possessors of such lands known as nawab, diwan, thakur, raja etc. in our subah, enjoyed Superior zamindar-like position but with a difference. Their position was not legally sanctioned, even though it was virtually recognized. Theoretically they did not dissociate themselves from the Mughal Empire, but practically they broke it up into fragments. The nawabs even sought legal confirmation of their position as Mughal officials.
which they had virtually converted into zamindaris but as a matter of fact the Mughal Emperors acted only as rubber stamp. Such zamindars enjoyed hereditary rights, claimed a share in the revenue and surrendered a part of it to the provincial authorities only whenever forced. In the following pages we propose to discuss some of such zamindaris which emerged during the first half of the eighteenth century in the subah.

I MAIN LAND GUJARAT:

A. Diwans of Palanpur:

A study of faujdarī of Palanpur and Deesa which remained confined to the well-known Jalori family from 1697 to the close of our period provides a significant example of the emergence of a zamindari out of the faujdarī. The process of conversion of official position into a zamindari commenced with the death of Bahadurshah and reached its culmination in Mohammad Shah's reign.

At the time Emperor Aurangzeb took away the pargana of Jalor from the Jaloris in 1697, he also confirmed diwan Mujahid Khan Jalori as faujdar of Palanpur, Dantiwara and Deesa. In addition to the revenues conditional (mashrut) on

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1. Situated in North-eastern part of Gujarat, Palanpur was a pargana in sarkar Pattan. Because of the turbulent nature of the populace, the pargana was provided with 28 thanas dependent upon faujdarī. Mirat-i Ahmadi Supplement, p.201
faujdari, Mujahid Khan was also granted tankhwah jagir out of the revenues of the aforesaid pargana against a mansab of 1500/1500. The rest was settled as jagir of the jagirdars. Mujahid Khan, besides his duties associated with faujdari within the pargana, was also commanded to serve the Nazims at the head of specified contingents.

The author of Mirat-i Ahmadi tells us nothing about Mujahid Khan Jalori after 1697. But at the time of assumption of faujdari by diwan Firuz Jalori alias Ghazni Khan (1715), our author records that "he (i.e. Ghazni Khan) occupied (Palanpur and Deesa) from the beginning(?) of revolts as zamindar" and "abstained from royal service and occupied by force some of the places in the neighbourhood and brought them under his control". In the pargana-wise description of subah Gujarat he remarks that "earlier (?) they assisted Nazims. Now (i.e. sixth/seventh decade of the eighteenth century) the Subedar leads an expedition and captures peshkash according to his power and strenght. They have divided the mulk among themselves like zamindars (b' tariq-i zamindaran) and they (i.e. Jalaris) do not behave

1. Mirat-i Ahmadi, i, pp. 341-2; Tarikh-i Palanpur pp. 195, 201-2; Hadiqat-ul hind, f.33
2. Mirat-i Ahmadi, i, p. 342; Ibid., Supplement, p.200
3. Mirat-i Ahmadi, i, pp. 341-2; Ibid., Supplement, pp.201-2
well though the post of faujdar was held by them till the book was being written.

From the detailed statements of the Mirat quoted above it may be inferred that the Jaloris occupied the parganas like zamindars, conquered the lands not belonging to them, did not perform the functions attached to their office, divided the lands among themselves, turned zortalab-peshkashi but continued as imperial faujdar. Before reaching a final conclusion, it would be better to examine in detail the available evidence not merely for checking the statement of the Mirat but also for a better appreciation of the new dimensions being added to the position of the faujdar that had been held on a hereditary basis by the same family.

According to the author of Tarikh-i Palanpur, the family history of Jaloris, Mohammad Kamal Khan Jalori had occupied pargana Tehrad sometime between 1711 and 1712\(^3\) -- the first undesirable action on the part of a faujdar from the point of view of imperial authority. Diwan Ghazni Khan, the next faujdar (1715-29), extorted peshkash from Rana Pac-

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1. Mirat-i Ahmadi, I pp. 341-2; Ibid., Supplement, pp. 201-2. The faujdar of the place therefore, came to be described as the 'rebel' (faujdar baghi) Account, f. 46.


3. Tarikh-i Palanpur, p. 212
hanji, zamindar of *pargana* Wao soon after he assumed the office of *faujdar.* Sometime later the Khan incorporated the said *parganas* into his possessions. Similarly he forced the zamindars of Kakosi, Kedonar, Rohu, Dabhela, Dhaner, Malana and Sorbhakri to pay *peshkash.* In the subsequent years the zamindars of these places met the fate of Rana Pachanji.

Firuz Khan alias Ghazni Khan is also reported to have forced the *jagirdar* of Kakrej to offer "*peshkash* and *nazrana*" to him and some time later he annexed the entire *pargana.*

Ghazni Khan's successor, *diwan* Karimdad Khan extorted *peshkash* from Bajodhodi of Nagor, invaded Danta and occupied the place. Rana Amar Singh of Danta was forced to offer his daughter in marriage to the Khan in return for his possessions. Jaloris are also reported to have occupied the *jagirs* of Sherwanis some time in the year 1742-43. Thus *Mirat*'s observation that Firuz Khan had occupied some of the

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1. *Ibid. ,
2. *Ibid. ,
3. *Ibid. , p. 213*
4. *Ibid. ,
6. *Ibid. , p. 240*
7. *Ibid. , p. 241*
neighbouring territories by force is borne out by corroborative evidence.

The Mirat's observations that the faujdar of Palanpur and Deesa was held by Jaloris, at least during our period, is also corroborated by detailed evidence. As we have noted earlier Mujahid Khan Jalioti was confirmed as faujdar of Palanpur and Deesa in 1697. At his death, his eldest son, Mohammad Kamal Khan assumed the office even without seeking the approval of the emperor. Farrukhsiyar appointed Rahim Yar Khan (1715) who arrived at Palanpur to take charge. But Ghazni Khan who had, in the meantime, assumed the charge asserted his right, gave a battle and did not allow him to occupy the office. But in order to seek imperial confirmation of his de facto position, he sent presents, and pesh-kash to His Majesty and with an offering of money obtained the farman-i bahali to continue at the same post. He was so confident of the continuity of the position that during his lifetime itself he divided the territory among his sons thus assigning Deesa to his younger son and the rest to the

3. *Mirat-i Ahmadi*, II, p. 3; *ibid.*, *Supplement* pp.200-1
eldest one, Karimdad Khan, who succeeded him at his death. 1
Karimdad Khan Jalori lived for about two years and died in 1730 at Ahmadabad while serving Maharaja Abhay Singh, the Subedar. The Subedar is reported to have got diwan Mohammad Pahad Khan Jalori confirmed in the rank and position of his deceased father. 2 Mohammad Pahad Khan was succeeded by his uncle, Bahadur Khan (1744) who held the office for the rest of our period. 3 It is, therefore, evident that the principle of hereditary succession to the office of faujdar had virtually been established and it was enforced through the use of sword, diplomacy and the purse. The imperial authority acted merely as regularising authority.

The Mirat's assertion that diwan Firuz Khan alias Ghazni Khan and his successors did not serve the Nazims is only partly borne out by other evidence for we notice Ghazni Khan, and later on his son at Subedar's service. Ghazni Khan served Maharaja Ajit Singh during the latter's tenure as

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1. Tarikh-i Palanpur, pp. 214-6; Mirat-i Ahmadi, I, p. 342
3. Mirat-i Ahmadi, I, pp. 341-2, 373, 413, Ibid., II, pp. 119, 132-3, 321-2; Mukhtasar Tarikh-i Gujarat, f. 83
Subedar (1715-17) of Gujarat.\(^1\) Diwan Karimdad Khan (1729-30) accompanied Maharaja Abhay Singh while the latter passed through Palanpur to take charge of the subah in 1730.\(^2\) However, none of the faujdars of Palanpur after Maharaja Abhay Singh's withdrawal from the subah seem to have served any of the succeeding subedars.

It is important to note that the assumption of office by Ghazni Khan in 1715 and his son Karimdad Khan in 1729, almost coincided with the posting of Maharaja Ajit Singh and his son, Maharaja Abhay Singh as subedars in 1715 and 1730 respectively.\(^3\) That the Jaloris served only these two subedars may not be regarded as a matter of mere coincidence. The Two Rajput princes were the immediate hereditary and strong neighbourers of Palanpur.\(^4\) For Jaloris it might be politic to maintain good relations, or at least not to allow any suspicion to arise in the minds of their neighbours.

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\begin{align*}
1. & \quad \text{Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 18, 20. The Khan was invited to assume the office of Naib Subedar by Dawood Khan Panni when the latter left for Deccan. But before the arrival of Maharaja, Ghazni Khan had left for Palanpur. It must be remembered that the Khan did not serve Daood Khan. } \text{Ibid., I, pp. 413; Also Ghazni Khan served as Maharaja’s naib., II, p. 20} \\
2. & \quad \text{Ibid., II pp. 119, 132, Mukhtasar Tarikh-i Gujarat f.71} \\
3. & \quad \text{Ibid., II, pp. 3, 119, 132-3,} \\
4. & \quad \text{For details M.S. Commissariat, History of Gujarat, II, pp. 560 and n.}
\end{align*}
\)
Secondly, Ghazni Khan in 1715 had opposed the officially appointed faujdar and was waiting for the award of sanad-i bahall from the imperial court.\(^1\) Fear of armed action and the hope of securing recommendation of the Maharaja might have compelled Ghazni Khan to render service. Partly his desire to be confirmed in his position might have motivated him to serve the Raja. Lastly, both the princes-subedars passed through Palanpur at the head of strong contingents while the other subedars had adopted the other route.\(^2\)

Maharaja Abhay Singh's march was directed against Sarbuland Khan Mubariz-ul mulk, then subedar in office, who had concluded treaty with the Marathas and against the latter who had imposed khandni upon the Jatoris.\(^3\) Obviously the Jatoris might have visualised a strong general in the person of the Maharaja who could provide protection against the Marathas and put an end to the subedari of Sarbuland Khan who had let

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the Jaloris suffer at the hands of the Marathas. 1 The very next year (1731) the Jaloris were again exposed to Maratha impositions and the Maharaja could do nothing about it. The Maharaja could not protect even Ahmadabad well. 2 It might have proved an eye opener to the Jaloris. At this stage the Jaloris might have with reason decided to look after their own possessions instead of rendering service at Ahmadabad. Hence they fortified Palanpur, raised strong fortifications 3 and after 1733 never came to serve the subedar.

The Mirat-i Ahmadi, as mentioned above, has reported that as the faujdars did not come to serve the Nazim, the latter led expeditions and extorted peshkash from them according to his strength and capacity. 4 We have seen that the Jaloris rendered service for the last time in 1732-33. The first reported expedition for peshkash from Jaloris was led in 1734-35 by Ratan Singh Bhandari, the naib of Maharaja Abhay Singh. 5 Three years later, Momin Khan extorted

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1. For Maratha imposition on Jaloris, Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 99-100, 102-03; Tarikh-i Palanpur, pp. 228-9, Tarikh-i Maratha dar Gujarat f. 16
2. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 157-61, 235-6, Tarikh-i Maratha dar Gujarat f. 16
4. Ibid., Supplement, pp. 201-02 Account f. 46a
5. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, p. 190., Tarikh-i Maratha dar Gujarat f. 15
peshkash from Jatoris who offered it through Sher Khan Babi. \(^1\) The last expedition under Jawanmard Khan Babi, the de facto subedar, was led in 1748. \(^2\) Thus the Mughal subedars who could not extort regular military service from the Jatoris faujdars, decided to extort occasional peshkash at least, as in the case of Superior zamindars of long standing.

It is, therefore, evident that the Jatoris who held faujdari of Palanpur and Deesa, acquired the position of Superior zamindar who not merely ruled within the territory like autonomous chiefs but also behaved like independent rulers. With expedient use of the power of sword, diplomacy and purse they converted the faujdari into zamindari within the empire in violation of the established rules. \(^3\)

B. *Raja of Idar*: 

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1. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, p. 245; for Jatoris' close association with the Babis, the founder of the Nawabs of Radhanpur and Junagarh, please see Ibid., II, pp. 16-8.

2. Ibid., II, pp. 403-04; Tarikh-i Maratha dar Gujarat f.21

3. Even then the Jatoris continued to recognize the Mughal emperor as their sovereign. Please see them seeking and getting favors from the court, Basheeruddin Khan (ed.) Faramin-i Salatin-i Hind, pp. 160-6; also Parwana dated 15 Jamadi II, 22 RY of Muhammad Shah in possession of Hamiduddin Amir Miyan, Shehr Qazi of Palanpur.

4. Situated in Eastern part of the subah on a hillock and duly fortified, Idar was a pargana of sarkar Ahmadabad.
The history of the establishment of what came to be known as "Later Rathor dynasty" at Idar is an interesting episode of the gradual transformation of jagir, acquired virtually by force, into zamindari. The disturbed state of affairs helped the two Rathor brothers, Anand Singh and Rai Singh, in their endeavours to acquire Idar and subsequently to retain it by the force of arms, diplomacy and money—though at times the process was also hindered by the forces at work in the region.

The episode of the establishment of the hold of Anand Singh and Rai Singh, the younger brothers of Maharaja Abhay Singh, over Idar had its roots in the family feud that followed the death of Maharaja Ajit Singh in 1724 for the gaddi of Jodhpur. Maharaja Ajit Singh's younger sons, Anand Singh and Rai Singh, raised the standard of revolt against Abhay Singh who had been recognized as the ruler of Jodhpur.

1. Prior to 1678, Idar was held by the Rajput zamindar of Rathor clan. In 1678, this territory as a result of the confontration between the Rathors and Aurangzed, was incorporated into Khalsa lands. For details, Commissariat, History of Gujarat, 11, pp. 2, 10, 49n, 178; K. Kamdar, "Conquest of Jamnagar", p. 215.

2. Maharaja Ajit Singh was believed to have been poisoned by his son Bakht Singh at the instigation of Abhay Singh; after his death, Ajit's sons were divided into two rival groups, viz., Bakht Singh and Abhay Singh, and Anand Singh and Rai Singh. For detail G.R. Parihar, Marwar and the Marathas (1724-1843), Jodhpur, 1968, pp. 26-30; B.N. Reu, Marwar Ka Itihas (Hindi), Jodhpur, 1968, 1, pp. 328-33; by the same author, Glories of Marwar and the Glorious Rathors, 1943, pp. 127-29.
by Mohammed Shah. The two brothers, having failed in Marwar, retired to Gujarat and made an attempt to capture Idar, which Maharaja Abhay Singh held as jagir. In order to strengthen their position the Rathor brothers, Anand Singh and Rai Singh, allied themselves with the Marathas who began their onslaught on Idar in the middle of 1725. Though the Rathor brothers failed to weaken Abhay Singh's hold on the territory, their regular incursions ruined sources of revenue.4

On the other hand, desais and other zamindars who are reported to have formed one group, were at daggers drawn with the Qasbatis -- the professional soldiers and money-lenders.5 Members of the extinct ruling house of Idar also


were active in the politics of Idar.\footnote{Ibid., pp.345-6.} In addition to the havoc caused by Maratha forces, Idar, even internally, did not enjoy peace at the moment.

Maharaja Abhay Singh devised a plan to deal with his brothers. He designed to hand over the \emph{jagir} of Idar to the Maharana of Udaipur on condition that the Rana would get both the brothers, Anand Singh and Rai Singh, murdered.\footnote{A Kharita from Abhay Singh to Jai Singh, 31st May, 1727 cited in Parihar, \textit{Marwar and the Marathas}, p. 31 \textit{Vir Vinod}, p. 967, \textit{Kharita} dated August 1724 written by the ruler of Jodhpur declares Idar as 'part of Marwar'. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 968-9} But the Rana did not lay hands on the two brothers. On the other hand the Maharana entertained overtures from Anand Singh for a compromise between the brothers. Abhay Singh did not like the move.\footnote{A Kharita from Jai Singh to Abhay Singh, 6th August, 1726, cited by Parihar, \textit{Marwar and the Marathas}, pp. 31-32. \textit{Vir Vinod} pp. 969-70} In the meantime Pilaji and Kanthaji, the two Maratha generals, invaded Marwar and looted the area of Jalore which was then held in \emph{jagir} by Bakht Singh, the brother of Maharaja.\footnote{\textit{Marwad Khayat}, p. 131 cited in Parihar, \textit{Marwar and the Marathas}, p.32} On the other side, Anand Singh and Rai Singh took possession of Idar (1728) which by then was
included in the jagir of Abhay Singh. The Maharaja did not oppose their action probably keeping in view of maintaining undisturbed peace in Marwar. Even the then subedar of Gujarat, Sarbuland Khan seems not to have taken note of this incident. Virtually forced by circumstances, Maharaja Abhay Singh agreed to the proposal of Maharana of Udaipur to close down the long struggle with his brothers by agreeing, in August 1728, that Idar might be granted as jagir to Anand Singh and Rai Sigh by the imperial court. Thus Anand Singh and Rai Sigh who started the struggle with their eyes on the gaddi of Jodhpur succeeded in acquiring Idar as a political concession from Abhay Singh.

The jagir of Idar so acquired was retained by the Rathor brothers by using force, bribery and diplomacy. Jawanmard Khan Babi, then faujdar of Viramgaon, resolved to secure possession of Idar with the help of Akraj, the Kol zamindar of Katosan and Amra Kol, the zamindar of Kanrah (pargana Ahmadnagar) to compensate losses which he had suffered in his ijara lands. He marched against Idar in


1734. It so happened that at this time two Maratha generals, Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Sindia, were proceeding to Malwa. Messengers for help were accordingly sent by the Rathor brothers and it was readily granted. Idar, because of this timely help was saved. But the Rathors had to part with half of the Idar revenue as chauth to Damaji Gaekwad some time between 1734 and 1741.

In 1742, the Rehwar Rajputs in league with qasbatils, the professional soldiers and money lenders, attacked and took Idar, killing Raja Anand Singh. On hearing of the disaster his brother, Rai Singh, taking leave of the Nazim, Momin Khan went to Idar. With the help of desais and zamindars and his clansmen he drove out the Rehwards and killed many qasbatils who had supported them and reoccupied Idar. The Mughal subedars all through those years neither lent any support nor intervened in the affairs of Idar. It was due to the effort of Rathor brothers themselves that they succeeded

1. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 172-5; Commissariat, History of Gujarat, II, p. 449. The Rathors had to pay the cost of assistance they had acquired. Mukhtasar Tarikh-i Gujarat f. 83; Ms. No. 191/1. f. 13


in retaining their possessions against the potential threat, both from within and without.¹

The Rathor brothers are in our sources nowhere reported to have been rendering military assistance to the then subedar Maharaja Abhay Singh (1730-37). Expediency seems to have dictated the Maharaja not to press his brother for service.

But during the years 1738-42 the Rathor brothers are reported to have served the then subedar, Momin Khan (1737-1743). They came to Momin Khan's camp when he visited the area. After matters about the payment of peshkash had been settled, the elder brother returned to Idar while Rai Singh remained with the Nazim.² Sarjit Singh, zamindar of Mohanpur paid peshkash to the Nazim through Rai Singh.³ At the time Momin Khan laid siege to Viramgaon in 1740, Rai Singh was present in the Nazim's camp.⁴ Two years later (1742), Rai Singh, for the last time, is noted in the company of the

¹ Ratan Singh Bhandari, deputy to Abhay Singh, the Nazim of the Subah acted as silent spectator while Idar was besieged by Jawanmard Khan Babi. Nor even Momin Khan came to help them either against Marathas or the Rehwarī Rajputs.
² Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 224-5.
³ Ibid., II, pp. 247-8
⁴ Ibid., II, pp. 261-2
Nazim, Momin Khan. 1

Raja Rai Singh was summoned by Fakhruddawla, the Nazim-designate (1743), to assist him against Jawanmard Khan Babi, the de facto subedar (1743-53). The Raja joined Fakhruddawla near Kapadwanj (sarkar Patan) as a mercenary general. Since the Nazim-designate did not meet the expenses of his troops on the pleas of his holding the jagir, he abandoned his camp and joined hands with Jawanmard Khan who had readily agreed to bear the expenses. 2 Until the year of his death (1750) Rai Singh took an active part in the shifting politics of the time, allying himself indiscriminately with other Mughal nobles, with Rengoji, with Fakhruddawlah, with Sher Khan Babi, the first Nawab of Junagadh as it suited his purpose and ambition. 3

1. Ibid., II, p. 265. Rai Singh took leave of the Nazim to settle affairs at Idar in 1742. The next year (1743), the Raja did not come to help and remained busy at his and his brother's jagir -- Idar.


3. Raja Rai Singh joined with Fakhruddawlah, the Subedar designate, in 1743-4. Since the subedar failed to pay him, the Raja deserted him and joined hands with Jawanmard Khan Babi, the de facto subedar, who undertook to pay him for his services. Again, Raja Rai Singh left Jawanmard in 1744-5 and allied himself with Renkoji, the Maratha chief against the de facto subedar. Since Renkoji failed to meet his claims, the Raja deserted him and left for his jagir. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 269-71, 327-8, 328-30, 334-6, 355-6, 358-69, 394, 402-12; Mirat-i Mustafabad, pp. 270-4.
At the death of Raja Anand Singh at the hands of some local Rajput -- probably a zamindar -- his son Shiv Singh who was only six years old succeeded to the gaddi of Idar in 1742.\(^1\) His uncle Rai Singh who died in 1750 acted as in-charge of affairs.\(^2\) After 1750, Raja Shiv Singh enjoyed a long period of rule at Idar till his death in 1791.\(^3\)

It may be seen, then, that the Rathor brothers who had acquired the jagir of Idar by virtue of conquest, retained it in a likewise manner. From the year 1742 they rendered neither service nor paid peshkash mainly because the power of collecting the revenue had almost gone. The prevailing state of affairs proved them helpful not merely in acquiring the jagir but also converting it gradually into zamindari with virtual hereditary claim on it.

C. **Nawab of Radhanpur**\(^*\)

Jawanmard Khan Babi, a leading member of the well known

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\(^*\) pargana Radhanpur (sarkar Pattan) is located in the North-west of Ahmadabad on the route leading to and adjoining the Rann of Kutch.
Babi family and de facto Governor (1743-53) of Gujarat established himself firmly, by carving out a Nawabi, at Radhanpur. Though he failed to retain the provincial capital but succeeded in retaining and transforming the positions of faujdar-watandar-jagirdar and ijadar assigned to him and other members of Babi family into hereditary nawabi which he and, later, his descendants continued to hold even after the extinction of Mughal rule from the subah. The ability of Babis in general and that of Jawanmard Khan in particular to

1. For a brief view of the Babis who played a significant political role during the first half of the eighteenth century, Ms Commussariat, History of Gujarat, II, pp. 169-70, 212, 432n and 435.

The family tree of Babis who established Nawabis during the period is as under;

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<th>Safdar Khan Babi</th>
<th>Jawanmard Khan Babi (Senior)</th>
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<tr>
<th>Salabat Mohammad Khan Babi</th>
<th>Jawanmard Khan Babi (Senior)</th>
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<tr>
<th>Bahadur Khan (Sher Khan Babi)</th>
<th>Kamaluddin Khan Mohammad (Jawanmard Khan Anwar - Junior)</th>
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<th>Mahabat Khan</th>
<th>Sardar Mohammad Khan</th>
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<td>II Nawab of Junagadh</td>
<td>I Nawab of Balasimor.</td>
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muster resources by making effective use of their nativity and acquaintance with the region seem to have enabled them to acquire and retain positions under the prevailing situation.

The first assignment of significance to the Babis during the eighteenth century was made during Emperor Farrukhsiyar's reign. The Emperor granted Jawanmard Khan Babi (died 1728) the watandari right, and as also assigned him in jagir the pargana of Radhanpur, the place which formed the seat of the Nawabi's power. Later on the Babis not only succeeded in retaining Radhanpur but also made valuable acquisitions in terms of administrative assignments and territorial sway.

From the time of Hamid Khan the Naib-subedar under Nizam-ul mulk every succeeding subedar ensured to acquire services of the Babis who in their turn were accordingly rewarded. In order to ensure active support of the Babis, Hamid Khan appointed (1726) Salabat Mohammad Khan as faujdar of Viramgaon. But as the Babis' moves for extending support

1. Precise nature of the watandari rights is not known. However, it seems, the watandari right implied grant of some financial benefits for, according to the Mirat-i Ahmadi, (Supplement pp. 202-3) the jama of the pargana was reduced at the time of his appointment as watandar.


3. Mirat-i Ahmadi, 11, p. 78

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to the incoming subedar became evident, the faujdarī was taken away.¹ The incoming Subedar, Mubariz-ul mulk, ensured Babis' support against Hamid Khan by promising, beforehand, faujdarī of the same place to Salabat Mohommed Khan Babi and that of Pattan (sarkar Pattan) to Jawanmard Khan Babi (d.1728).² In appreciation of their valuable services which they rendered against Hamid Khan and, presumably, for ensuring their active assistance in future, the subedar appointed Jawanmard Khan Babi as faujdar-amin of pargana Petlad also.³ At his death in 1728, the subedar proposed the award of khitab, (Jawanmard Khan) and mansab (700/? for his eldest son, Kamaludding Khan thus ennobled as Jawanmard Khan Babi (junior), and jagir in the parganas of Saml and Monjpur. The younger son, Mohammad Anwar Khan, (ennobled Safdar Khan) got the mansab of 500/? and the faujdarī of Radhanpur along with its dependency, Terwara.⁴

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1. Ibid., II, p. 81
2. Ibid., II, p. 86 Salabat Mohammad Khan died in office (Ibid. p. 116) at the time of Maharaja Abhay Singh's arrival.
3. Ibid., II, p 105; for their support against Hamid and for assistance to Mubariz-ul mulk Ibid., II, pp. 79-80, 83, 86, 88, 92, 93, 98.
4. Ibid., II, p. 106 He had also contracted ijare right on pargana Petlad, but died before the completion of the stipulated period. Ibid., II, p. 112,
With the arrival of subedar-designate Maharaja Abhay Singh and determination of Mubariz-ul muilk to resist his ouster, Jawanmard Khan opted for rendering active support to the former.\(^1\) In view of his active assistance and for compensating the apparent loss of Pattan, the maharaja procured for Jawanmard Khan Babi an addition to mansab and watandari of Badnagar.\(^2\) Later (1731) the Babi chief acquired parganas of Kadi, and Vijapur on ijara.\(^3\) His brother, like-wise acquired parganas of Munda, Matar (Arharmatar) and Nadiad.\(^4\)

Jawanmard Khan Babi reoccupied pargana Pattan at (Subedar-designate) Momin Khan's instance who needed his support for ousting Ratan Singh Bhandari (naib-subedar in office) and therefore assigned faujdari of the pargana before hand to align the Babi with him.\(^5\) Jawanmard Khan also

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3. *Ibid.*, II, p. 168. Sometime before 1753 Kadi was lost to the Marathas; MS NO 191/1 f 13.


5. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 196-7. The faujdari of the pargana, as pointed out in a preceding note, had been assigned to Raja Bakht Singh, the brother of maharaja. The Babi chief seems to have been hurt and was therefore to get it back which he did by expelling the Raja's naib forcibly. Mukhtasar Tarikh-i Gujarat, f.83.
obtained from Momin Khan pargana Kheralu for his brother, Zorawar Khan.¹

It may thus be seen that Jawanmard Khan emerged beneficiary after every change in the subedar. The Babi chief almost consistently remained 'loyal' to the Subedars-in-office rendering them active assistance.² Once the subedar-in-office was dismissed, he threw his lot with the Governor-designate after his arrival in the subah for ousting his predecessor by force of arms.³ The Babi chief extended his support and extorted one or the other official position which, barring exceptions already mentioned, he and members of his family continued to hold. Then in 1743, a little

¹ He was assigned pargana Prantij for paying ransom money to the Marathas who held Zorawar Khan, his brother as hostage. Later, he got Kheralu instead. Even after his brother's release, the pargana was retained by them, Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 205, 6, 239.

² Please see particularly, Ibid., II, pp. 48-9, 54-5, 62-3 69-70, 73, 78, 81, 82 against Muizuddawlah and under Nizam-ul mulk and his deputy, Hamid Khan: Ibid., II pp. 79-80, 83, 86, 88, 92-3, 98, 107, against Hamid and under Mubariz-ul mulk; Ibid., II, pp. 119, 120, 144, 159, 161; against Mubariz and under Maharaja Abhay Singh and his deputy Ratan Singh Bhandari) Ibid. II, pp. 191, 196-7, 200-1, 236, 239; 242-3, 248-9, 261-2, 272, against Bhandari and under Momin Khan.

after Momin Khan's death Jawanmard Khan occupied Subedari which he made instrumental for ensuring continued possession of Radhanpur.¹

Despite holding faujdaris, enjoying mansab, jagir and watandari, Jawanmard Khan Babi ceased to render services at least from the time of Momin Khan's period (1737-43) of subedari. Instead, he served as a mercenary charging "an amount of money by way of daily expenses of his troops" for rendering service which the nazim procured every year.² Since the amount charged by him was found "to be heavy", Momin Khan chose to engage his brother, Zorawar Khan, who also held pargana Kheralu in 'jagir' on an agreement of less expenses,³ as a mercenary. Evidently the services of Babis' in general and those of Jawanmard Khan in particular seem to have become virtually indispensable for the subedars. From the time of Hamid Khan each subedar was keen to ensure their

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1. Having entered into an agreement with the Marathas, he surrendered Ahmadabad to them in 1753. As per the terms and conditions settled between them Jawanmard Khan was to retain entirely and exclusively (dar-o-bast bila shirkat) the parganas of Pattan, Badnager, Sami, Munjpur, Baisalnagar, Tharad, Kheralu, Radhanpur, Terwara, and Vijapur. Moreover his family members were to retain one third of revenues of qasbah Matar, Kheda, Vasna and Munda entirely beside the villages which they held in jagir.

2. Ibid., 257

3. Ibid.
support and, procure their services for taking possession of the subah, dealing with the Marathas, running the administration and effecting assessment and collection of revenues and extorting peshkash from the zamindars. 1 Jawanmard Khan Babi, like his father and other member of the family, seems to have established good rapport with some of the leading magnets of the region 2 The Babis were capable of mustering support for assisting the Nazims as well as for fighting them. 3 It may particularly be mentioned that the 'zamindars', girasias, Kolis and other recalcitrants were among the ones who assisted them against the Nazim. 4 The Babis who were duly recognized as natives of the region 5 might have,


2. Ruqqat-i Alamgiri, letter no. XIX (1706), pp. 24-6; For the Babis enjoying confidence of the leading element of the region, Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 40-1, 78-81, 144, 170-1; Jawanmard Khan Babi for being hailed as man of the region (ham watani) by the Gujaratis, Ibid., II, p. 312


4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., II, p. 312

* Located on a hill and having strong fortification, Junagadh was headquarter of sarkar Soreth, the peninsular Gujarart.
presumably, been better placed to consolidate their position with the cooperation of local element.

II. The Peninsula Gujarat:

D Nawabi of Junagadh:

The last faujdar of sarkar Soreth, Sher Khan Babi\(^1\) consolidated his position at Junagadh during the days of the decline of Mughal rule in the subah. Having tried his luck on the mainland where he could not make much headway, Sher Khan Babi retired to the peninsula and established himself at Junagadh. With Junagadh safe in his hands, Sher Khan re-entered the main field of provincial politics but with a new approach and changed purpose. The distasteful, as also not so appreciable an experience there, forced him to retire to Junagadh to consolidate his achievements in the climate of political uncertainty. Our main point of concern, therefore, is Junagadh; however, for a better appraisal of the whole development a study of Sher Khan’s achievements, failures and strategy on the main-land seems to be pertinent.

To beginwith, Sher Khan Babi, during the early years (1719-37) of his career had endeavored to acquire and hold a

\(^1\) Ennobled as Sher Khan Babi, Mohammad Bahadur Babi was son of Salabat Mohammad Khan Babi (500/250), the watan-dar of Balasinor (Barasinwara). His father came to lime light during Aurangzeb’s reign and played an active role in the provincial politics during later years. Commissariat, History of Gujarat, II, pp. 169-70, 212, 432n and 435.
position on the main-land, except for a short duration (1720-20). According to the available evidence he began his career as faujdar-i gird (1719) of Ahmadabad, the position which he retained under naib-subedar Mehar Ali Khan. In 1721, naib-subedar Shujat Khan (1721-22) who bore enmity towards the Babis threatened him and his father in their respective possessions but their grievances against the Khan's humiliating behaviour were redressed by Subedar Muizuddawlah Haider Quill Khan (1721-22) who appointed him thanedar of Sadra and Birpur, managed award of mansab and confirmation in the jagir.

But Sher Khan Babi was deprived of the above mentioned thanedari within an year and with the death of his father (1730) he was left in his sole (watandari) possession of Khera.

1. Sher Khan held Junagadh (1728-30) as deputy of his father who had been appointed naib-faujdar of the place by the dying faujdar; Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 101, 103
2. Mirat-i Ahmadi II, p. 22
3. Ibid., II, pp. 41-2. Mirat-i Mustafabad pp. 259-60. He was awarded a mansab of 500/270 and khitab of Sher Khan. His father was, likewise, allowed to hold Barasinwra as watandar and Sher Khan to continue in the wa-tandari of Khera.
4. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 48-9, 69-70. His father was continuously favoured and then, disfavoured by Nizam-ul-mulk, Hamid Khan and Sarbuland Khan. But at the time of his death, he held Barasinwra as watander and Ghoga as faujdar and manager of the king's mother who held it in ta'iyul (i.e. jagir), Ibid., II, pp. 10, 21-2, 48-9, 69-
Sher Khan Babi managed, at the recommendation of the then subedar to acquire Barasinwra, watan darl of his father, and port of Ghoga after his father's death. The imperial court rejected the Nazim's proposal and deprived him of Ghoga, an easily manageable and prosperous port-town on the peninsula.

Sher Khan's fortunes witnessed fluctuations in his other assignments also. Maharaja Abhay Singh appointed him faujdar of Baroda (1731) but soon (1733) it was captured by the Marathas when Sher Khan was in Barasinwra. Similarly he was appointed faujdar of Viramgaon (1733) by the naib-subedar but the imperial court assigned it to Behram Khan. At the instigation of the Naib-Subedar, Sher Khan Babi fought the new incumbent to finish. But then, the naib-subedar himself replaced him by another person of his liking for

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...Continued...

70, 78, 81-2, 86, 116

1. He was allowed to retain his father's mansab and jagir. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp 132, 165-66, Ibid., Supplement, p. 191


some ulterior motives. As such, of the many areas at one or the other time at his disposal, he was left only with hiswatandari possessions of Barasinwra and Khera. It may thus be seen that Sher Khan Babi was generally beneficiary of the subedar's favours and each time a looser at the hands of the imperial court. It may further be seen that except the incident of Viramgaon-- the strategically significant fortified town between the main-land and Soreth -- Sher Khan, by and large followed the imperial command peacefully. Moreover, he was continuously at the service of Nazim. But the Nazim too seems to have gradually lost its credibility as the source of providing favours and therefore Sher Khan Babi

1. The faujdari was granted to him because he maintained cordial relations with the desai without whose cooperation management of affairs was a difficult task. Ibid., II pp 168, 179, 184, Mirat-i Mustafabad, pp. 264-5.


3. The Babis, in general, acted as mediator between the peskash collecting expeditionary forces and the zamindars. As such their utility for the subedars need not be over emphasised. The favours, moreover, sometime came in view of political compulsions as mentioned in the preceding note.

4. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 41-2, 48-9, 86, 101, 103, 318

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was, as will be seen a little later, with reason obliged to proceed accordingly.

Sher Khan Babi, as early as 1728, was reluctant to surrender Junagadh to the naib of the faujdar appointed by the imperial court. Sher Khan held the place since 1727 as naib of the naib-faujdar Salabat Mohammad Khan under faujdar Asad Quli Khan, who died in 1727. The next faujdar, Ghulam Muhiudding Khan also appointed him his naib. In 1728 Ghulam Muhiuddin Khan, with royal consent, deputed Mir Ismail in Sher Khan's stead. But Sher Khan did not let him assume office. 1 Mubariz-ul mulk, then subedar, recommended (1729) that Sher Khan be allowed to continue by way of ijarah-i nayabat. 2 But the following year (1730), Sher Khan, for reasons unknown, vacated the office for Mir Ismail Khan. 3 Nevertheless Sher Khan's interest is evident from his early action. In the year 1736 at the time he had been deprived of all his positions except ones in Barasinwra and Khera, Sher

3. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, p. 117; Mirat-i Mustafabad, p.259. By this time Maharaja Abhay Singh had assumed charge of the subah and the Babi had not even called on him. Moreover, his father Salabat Mohammad Khan also died (1730). Apparently Sher Khan Babi would not like to annoy the Subedar and the court at the juncture when he needed imperial favours.
Khan Babi was appointed faujdar of Petlad by Naib-i-subeder, Ratan Singh Bhandari. The Bhandari in spite of proceeding with a firm determination (azm-i musammam) however, failed to install Sher Khan Babi by ousting Momin Khan, the ifaradar of Petlad. The incident which reflected the weakness and inability of the highest provincial authority, seems to have proved an eye-opener for Sher Khan. Before analyzing evidence and developments for the ensuing years, it will not be out of place to have a retrospect of the preceding developments — Sher Khan's obvious endeavours to hold some position on main-land which had resulted in almost a fiasco.

On the basis of available evidence it may be submitted that until the year 1736-37 Sher Khan had associated himself with the subedars and obviously he seems to have seen an identity of interests with those of the latter i.e. the Nazims of the subah. In principle, no doubt, he was bound to serve the subedars in his various official capacities but he did, in this association, something more even apart from and also in violation of the rules and regulations. It was at the instigation of Ratan Singh Bhandari, the naib-subedar incharge of the subah that Sher Khan fought the faujdar-

1. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 192-94. Momin Khan, the first nawab of Khanbat was also a strong noble having roots in the soil of the land. For details please see discussion under khanbat in the following lines.
designate of Viramgaon to the finish. Moreover, he was, generally, with the subedars in their peshkash collecting expeditions. It was, apparently because of his association with the subedars that since the days of Maharaja Ajit Singh (1719-21) almost every subedar favoured him by making assignments, recommending khitab and increase in mansab and on two occasions favours came in violation of imperial regulation and rules. But such favours neither proved lasting nor even secure. As pointed out above Sher Khan was deprived of all his positions, excepting the watandari of Barasinwra and Khera by the year 1736. Even Barasinwra was exposed to Maratha inroads twice in 1733 and 1736. It could be retained only by offering a huge sum by way of khandni (security money). As such, Sher Khan might have observed that while the subedars could assign positions and make grants, it was the recipient alone who could retain these by virtue of his own strength. Moreover, inability and failure of Bhandari against Momin Khan highlighted the fact that the highest authority of the subah was neither capable of ousting a

1. Ibid., II, pp. 103, 133-4, 192-4 Mirat-i Mustafabad, pp. 163, 246-7, 265
2. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp 103, 144, 168; Mirat-i Mustafabad, pp. 260-1
3. Mirat-i Ahmadi, Supplement, p. 191

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determined official nor, therefore, in a position to bestow favours even on its favourites. The conditions of insecurity and instability were further created, at least for Sher Khan, by the subedars themselves. Ratan Singh Bhandari took faujdari of Viramgaon from him. To all appearances Sher Khan's strategy i.e. acquiring and retaining position through the good offices of subedar by helping them in the subah, failed to meet the desired aim.

With regard to his field of action - the mainland - it may be submitted that it was like the hunting ground of Maratha armies. Beside extorting khandni they had successfully aimed at territorial acquisitions, as distinct from their policy of collecting only khandni from the peninsular Gujarat. The mainland was relatively vulnerable and within easy reach of Marathas as well as the Mughal subedars. Above all, since he failed to retain his positions on the mainland, therefore, he would welcome a change in the area of operation. Hence forward (1736), Sher Khan seems to have decided to act independent of the state authority to acquire as well as consolidate his position in his own right.

The long armed struggle (April 1736 to May 1737) that started between Momin Khan (the future subedar) and Ratan

Singh Bhandari (the naib-subedar in charge) for the occupation of Ahmadabad provided Sher Khan an opportunity to act. Instead of taking sides, Sher Khan Babi utilised the opportunity to expel state officials and occupy Dehgam and Korwa which were located in the vicinity of Barasinwra. Having acquired tacit approval of the new subedar who did not disturb him in his new acquisition, Sher Khan Babi called on him (September 1737) and served him for sometime. In the meantime situation at Junagadh took a favourable turn for the Babi chief.

Hazbar Khan, faujdar of Soreth, deputed two naibs — Sher Mohammad Khan and Mamur Khan — one after another to take over Junagadh from Mir Dost Ali, the naib-in-charge in office. With a design to capture Junagadh, Sher Khan Babi proceeded to Ghoga (which was situated on the peninsula and had already been occupied by him) and instigated the unpaid Gujarati soldiers of Mir Dost Ali who was simultaneously threatened in his position by the nabis-designate and, moreover, short of funds too. The soldiers "were internally in concord with Sher Khan Babi" and "that helpless man (i.e. Mir Dost Ali) was entangled in the snare of their

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strategam*. Mir Dost Ali was forced to invite Sher Khan Babi on an agreement of half to half for collecting revenues. Having thus entered the citadel of Junagadh, Sher Khan Babi occupied the place for himself without partnership of anyone. A little later the imperial court appointed Himmat Ali Khan, nephew of subedar Momin Khan, as faujdar. But in view of Marath's presence and Sher Khan Babi's strength (for he was entrenched in the strong citadel of Junagadh) the subedar could not even venture to act against him. Sher Khan therefore continued to hold the place uninterrupted.

During the years 1738-43, Sher Khan confined his activities to Junagadh and took no part in politics on the mainland. Because of the paucity of evidence nothing can be stated with confidence, however, according to the author of the Mirat-i Mustafabad, Sher Khan, during these years, subdued the recalcitrant elements there. In all probability Sher Khan Babi might have utilised the time to consolidate his position at Junagadh. That his wives, Ladli and Amani, succeeded in administering the region during the years of

1. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 245-7 He expelled the naib after his entry into the citadel.
Sher Khan's absence (1743-45 and 1746-47) is indicative of the degree of success he had attained. During the period Sher Khan Babi confirmed the holders of the madad-i ma'sh, in'am, pusaita and other grants in their possessions. There is evidence to show that he made new grants in favour of Bairagis, sadhus, faqirs, Saidyids and the desais. Also, he is reported to have made a grant of four villages in 1741-42 to a local zamindar. It seems that during the period he had tried to win strong and influential local persons to his side.

Sher Khan re-appeared on the political scene of the mainland in 1743-45. He came at the invitation of Maratha chief, Rengoji who had promised him deputy Governorship of the subah under Marathas. Finding no room for materializing his objectives of getting deputy-Governorship, he plundered


2. Each document concerning Settled cases (Junagadh) cited in Chapter V and Chapter VI above testifies the undis­turbed continuity of the grantees in their possession. Besides, the files related to mahal Junagadh precisely cite Sher Khan Babi's order dated 1153, 1154 and 1155 AH. to that effect.

3. Please see, for instance Junagadh SC No. 993, (mahal Mangrole); Ex A/1, Ex A/3 and A/5; SC No. 362, (mahal- Seel) Ex. No. 4

4. Tarikh-i Soreth (Junagadh MS.) f. 17.

5. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 286,289,290,293
villages and then joined hands with the then Mughal Deputy-Governors\(^1\) as mercenary against the Marathas.\(^2\) But his endeavours to ensure installation of Fida-ud-Din Khan and then Fakhruddin in the seat of power were successfully thwarted by his cousin, Jawanmard Khan Babi who aspired for and succeeded in capturing the office of subedar for himself.\(^3\)

Once Jawanmard Khan Babi captured Ahmadabad, Sher Khan Babi endeavoured to consolidate his position by occupying Kapadbanj and Thamna, the territories adjoining Barasinwra, which was held by his son, Sardar Mohammad Khan.\(^4\)

Sher Khan, it may be seen, had by now abandoned the policy of association with subedars and remaining aloof from the politics of the subah. Between 1743 and 1745 Sher Khan took an active part in the shifting politics of the time allying himself indiscriminately with the subedar, with other Mughal nobles, with Rengoji and other Maratha sardars; with the phantom subedar, Fakhruddawlah and with Rai Singh, the jagirdar-chief of ldar according to convenience. During

\(^1\) After the death of Momin Khan, the charge of the subah was held by Fakhruddin and Fidaudaddin jointly as deputy Governors. They were engaged in a struggle with Renkoji who wanted to oust them.

\(^2\) Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 289-90, 293

\(^3\) Ibid., II, pp. 290, 293, 295-8, 311, 317.

\(^4\) Ibid., II, pp. 311.

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all these years his only permanent ally seems to have been Rai Singh, the man with identical interests. In 1745-46 finding no possibility of adventure on the mainland and having strengthened his position at Barasinwra he retired to Junagadh where his wives had carried the management of affairs.

Post 1746-48 developments show Sher Khan acting as an independent ruler. Available evidence, though little in quantity, is significant for the light it casts on Sher Khan's ways of asserting and consolidating position.

Sher Khan shifted to the policy of opposing Mughals in case he was disturbed, and earning confidence of the local elements. The very position of faujdari, as pointed out

1. Sher Khan with Raja Rai Singh of Idar warmly welcomed Fakhruddawlah, the Nazim-designate in 1743-44 but within few days he deserted the Nazim-designate and joined hands with Potaji, the Maratha chief who along-with Jawanmard Khan Babi was opposed to Fakhruddawlah. In the year 1744 Fakhruddawlah attacked Sher Khan's camp but could not achieve success. Sher Khan, subsequently entered into league with Rengoji, the other Maratha chief in the subah. The new alliance forced Fakhruddawlah to open dialogue with Sher Khan. But Sher Khan could not be desisted. In the struggle between Jawanmard Khan, the de facto subedar and Rengoji, Sher Khan supported the latter but during the following year, he deserted Rengoji who was fighting Khanderao, another Maratha chief. While the struggle for supremacy between Rengoji and Fidauddin Khan was on, Sher Khan changed his sides twice. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 286, 289, 290, 293, 296-8, 314-25, 327-30, 334-8, 355-6, 385-6, 402-11, 502-12, Mirat-i Mustafabad pp. 270-4.

2. Mirat-i Mustafabad. p. 274, Barasinwra, under Sher Khan Babi's son, also acquired the status of Nawabi.
above, was gained by him by seizure rather than by sanction. Also, he continued to hold it without having legal approval and against the wishes of the Emperor. During the closing days of 1746, Sher Khan opposed and fought Fakhrud-dawlah, the subedar at Banthli, 10 miles east of Junagadh.\(^1\)

At Khare and Barasinwra, Sher Khan's son and deputy resisted imposition of *peshkash* by the subedar but was forced to offer it twice.\(^2\) Sher Khan's son agreed to share revenues of Barasinwra with the Marathas, under the pressure of arms.\(^3\)

Sher Khan in an apparent effort to growing roots in the soil granted certain concessions to the local zamindars. He granted them exemption from paying *salami* on their *chaouth* rights.\(^4\) As such the possessions of the *chaouthias* were made free of the main monetary obligation. One Weera Kathi of Jeetpur was permitted to raise fortification at the same place. He was also granted a *jagir* in the *pargana* of Jeet-

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4. *Mirat-i Mustafabad*, pp. 284-85. The loss in terms of revenues must have been quite considerable because there were, in all, 400 such villages as contained *chaouth* possessions and the exemption was not withdrawn. *Tarikh-i Soreth* (Junagadh MS) f.7.
besant, a rajput, was granted the revenues from the
Panchala village. 2 the mahant of Koili was granted revenues
of the village Koili in the pargana of Banthali. 3 Dholqa was
assigned to the gasbatis -- wealthy-soldierly class -- who
had killed the Mughal faujdar of the town. 4 Town of Una was
likewise granted to the local gasbatis as watan. 5 He also
assigned talluqa of Bantwa and Sardargarh, also known as
Gidar, to his younger brother. 6 He did not disturb the
zamindar of Porbandar in his new acquisitions, instead
demanded peshkash only. 7 On the whole he seems to have
maintained cordial relations with the old as well as newly
emerging zamindars. 8

In spite of ruling Junagadh like an independent chief,
Sher Khan never broke his relations with the Emperor till

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1. Tarikh-i Soreth (Junagadh MS) f.37, Mirat-i Mustafabad,
p. 285.
2. Mirat-i Mustafabad, p. 280
3. Ibid., p.286
4. Ibid., p. 351
5. Tarikh-i Soreth (Junagadh MS) f.70
6. Mirat-i Mustafabad, p.286
7. Tarikh-i Soreth (Junagadh MS) f.69
8. For his relations with Pahad Khan Jalori (chief of
Palanpur) and Raja of Idar, Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, p. 245;
Mirat-i Mustafabad, pp. 261-2, 272-4; with muqaddam of
Padra and the desai of Viramgaon, Mirat-i Ahmadi, II,
pp.144, 162, 168, 179, 184
his death (1758). He liked to be addressed as Nawab Sher Khan Bahadur fidwi-i Badshah. However, he did not share revenues with the Mughal Emperors.

To sum up, Sher Khan Babi, the founder of the Nawabi of Junagadh, first unsuccessfully tried his fortune on the mainland and attempted holding positions with the consent and support of the subedar. Since he failed to retain any position of significance with the Nazim's help and had to part with his positions on the mainland, he consolidated his position at Junagadh by acquiring support of the local zamindars. The period of uncertain political conditions thus provided opportunity to one more Mughal noble to carve out an independent principality.

III. SOUTH GUJARAT: THE PORT-TOWNS

D. Nawabi of Surat:

Tegh Beg Khan, who appeared as compromise candidate in the political game initiated by Mulla Mohammad Ali, the

1. Britishers wrongly assumed that Sher Khan Babi assumed the appellation of Nawab and Bahadur, see Bombay Gazetteer, VI, p. 99, Wilberforce, op. cit p. 129; Treaties, VI, pp 84-5. The Khitabs were granted by Empror Muhammad Shah, see Mirat-i Mustafabad, pp. 259, 261-2, Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 132, 144. Even his grand son was addressed with the same title see Mirat-i Mustafabad, p. 285.

2. Account, ff. 10b, 18a

3. However his son continued to hold Barasinwra and Kheda on the mainland even after extinction of Mughal rule from the subah.
umdat-ul tujjar, to acquire ascendancy over the economically important sea-part of Surat, emerged out of strife as the practically independent ruler -- the Nawab of the place. The capture of power by Tegh Beg Khan and later on by other adventurers and the related developments constitute an interesting episode in the history of unscrupulous politics.

The history of this episode may be divided into three broad phases: the first phase when Tegh Beg Khan succeeded twice in capturing the mutasaddi's office displacing Behram Khan, the officially appointed mutasaddi, with the help of Mulla Mohammad Ali, the trader and Begler Khan, the qiledar; the second phase when having been officially appointed mutasaddi of Surat, Tegh Begh Khan attempted to consolidate his position and power, and the third phase when, after the death of Tegh Beg Khan, a new game began in which the mutasadigiri changed hands more than once.

Umdat-ul tujjar Mohammad Ali, an ambitious rich merchant of Surat, gave up his ancestral ways due to abdu-

1. Mulla Mohammad Ali was the son of Mulla Abdul Ghafoor the umdat-ul tujjar. At the death of Mulla Ghafoor, the then mutasaddi (1716-18) Haider Quli Khan confiscated his property. Beside precious material and articles he is reported to have left a fabulous sum of Rs. 80,00,000/- in cash. After making arduous efforts, Mulla Mohammad Ali was allowed to take back his father's belongings. For details see, Zahiruddin Malik, "The Rise of Tegh Beg Khan" (1733-46), Islamic Culture, XXXVI, 1972, pp. 57-8.
nance of wealth* and laid the foundation of a palatial fort-
sum-port at Athwa island, three miles off Surat. Behram
Khan, the then mutasaddi, forbade (1729) the trader from
carrying out his unauthorised work of construction. 1 Humili-
ated but resolute in his designs, the trader, with big power
of purse at his command, resolved to dislodge Behram Khan
from his office. With a lucrative offer of securing *sanad
for the post of mutasaddi for qiledar Beglar Khan’s brother
Tegh Beg Khan, the merchant purchased the loyalty of the
Khan to execute his designs of expelling Behram Khan from
the office (1729-30). 2 Tegh Beg Khan, thus, appeared on the
political chessboard; previously he held no post in the
Imperial administration.

To translate their political ambitions into reality
Tegh Beg Khan gave out that he had received a *sanad for the
post of mutasaddi of Surat. Having brought about a keen
controversy around Behram Khan the two brothers dragged him
into conflict and gave him battle. Under the terms of agree-
ment concluded through the peace making mission of interest-
ed traders of Surat, Behram Khan vacated the office and
waited for the arrival of a new *sanad in his name. Tegh Beg

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2. *Mirat-i Ahmadi*, II, pp. 103-4; *Mukhtasar Tarikh-i Guj-
arat*, f.77
Khan entered the official palace (darbar) and began to rule over Surat from 1730 as a de facto ruler with no legal right to rule.¹

The agreement came under a strain soon after the merchant recommenced the work of building his palatial-fort-cum-port without procuring the sanad of confirmation for the post of mutasaddi in the name of Tegh Beg Khan from the imperial court. Tegh Beg did not permit him to proceed until the sanad had been procured. The snubbed trader turned to Behram Khan -- the mutasaddi out of office. Mohammad Ali, the trader, assured him of the sanad of confirmation; in turn Behram Khan undertook to allow the merchant to accomplish his object. The trader spent a sum of Rs. 180000/-, procured sanad for the new ally and thus enabled him to reoccupy the official palace of mutasaddi after a lapse of ten months (1731). Mohammad Ali, then, put his design into effect and built a palatial fort-cum-port at the island of Athwa.²

Even the newly formed alliance did not last long. Mulla Muhammad Ali assumed princely ways: he appointed his own qiledar and kotwal, kept retinue, put cannons on the fort

² Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp.109-10, 142 Hadiqat-ul Hind, f.40; Mukhtasar Tarikh-i Gujarat. f.70;
and above all succeeded in attracting the merchants to the newly developed port. The new port registered very rapid growth at the expense of Surat. The mutasaddi could not and would 'not suffer the pecuniary loss in terms of revenues' nor political prestige.\(^1\) In order to protect his interests, Behram Khan appointed faujdar at Athwa to supervise the trade. The action was sharply objected to by the merchant-prince.\(^2\) With the help of the trading communities and 'an amendable religious leader' Syed Muhammad Ali Wazir, the merchant prince gave the issue 'a sectarian fervour' which led to a big tumult.\(^3\) Behram Khan, however, succeeded in overcoming the problem with a firm hand.

Mulla Muhammad Ali pursuaded his abandoned allies, Beglar Khan and Tegh Beg Khan, to resume the task of expelling Behram Khan. In addition to his promise of securing the sanad, the trader by advancing the required amount of money and providing the ammunition, demonstrated the sincerity of his intention.\(^4\) In his revengeful mood, he sought the assistance

\(^1\) Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 109-10, 142, 147.
\(^2\) Ibid., II, pp. 147-8
\(^3\) Ibid., II, pp.69, 147-8. Syed Muhammad Ali Waiz who had bribed the qazi also, declared that Tegh Beg Khan had not kept his word, cheated the trader and thus acted against the Shariat. Z.U. Malik, "The Rise of Tegh Beg Khan", p.59.
\(^4\) Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 148-9; Hadiqat-ul Hind, f.61.
istance of the Dutch, the English and the Marathas. ¹ The mutasaddi gave a long battle but could not succeed. Hence Tegh Beg Khan was reinstalled as the de facto mutasaddi (1731-32).² The trader resumed the princely ways and busied himself with enhancing the trade at Athwa. Tegh Beg Khan, along with his brother-ally Beglar Khan, the qiledar, ruled over Surat.

Apparently Mulla Muhammad Ali did not remain content with what he had achieved till then. To keep Tegh Beg Khan on tenterhooks, the Mulla made no effort to procure the sanad from the court for the Khan. Instead he secretly arranged for seeking a grant of mansab of 3000 with a title of Fakhruddin Khan for his younger son and the sanad of the post of mutasaddi exclusively for himself with the specific request that he be allowed to appoint any one of his choice as his deputy.³ Apparently he wanted to acquire the legal supremacy at Surat so as to perpetuate his gains at Athwa or

1. Surat District Gazetteer, p 135; Bombay Gazetteer, VI, pp. 109, 111. The Mirat does not mention of Europeans's participation in the struggles but notes Devji Nagvir Martha supporting the trader as a mercenary general at the head of ten thousand soldiers, Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 149-51. The trader had himself collected 10000 horse-men and footmen to strengthen his ally. Ibid., II, p.147.


at least to make the position of Tegh Khan vulnerable. To translate his desire into action he sent a hundi of Rs. 60,000/- to Hafiz Khidmatgar, the favourite of Emperor Muhammad Shah.¹

But the merchant's scheme of attaining a position of legal eminence did not succeed. His court-bound messenger fell into the hands of Tegh Beg Khan. Tegh Beg Khan changed his strategy and embarked upon a policy of cleansing the stage of his foes so as to consolidate his position there.

The de facto mutasaddi, without revealing the news of arrest of the trader's messengers decided to outwit him. He invited the trader to a feast and put him under arrest in 1732 and sometime later, (1733-34) deprived him of his life.² Mulla Muhammad Waiz who had sided with the trader was also assassinated.³ Ahmad Chalpi who had also tried to create a rift between Tegh Beg Khan and the British was put


2. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp.154-5, 168-9, Selection from the Peshwa Diaries, III, Letter No. 185. According to Mirat (II, pp. 153-6) the mutasaddi confiscated all his property and razed the Athwa complex to ground. He further informs us that Asaf Jah had asked Tegh Beg to spare the life of the trader. But Tegh Beg Khan actually killed him while making public that the trader had been released.

to death (1735), at the instance of the former. 1 Thus the port was cleared of his known opponents. Then "he breathed of authority and absolutism with tranquility". 2

As yet Tegh Beg's position by the year 1732 was neither regularised nor had he sought legal confirmation from the Emperor. The circumstance however made it necessary. Mulla Muhammad Ali had, earlier (1732) attempted destabilisation of his position. On the other hand, the imperial court appointed Momin Khan as the mutasaddi of the port. Simultaneously Tegh Beg Khan was ordered to take charge of faujdari of Cambay. Tegh Beg Khan paid no heed to the imperial decree. Instead he retained his position by putting armed resistance to the new incumbent. 3 Nor did he proceed to Cambay. At the moment he might have thought the obtaining of the sanad of confirmation an expedient way out of the situation. Hence he deputed some reliable messengers to the court. By offering costly presents, seven Arab horses and 10,000 asharfis, he was confirmed (1737) in the position he already possessed by virtue of conquest. 4

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1. Ibid., II, pp. 175-6; Bombay Quarterly Review, IV, p. 203
2. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, p. 177
Having obtained legal confirmation, the mutasaddi, without seeking due permission, appointed his younger brother Safdar Mohammad Khan as naib-mutasaddi and put the city under his charge.\(^1\) The qiledari of the port was still held by the mutasaddi's elder brother, Begler Khan. For all practical purposes the principle of division of power had ceased to operate.\(^2\) Not content, Tegh Beg Khan discarded the official designation of mutasaddi and styled himself as Nawab.\(^3\)

That Tegh Beg Khan had assumed a position of practical independence is also borne out by other facts. He is reported to have imposed new taxes on the populace of Surat.\(^4\) He concluded treaty with Damaji Gaekwad, a Maratha sardar. According to the terms, Damaji undertook the responsibility of assessing and collecting revenues of the mahals dependent


\(^2\) After Beglar Khan the qiledari was held by his son, Aibak Khan who was succeeded by his son-in law, Waqar Mohammad Khan, the son of Safdar Mohammad Khan. As such the mutasaddigiri and qiledri both, were held by the same family. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 340, 352, 362-3.

\(^3\) English Documents, pp. 16-7, The Surat District Gazetteer, pp. 140-2. It is not certain as to whether the title was bestowed by the Emperor or assumed by himself. The British works also speak of the assumption of the title of 'Nawab' by Sher Khan Babi (Junagadh) though it was granted by the Emperor.

\(^4\) English Documents, pp. 16-8, Surat District Gazetteer. pp. 139-41; Bombay Gazetteer, VI, p. 116-7.
on Surat agreeing to pay a fixed sum to the mutasaddi per annum. In this way the mutasaddi pacified the Marathas who had been enjoying a predominant position on the land in South Gujarat and particularly in the sarkar of Surat. As such he placed himself, relatively, in a safer position both on land around and inside the port. In his next step he refused to pay Sidi, the incharge of Mughal Fleet, the usual amount of money out of the revenue of Surat.

According to the British work Tegh Beg Khan, prior to his coming into open hostility with Sidi, had concluded some agreement with the British at Surat. It will not be out of place to note

1. The Maratha ascendancy in sarkar Surat had been established by Pilaji Gaekwad during the mutasaddigiri of Behram Khan. Deprived of the land revenue the mutasaddi closed city-gates for the riaya for selling its produce in Surat, the only available market. The Marathas, in their turn, blocked up routes for the town-folk. The deadlock was resolved with the riaya agreeing to pay a share of their produce to the mutasaddi. Later, Damaji Gaekwad (1734-57) agreed to pay Rs. 2, 36,000/- as his share in the revenues annually. Soon, a cleavage developed and the Marathas refused to pay at all (November 1735). Finally in December 1735 the crisis was resolved when the 'Nawab' (Tegh Beg Khan) agreed to accept less than the stipulated amount. English Documents, pp. 16-8; Ibid., letters dated 2nd and 26th November, 1735 and 28th December 1735; Mirat-i Ahmadi II, pp. 363-4; Bombay Gazetteer (Surat, Bharuch, Cambay), p.117


4. Treaties, VIII, pp. 353; Bombay Gazetteer, IV, p. 117.
that the zamindar of Cheharmandvi (the saraiab one) had supported Tegh Beg Khan against the marchant prince.¹

From 1732 until his death (1746) Tegh Beg Khan was practically an independent ruler of Surat. He was succeeded by his younger brother Safdar Mohammad Khan, the incharge of port. Safdar Mohammad Khan also sought the sanad of confirmation (1747) from the court and spent a sum of 10,000 asharfis, besides other precious presents, to obtain it.²

But Safdar Mohammad Khan was not destined to enjoy the position uninterrupted. His bakhshi, Saiyid Muinuddin Khan alias Achhan³ acting under Nizam-ul mulk Asaf Jah's instructions, ousted Safdar Mohammad Khan out of port and the fort. In a sudden move the Bakhshi captured the fort and placed the qiledar, Waqar Mohammad Khan who was taken by surprise, under arrest (November 1747).⁴ Determined to capture the port also, Saiyed Achhan acquired services of Madhav Rao

3. The Saiyid was brother of Saiyid Mithan, a religious man who was held in esteem by Nizam-ul mulk Asaf Jah. The Nizam had hatched a plan to oust Tegh Beg Khan earlier by working on Achhan (the bakhshi) through Mithan but to no avail. After Tegh Beg Khan's death, the Nizam renewed his effort, hence the present struggle. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 356-8
Maratha who was invited into the fort. Equally determined to retain his position, Safdar Mohammad Khan obtained support of another Maratha sardar, Khanderao. But the traders, wealthy men, the British the 'nobles and ignobles' of the town who were vexed with the mutasaddi lent support to Achhan. Having smelt general opposition and apprehending mass uprising against him, Sadfar Mohammad Khan vacated the post. Thus Saiyed Achhan who assumed power and made proclamation in the name of Nizam came to occupy (December 1747), the mustasaddigiri as well as the qiledari.

But within a month of his exit, Safdar Mohammad Khan found a treasure trove and resumed the struggle (February

1. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 358-9, 363; English Documents letter dated 10 December, 1747. His services were acquired for Rs. 1100,000 with the understanding that he would enjoy one third share in the revenues until the stipulated amount was paid. But the sardar was slain while the struggle was still on. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 358-9, 363.

2. His services were acquired for Rs. 300,000 Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, p. 364.

3. They were all opposed to Safdar Mohammad Khan and disliked him since the days of his deputy-mutasaddigiri. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 359-60, English Documents, dated 18 December, 1747; For his oppressive attitude under Tegh Beg Khan and reaction of the traders, English Documents dated 22 January, 24 January, 1st February, and 10th February 1734.

4. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 359-60. He seems to have run short of funds also.

5. Ibid., II, p. 360; English Documents, letter dated 18th December 1747
1748) to meet, this time, still stiffer opposition. 1 Saiyed Achhan approached and acquired active support of the English, the Dutch, the Portuguese and Hafiz Masud Khan. (Vakil of Yaqut Khan of Danda Rajpuri, in-charge of Mughal Fleet). 2 He was joined by the wealthy men, traders and common populace. Apprehending ill treatment which might be meted out if Safdar Mohammad Khan succeeded they "on their own entered into an agreement together among themselves not to allow Safdar Khan, or any other person in future, to seize government (of Surat) and that they would prevent and obstruct him". 3 Also Nizam-ul mulk endeavoured to ensure support of leading men of Surat in favour of Achhan by promising them favours. 4 Safdar Mohammad Khan finding himself not capable to meeting the challenge, withdrew and left for Sindh. 5 With this, Saiyed Achhan started ruling Surat by assigning qile-dari to his son, Saiyed Hafizuddin and naib-mutasaddigiri to


3. Ibid., English Documents, letter dated 18th December 1747


Ali Nawaz Khan. 1 Nizam-ul mulk, patron of Saiyed Achhan, procured imperial farman confirming the Saiyed in the position and granting him mansab and khitab. 2

But the revenues of the port which he did not share with the imperial centre, were not appropriated solely by Saiyed Achhan. 3 The Marathas sometime between December 1747 and February 1748 succeeded in extorting a share of one-third in the port revenues. Alongwith them, Hafiz Masud Khan also enjoyed equal share. The mutasaddi and bakhshi together were left to enjoy the remaining one-third part of port revenues. 4 As such from the point of view of shares in the

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1. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, p. 362, In the meantime leading men of Surat sent a petition requesting the court to appoint the Saiyed as mutasaddi. The Court, however, appointed Sadiq Ali Khan, a close friend of Hafiz Masud Khan. Sadiq Ali Khan approached his friend for help. But in view of the pact referred to above the Hafiz refused. Ibid.

2. Ibid., II, pp. 360, 362

3. Account ff. 15a, 18a

4. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 363-4. The logic put forward by the Marathas in justification of their share is interesting to note. As pointed out above, Safdar Mohammad Khan had procured Khanderao's help for Rs. 300,000. But the Khan was defeated. Khanderao, then, approached Saiyed Achhan, saying 'if Safdar Khan had succeeded—he would have paid the stipulated amount of money. Now that he (i.e. Achhan) had assumed the charge of government, he must pay the amount.' To press it further, he blocked up the roads of transport and communication for merchants and travellers. Saiyed Achhan could not meet the demand immediately. He, therefore, assigned one-third of the port's revenue till he paid off Rs. three lakh. But even after the amount had been paid, the mutasaddi could not expel the incharge of the Maratha
revenues, the nawabi of Surat emerged as a collective-holding of the three partners in the revenues.

But Saiyed Achhan too failed to retain the trust and support of his allies in the port and consequently lost the position, acquisition of which had been facilitated by the Nizam and regularised by the Emperor. In the prevailing atmosphere of mis-trust and distrust Saiyed Achhan developed suspicions against his ally and partner, Hafiz Masud Khan, and antagonised him.¹ The Saiyed then planned to confiscate property and wealth of Wali-ullah Khan and Kali who had served under Safdar Mohammad Khan, the ousted mutasaddi.² Then attributing their escape to and shelter in the dargah of Saiyed Edroos to Naib-mutasaddi Ali Nawaz Khan, he ordered him too to quit.³ Ali Nawaz Khan brought Safdar Mohammad Khan’s son, Waqar Mohammad Khan into the port with the assistance of Sajjadah Nashin Saiyed Abdullah of the dargah.⁴ Proclaiming Waqar Mohammad Khan the leader and...Continued...

share. Ibid.

1. Ibid., II, pp. 382-3, 385.
2. Ibid., II, p. 384
3. Ibid., II, pp. 382-4. The present struggle started in May 1749. Ali Nawaz Khan was sister’s son of Saiyed Achhan and son-in-law of Safdar Mohammad Khan.
4. Ibid., II, pp. 384-5. Waqar Mohammad Khan was brother-in-law of Ali Nawaz Khan and son-in-law of Beglar Khan. He had been qiledar under Tegh Beg Khan.
declaring to bring Safdar Mohammad Khan back, he joined hands with Hafiz Masud and attracted around him pro-Safdar Khan and anti-Achhan element. Hafiz Masud Khan also won over the traders who lent him active assistance. Syed Achhan's bakhshī deserted his master and joined hands with Hafiz Masud. But the Saiyed enjoyed active support of the British whereas his opponents acquired support of the Dutch. By November 1749, the fort had passed into the possession of Hafiz Masud and the port (darbar) had been occupied by Waqar Mohammad Khan who brought Safdar Khan back from Sindh and installed (1750) him in the position which had likewise been lost.

The inability of the Emperor in protecting Surat region against Maratha inroads and making effective interference there seems to have motivated the merchant prince to turn adventurer. By the year 1728-29 the routes between Cambay, 

1. Ibid., II, pp. 383-5.
2. Ibid.,
3. Ibid., II, pp. 386-7
5. Ibid., II, pp. 387-90. But then Sayed Achhan resumed the struggle with the support of the British who finally emerged as the real master of the port.
Bharuch and Surat had been occupied by the Marathas. Thus the city was isolated from the rest of the Mughal Empire. Therefore, the developments at Surat went unchecked though not un-noticed. Under such circumstances it was the turn of adventurers who might take risks and make their fortunes by the dint of intrigue and sword. Tegh Beg Khan at the instance of the trader and Syed Achhan at the instance of Nizam-ul mulk, turned ones such, carved out a principality out of Mughal empire and listed themselves among the Nawabs.

E  Nawabi of Bharuch

By an expedient use of sheer diplomacy Abdullah Beg, the faujdar-amin of pargana Bharuch succeeded in establishing his personal rule and in carving out a principality. The process of emergence of the Nawabi at Bharuch furnishes an interesting instance of how a prudent and shrewd Mughal official could succeed in defying the authority by aligning

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1. Ibid., II, pp. 132, 239, 363-4, 521, V.G. Dighe, Peshwa Baji Rao I and Maratha Expansion, pp. 20-30; Bombay Gazetteer, IV, p. 109

2. Bharuch, a well known port-town, is situated in Southern Gujarat between Surat and Baroda. Situated on comparatively an easy route for Deccan, the town was strongly fortified. Its fort was known for its 'impregnanility and solidarity'. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, p. 445; Hamilton, New Act, I, p. 49; Munshi Abbas Ali Qissa-i Ghamgin, Baroda, 1975 couplet no. 74, p. S. Administratively, the town was sarkar and pargana head-quarter of the same name. The port was however the administrative concern of the port officer of Surat. But the sarkar and pargana were the administrative charge of the faujdar. Mirat-i Ahmadi, Supplement, p. 205.
himself with and placing himself under the political protec-
tion of another strong defiant, Nizam-ul mulk Asaf Jah of
Deccan.

Abdullah Beg was appointed faujdar and amin of pargana
Bharuch by subedar Mubariz-ul mulk at the recommendation of
his son, Khanzad Khan (1725).\(^1\) Prior to his appointment, the
pargana had been hit by the Marathas and their claim for
chauth accepted by Hamid Khan, and later on, renewed by
Mubariz-ul mulk himself.\(^2\) Subsequent to his appointment the
Marathas cut the land routes which connected Bharuch with
Surat, the seat of the Port-officer, and Ahmadabad, the seat
of provincial authority.\(^3\) Then, the Port-officers of Surat
came to be locked up in internecine wars with the qiledrs in

\(^1\) The pargana still formed part of jagir of Nizam-ul
mulk. Mubariz-ul mulk had encroached upon the khalsa
and jagir lands in the subah. The appointment of fauj-
dar to the sarkar was an imperial prerogative which too
had thus been usurped by the subedar. Mirat-i Ahmadi II,
p.91

\(^2\) Ibid., II, pp. 55, 89, English Documents please see
letters dated 23rd December 1772 which summarises the
developments concerning Bharuch, Mukhtasar Tarikh-i
Gujarat. f.65; Ahwal-i Gaekwad, f.10.

\(^3\) Thus the mutasaddi-designate of Surat, Mustafid Khan
(1726) could not go to Surat from Ahmadabad through
land route. He reached Khanbat (Cambay) and thence
reached Bharuch by sea route. Since he "had no boldness
to cross the river Narbada so opened communication with
Pilaji Gaekwad" and agreed to surrender chauth of Surat
for ensuring his safe arrival there. Mirat-i Ahmadi,
II, pp. 132. For Maratha occupation of Baroda (1727)
and Dabhol (1726-7), the towns situated between Ahmadabad
and Bharuch, Ibid., II, pp. 95-6,
addition to fighting defensive battles against the Marathas.\(^1\) Thus neither the subedar, nor the mutasaddi had an easy access and a free hand to take any effective interest in the affairs of Bharuch whose faujdar thus would act the way he deemed fit for himself.

With the assumption of subedari by Maharaja Abhay Singh and his successful march against the Marathas as far as Baroda, the situation seems to have taken an alarming turn for Abdullah Beg. The Beg like his master Mubariz-ul mulk, who had already been expelled from Ahmadabad, apprehended his own ouster from Bharuch by the new Nazim.\(^2\) In order to ensure his continuity in office and do away with the fear of expected action, the Beg "with foresight approached" Nizam-ul mulk Asaf Jah (technically still jagirdar of Bharuch), the strongest defiant of the empire. Asaf Jah granted him

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1. The struggle that went unabated, started in 1726. For details please see Nawabi of Surat, above.

2. Abdullah Beg had stood neutral in the battle that took place between Mubariz-ul mulk who resisted his ouster and Maharaja Abhay Singh. As such he managed his survival. But the Maharaja who had taken hold of the jagir and khalsa lands, could obviously occupy Bharuch as it was held by the Beg as faujdar under Mubariz-ul mulk. (Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 132). By occupying Baroda, the Raja had shown his ability to reach Bharuch also. Above all, the court had appointed one Saiyid Azmat as faujdar and he had come with the Raja to assume charge of office. Ibid., II, p. 133.
Having thus placed himself under Asaf Jah, the Beg and his descendants continued to hold Bharuch and there is, moreover, no evidence showing interference either by the imperial centre or the provincial authorities. Not that, Bharuch was considered as hereditary jagir of the successors of Asaf Jah.

The Marathas appear to have been the major disturbing factor for the Nawabs of Bharuch. Pilaji Gaekwad and later his son, Damaji Gaekwad, attacked and besieged Bharuch. In view of increased as also increasing Maratha pressure, Nizam-ul-mulk Asaf Jah intervened and agreed to surrender half of the revenues of the port and the pargana. Later on,


3. When the imperial court asked (1749-50) Nek Alam Khan to remit Rs. 10,000/- he answered that the pargana after the death of Asaf Jah belonged to Nasar Jang and his permission was necessary for the purpose. *Mirat-i Ahmadi*, II, p. 380-1.

4. *Qissa-i Ghamgin*, p. 6 couplet Nos. 96-7. These couplets also refer to the mawassis i.e. recalcitrants as having been fought by the Nawab.
Damaji was allowed 3/5th part of the revenues.\(^1\) It seems the

Nawab had made it a point to live in peace with the Marathas
even at the cost of open hostility with the Governor.\(^2\)

Nek Alam Khan II broke off his relationship with Nasar
Jang, son and successor of Nizam-ul mulk Asaf Jah also. When
Nasar Jang, instructed Nek Alam Khan II to remit his share
in the port revenues, he approached the imperial court for
the award of mansab (2000/500), Khitab of Nek Alam Khan and
sanad-i pargana, which he was accordingly granted. Thereaf-
ter he appropriated "the whole amount of revenue without
partnership" of Nasar Jang and the imperial court. He pre-
pared detailed accounts for equating expenditure with the
income, submitted with the office of Khalsa and
'prospered'.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Ahwal-i Gaekwad, f. 26, Tarikh-i Maratia dar Gujarat f.
4, Mukhtasar Tarikh-i Gujarat, f.65, English Documents,
dated 23rd December, 1772, Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 263-
4. For the Nizam's successful pursuation of the Marat-
has for non-intervention, Historical Selections from
Baroda State Records, I (1724-68), Baroda, 1934. pp. 3-
4, 90, 185-86.

\(^2\) Nek Alam Khan II "either through fear or at the in-
stance of" Maratha sardar came into open against su-
bedr-designate in 1743-44 Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, p.320.

\(^3\) Ibid., II, p. 399 Hadiqat-ul Hind, ff. 43-5 The Nawabi
after passing through a long drawn struggle over the
question of succession among the family members, was
finally captured by the British in 1772. Gazetteer of
India; Gujarat State, Bharuch, p. 70. The Nawabs, It
may be mentioned, continued to regard themselves in
theory, as the imperial servant and their possession as
part of khalsa land. Qissa-i Ghamgin, p.10 couplet Nos.
168, 174.
F. Nawab of Khanbat

The mutasaddi of Khanbat was another Mughal official of a port town to establish his personal authority and family rule over the place thus adding yet another nawabi to the chain of chieftaincies which were being carved out of the shattering Mughal Empire. A study of the process of conversion of the official position into a family rule significantly brings to light the way Momin Khan, founder of the nawabi, made the offices of mutasaddi and the Nazim instrumental for consolidating his hold over Khanbat.

Having been appointed the mutasaddi of Khanbat, and bakhshi and chronicler of the subah, Momin Khan reached

1. The port town of Khanbat, also called Cambay, situated at a distance of 32 Kuroh south of Ahmadabad, was also pargana head-quarter of Chorasi Khanbat. For administrative purposes the offices of mutasaddi of the port and faujdar of the pargana were combined into one. The official was sub-ordinate to the diwan-i subah, and appointed directly by the imperial court. The port town had a strong fortification around it and was easy to defend. JW Watson, (ed) Statistical Account of Bhaonagar, Rev. edn, 1883. p. 24. Account, ff 240a.

2. Momin Khan was son-in-law of Momin Khan Dehlami, the diwan of Gujarat (1725-27). His original name was Fidauddin Khan and was honoured with the title of Mirza Mohammad Najm-i Sani (1725) and Najmuddawlah Momin Khan Bahadur Dilawarjang in 1738. Commonly known as Momin Khan, he was the mutasaddi of Khanbat (1730-43) and subedar of Gujarat (1737-43) until his death(1743). Mirat-i Ahmadi, ii, pp. 87, 118, 195, 242, 271, Mukhtasar Tarikh-i Gujarat, f. 84. For further details, Kamaluddin Husain Rizvi Shirazi, Hasbanaama-i Khandan-i Momin Khan Sani Bahadur Wali-i Gujarat, Bombay, n. d. pp. 3-7, 29.
Ahmadabad (1730) with subedar-designate Maharaja Abhay Singh.\(^1\) The mutasaddi seems to have remained steadfast in his duties until the year 1734-35 when a definite cleavage developed between him and Ratan Singh Bhandari, then naib-subedar.\(^2\) From 1735 onward the Khan did not report for duty even though, he had been summoned by the naib-subedar.\(^3\)

1. *Mirat-i Ahmadi*, II, p. 118. It may be mentioned that Momin Khan’s services as petrolling faujdar of the environs of Ahmadabad had earlier been terminated by Sarbuland Khan. Momin Khan was, therefore, obliged to repair for the court. (*Ibid.*, II, p.110) Since Momin Khan also enjoyed some respect locally, his association with Maharaja Abhay Singh who was required to oust Sarbuland Khan from the subah is, evidently, meaningful. *Hasbnama-i Khandan-i Momin Khan* pp. 29-30, *Hadisqat-ul Hind*, ff. 33-4.


3. The author of the *Mirat* attributes the cause of Momin Khan's disobedience to the 'fraudent nature' of Bhandari: since Momin Khan "felt unsafe from his fraud" (*Oo chun kidrash itminan' n' dasht) therefore, he did not turn up. *Ibid.*, II, p.191. It must however be kept in mind that the author had himself suffered at the hands of Marwaris whom he hated whereas he happened to be a family friend of Momin Khan. See also *Ahwai-i Gaekwad*, f. 16.
*Naib-subedar* Ratan Singh Bhandari does not seem to have been bold and strong enough to take action against Momin Khan who commanded respect locally and enjoyed patronage of Amir-ul umrah, the strongman at the court. Determined however to expel the Khan from *pargana* Petlad which he held on *ijara*, Ratan Singh Bhandari persuaded Jawanmard Khan Babi to join his camp and assigned the *pargana* to Sher Khan Babi "who bore displeasure" with Momin Khan. With a firm resolution to expel Momin Khan from Petlad, the Bhandari directed Sher Khan Babi to march against him and himself started for extending moral and material support to the Babi.

Momin Khan who seems to have perceived the consequence of his act of defiance, in the meantime, strengthened his position. He undertook repairs of the fortress and made it 'strong enough' to face attacks. Then he avoided confrontation with the Marathas who were quite active in the surrounding areas. First, he 'entertained' Kanthaji in the vicinity of Khanbat. Since Kanthaji failed to assert

2. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 192-3. The *naib-subedar* terminated Momin Khan's *ijara* of Petlad before the expiry of the stipulated period. But Momin Khan refused to vacate it on one or the other pretext.
against Renkoji, another Maratha leader, the Khan allowed the latter to appoint naib for collection of chauth form the port. ¹ Soon after Ratan Singh Bhandari and Sher Khan Babi’s march, Momin Khan won over Renkoji’s support to use him as a shield against the inevitable threat which he thus avoided.²

To counteract Ratan Singh Bhandari’s moves further, Momin Khan approached his political patron, Amir-ul Umrāh and, at his instance, undertook to oust Bhandari from the office of subedar. In order to ensure success against Bhandari, he acquired Maratha support by surrendering half of the revenues of the subah. To retain Khanbat entirely for himself Momin Khan left pargana Viramgāon entirely with the Marathas in exchange for their share in the revenues of the port.³ With the appointment of Momin Khas as subedar and issuance of the farman long after he had entered into agreements with the Marathas, the imperial court thus put the

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¹ Ibid., pp. 185, 318, 398. The claim of chauth in the revenues of the port had been established as early as 1725. Danniel Innes to John Courtrey, Cambay, dated 6th April, 1725, and Danniel Innes to John Courtrey, Cambay, dated 29th September, 1725, English Documents, pp. 4 and 6

² Mirat-i Ahmadi, ii, pp. 193-4. Because of the Maratha’s presence there, the Bhandari could not march at Petlad. Mukhtasar Tarikh-i Gujarat f. 83.

³ Mirat-i Ahmadi, ii, pp. 198 200, 203, 206, 208, 212, 219-20, 318, Tarikh-i Maratha dar Gujarat f. 5; Ahwal-i Gaekwad, ff. 17-8, 22, 23, Mukhtasar Tarikh-i Gujarat, ff. 84, 86
Momin Khan utilised his position as subedar for furthering his interests at Khanbat. Sher Khan Babi held the port of Ghoga, a feudatory of Khanbat and still laid claim to the faujdarl of Pettad. Momin Khan expelled the Babi from Ghoga and 'gave in writing several villages' of Pettad to Renkoji, the Maratha chief, of his choice. He terminated services of the daroga-i bandar and in sheer violation of the Diwan's prerogative appointed, instead, a man of his own choice. Having effected administrative changes the Khan put the economy of the port in proper order.

Thus before his death (February 1743) Momin Khan had successfully consolidated his position in Khanbat. It goes to his credit that he did not come into confrontation with the imperial centre and simultaneously avoided hostilities with the Marathas whom he utilised to defend his position.


2. Large vessels directed for Khanbat were sent to unload at Ghoga whence the cargo was sent in small crafts to Khanbat. JW Watson, "Historical sketch of the town of Ghoga" *op.cit*, p. 263.


5. *Ibid*. Moreover, he did not remit any revenues of Khanbat to the court. *Account*, f. 18a.
against the subedar and then oust him from the office though at a big cost. Moreover, he made the port free of Maratha interference and established his sway over Ghoga.

After Momin Khan's death the port was held uninterrupted by his descendents, the imperial authority simply put the seal of approval on the succession to power. Though his successors were not disturbed by the imperial authority they however faced difficulties on other counts and failed to retain the entire inheritance intact.

The struggle for the subedar that ensued after the death of Momin Khan put his successor and the Marathas in opposite camps. Renkoji, a Maratha sardar exerted pressure on the mutasaddi with the design to capture Khanbat. Najam Khan, son-in-law and successor of Momin Khan yielded and "purchased Renkoji's friendship by allowing him half the revenues" of the port. During the post-1743 period, the mutasaddis faced Maratha forces on more than one occasion, each time defending the place successfully but yielding to pay dictated, or else bargained sums of money levied under


one or the other pretexts, to the invading sardars. The mutasaddis entrenched behind the strong fortifications could defend the port with relative ease but the land routes leading to and from the port passed through the open lands of the pargana Chowrasi Khanbat where the Marathas enjoyed predominant position.

Because of the surrender of chauth to the Marathas, imposition of a dakhla (entry) fee on the merchandise and exactions levied by them and, then, disturbed political condition affecting trading activities adversely and finally increased expenditure on the military establishments rendered the financial position of the mutasaddis so precarious that they could not come out of the vicious circle and continued to face difficulties.

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1. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, pp. 388, 418, 423-4, 449-50; Ahwal-i-Gaekwad f. 38, Precis Relating to the History and Affairs of the Nawabs of Bombay, Bombay, 1864, p.5 The levy so imposed is termed 'ghas-dana' (grass and grain). It was a military levy which could be exacted not only from the hostile territory but also from the territories included in the Maratha domain. It was imposed arbitrarily and exacted forcibly. "The fear of whole-sale plunder and destruction, and not the free consent motivated the payment of ghasdana tax." HB Vashishta, Land Revenue and Public Finance in Maratha Administration, Delhi 1975, pp 13-7


Having been confronted with financial difficulties the mutasaddis resorted to oppressive acts. Momin Khan's immediate successor captured the goods of silk merchants, imposed additional taxes on the town-dwellers and 'plundered' the merchants of Khanbat in May 1743. A few months later, the traders of the port were again forced to pay Rs. 100,000/-. Illegal extortions led to the desertion of the port by traders, who reached Borsad and Jamusr, thus reducing the income of the port. Some of the traders who had deserted the port early in 1744 developed strong suspicions against the mutusaddi and could agree to return only after some influential persons at the port became 'securities of Nizam (i.e. Najam) Khan's mild behaviour' towards the merchants. Thus Momin Khan's successors lost the faith and trust of the real masters of the source of their financial strength—the traders/tax-payers.

1. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, p. 286, English Documents, letter dated 22nd May 1743 states that 'the Nawab has begun to plunder the merchants giving an obligation by way of borrowing'. He extorted a sum of Rs. 1,50,000/- Ibid., letter dated 24th May 1743

2. Mirat-i Ahmadi, II, p. 318. ; English Documents, letter dated 16th September, 10th and 22nd October 1743 and 16th February 1744.


4. English Documents, dated 8th April 1744 and reply to it.