CHAPTER-III

Turmoil in Body Polity

A. Internal Rebellion and Feuds
B. Incursion of the Marathas
C. Anglo-Maratha Conflict and the British Occupation of Sambalpur
INTERNAL REBELLION AND FEUDS

The reign of Ajit Sing, the successor of Chhatra Sai, was one of internal feud and weak administration. The king was weak and indolent. He ruled the kingdom from 1725 to 1766 A.D. On the eve of his death in 1766 A.D, T. Motte sent by Lord Clive came to Sambalpur for negotiating with him for trade in diamond. His records clearly reveal the chaotic condition of Sambalpur towards the close of the reign of Ajit Sing\(^1\). The administration of the kingdom was completely under the influence of the ministers, especially Dakhin Ray, the Dewan who enjoyed considerable power and prominence. He did manage the administration according to his whims and had accumulated much wealth. When the Raja was warned by his queen Muktamani Devi to get rid of this powerful minister, Ajit Sing hatched a plot against Dakhin Ray. The Raja raised a party privately contemplating on Ray's assassination. Ajit Sing on the 16\(^{th}\) of June 1763 ordered the public hall to be cleared of all except Dakhin Ray on the pretence that the queen would pass through it on her way to a temple. The Dewan, not suspecting any violence, stayed there waiting for her when eight or ten ruffians, who had been concealed for the purpose, rushed out and cut him to pieces\(^2\).

Piloo Ray was the principal actor of this tragedy. One Kascree, who was an officer in charge of the royal household was jealous of him and advised Ajit Sing to keep the post of Dewan vacant for some time. His aim was to acquire power and wealth like Dakhin Ray taking advantage of the indolence of his master. Piloo Ray, however, could

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2 N. Senapati (ed.), op.cit., p.65.
smell the evil purpose and employed an assassin to murder him. After Kascree's assassination Piloo Ray became the Dewan and Ajit Sing soon came under his notorious influence. But the internal feud in his court did not end here. Akbar Ray, a relative of Kascree, wanted to take revenge upon Piloo Ray. He convinced the king of the wickedness of the Dewan and warned him not to be a puppet in his hands. Ajit Sing was so much impressed by Akbar Ray, that he privately directed him to murder Piloo Ray. It was on the 27th of August 1764 when all the important people of the town gathered in the public hall with the Raja on a festive occasion, Akbar despatched two or three ruffians after Piloo Ray and he was murdered while passing through a crowd1.

Soon after this, Akbar Ray was appointed as the Dewan of Sambalpur2. He surpassed all previous Dewans in cruelty and corruption and created a reign of terror. It was in the midst of such a chaotic situation that Ajit Sing died in May 1766. It was believed that he was poisoned by Akbar Ray, after his coming to throne. In his death-bed he cautioned his son and successor Abhaya Sing to get rid of Dewan, Akbar Ray.

Abhaya Sing became the king of Sambalpur (1766-78) at the age of sixteen. Reciprocal suspicion and resentment between him and Akbar developed into open hostility. Abhaya Sing appointed Krisna Barmullic as his Dewan and tried to suppress Akbar Ray by military forces. Akbar was prepared to meet such a situation as he himself also commanded some armed forces. He fortified himself also in his own house which was situated in the midst of the town. Consequently the whole town was divided into two hostile camps and at the time of this civil war Motte visited Sambalpur. He was an eye-witness to the

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1 R.C. Mullick, op.cit., p.181.
2 Ibid., p.182.
chaotic condition of the town. Motte was requested to help Abhaya Sing against Akbar but he did not like to be dragged into the civil war. Motte reports, “Matters came to a crisis on the 17th June at midnight, when Akbar having collected his people marched from his own house to the palace, secured the persons of the Raja and murdered everyone who opposed him. A massacre followed in the town, where three hundred dependents of Krisna Barmullic were put to death. I doubled my guards and kept all my people together. They were in the Raja’s service. Of the two Germans and two Frenchmen who were employed in taking care of his guns, the former two were killed in the palace, the latter two making their escape to me, were protected. Akbar Ray confined Krisna Barmullic in a dungeon, the entrance to which was by a trapdoor, where on Akbar always slept”.

The kingdom of Sambalpur was thus torn by dissension when Motte visited Sambalpur.

Akbar Ray, being free to act, had become all powerful. He imprisoned Abhaya Sing, killed a large number of Royalists who opposed him. Abhaya Sing apprehended that Akbar Ray might put an end to Chauhan rule. He, therefore, instructed his brother Jayanta Sing and Padman Sing to oust the Dewan by force, failing which at best one of them should go out of the kingdom to preserve the lineage. Accordingly, Jayanta Sing fled to Berar and he got himself enrolled in the Maratha regiment at Garhmandal.

**INCURSION OF THE MARATHA:**

The Maratha became the de-facto overlord of Orissa in 1751 when Nawab Aliwardi Khan of Bengal ceded the territory to the south

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1 P. Dubey, op.cit., Canto-III.
of Suvarnarekha river to them. Orissa, thereafter, formed a separate Subah and was ruled by the Maratha governors, appointed by the court of Nagpur. The Marathas, however, faced difficulties in managing the administration of Orissa Subah, which was cut off from the kingdom of Berar by the independent Chauhan territories of Sambalpur. The most common and convenient route from Nagpur to Cuttack was through the Mahanadi via Sambalpur and Sonepur. Before their occupation of Orissa, the Marathas were friendly with the Rajas of Sambalpur and it is known that Bhaskar Pundit, minister of Raghují Bhonsle, used to meet the Chauhan Raja Ajit Sing with presentations. In March 1745 Raghují himself passed through Sambalpur to Cuttack with an army of fourteen thousand horses without ravaging the kingdom of Sambalpur or being opposed by the Raja of this kingdom.

After 1751 the Maratha attitude towards Sambalpur underwent a change because of political reasons. But the Bhonsle, who was then deeply engaged in consolidating his position in Orissa where the Nawab of Bengal was still asserting his power, thought it wise not to take any hasty step against the Chauhan kingdom. In 1760, the dual Government in Orissa came to an end with the appointment of Seo Bhatt Sathe as the Maratha Governor, and the demoralised politics of Sambalpur offered the Marathas an opportunity to invade the kingdom. From the account of Motte it is known that in 1766, the Maratha General Bahukhan being sent by Januji Bhonsle of Nagpur, encamped near Sambalpur in his march towards Cuttack to assist Bhawani Pundit. He demanded forage and money of the Raja and getting no reply from

2 Sonepur was a feudatory of Orissa under the Chauhans.
4 S.P. Das, op. cit., p. 271.
5 T. Motte, op. cit., p. 52.
him, attempted to attack the town. This was the first recorded encounter of the Marathas with the Chauhan ruler of Sambalpur. It ended in a fiasco.

Akbar Ray, the defecto ruler of Sambalpur, had no friendly relation with the Marathas. The communication between Nagpur and Cuttack, became, therefore, precarious. On one occasion when the Marathas were transporting some guns from Nagpur to Cuttack through the Mahanadi, Akbar, with a view to strengthening the fort of Sambalpur with these, ordered his men to attack them as a result of which the guns were sunk in the river and the artillery-men were drowned. Akbar recovered eight of the guns and mounted them on the fort. The Raja of Nagpur tried to take revenge but the army sent by him was repulsed, by Akbar Ray1. From that day the Marathas were seeking an opportunity to attack Sambalpur which they did not get so long as Akbar was in power.

Akbar Ray, let loose a reign of terror in the kingdom. The widow of Ajit Sing was found to have been involved in a plot against Akbar and he murdered her in cold blood2. On getting this shocking news in the prison, Abhaya Sing died of heart failure in 1778. He had no son to succeed him and his brother Jayanta Sing, who was the rightful claimant to the throne, was away from the capital. Akbar put the crown on the head of a small boy of six, Balabhadra Sai, who was a distant collateral of the Chauhan family and in his name governed the kingdom3.

Viswanath Sai, Chief of Sarangarh, with a number of chiefs of Chhattisgarh, rose to the occasion. He sent words to Jayanta Sing at

1 R.C. Mullick, op.cit, p.192.
3 N. Senapati (ed.), op.cit., p.66.
Garhmandal to proceed to Sambalpur and assured him all possible help. Jayanta Sing, at once, acted accordingly. Sobha Sing, the Chief of Sonepur had two-fold dealings with the situation. Getting the news of Jayanta’s advance, he rushed to Sambalpur, and at the same time sent words to the Maratha General Chimnaji Bapu to invade the fortified township by taking advantage of this troubled water. He assured the Marathas that he would secretly help them by opening the gates of Sambalpur, if as a reward of this, he would be made the ruler of that kingdom.

During the time a powerful army headed by Chimnaji, a younger son of Madhuji Bhonsle, was stationed at Orissa. Chimnaji had been despatched to Orissa to attack the British in Bengal according to the plan of the coalition that had been formed with the Peswa of Poona, the Bhonsle of Nagpur, Hyder Ali of Mysore and the Nizam of Hyderabad. Madhuji Bhonsle in his diplomatic dealing, professed perfect friendship with the allies, but at the same time he informed the British about the secret alliance. Acting upon the plan, he assembled an army of about 35,000 cavalry and secretly instructed his second son Chimnaji, whom he appointed the commander, to march towards Orissa. During this expedition Chimnaji attacked Dhenkanal and defeated its Raja Trilochan Mahendra Bahadur after a protracted battle for 20 days. In the meantime, the British Governor-General Warren Hastings despatched David Anderson to Cuttack to contact Chimnaji and to win him away from the coalition through diplomatic

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1 P. Dubey, op.cit., Canto-VI.
2 Ibid.
4 Brajanath Badajena, *Samara Taranga*, Oriya, (Dhenkanal, 1964), Canto-VI.
manoeuvre. Anderson reached Cuttack on the 28th of January 1781. Chimnaji by that time had marched towards Dhenkanal. The British Ambassador, therefore, handed over the letters of the Governor-General to the Dewan of Chimnaji and left for Calcutta. When Chimnaji returned from Dhenkanal, negotiations were resumed. After a prolonged talk both the parties reached a preliminary agreement by which Hastings paid 13 lakh rupees to Chimnaji and advanced a loan of 10 lakh in exchange of which the latter had to quit Orissa as soon as possible.

On his way back Chimnaji was invited by the Raja of Sonepur to interfere in the affairs of Sambalpur. Chimnaji led his army against Sambalpur. The simultaneous appearance of the army of Jayanta Sing and that of Chimnaji on the two sides of the town frightened Akbar. He at once called a meeting of important persons and generals who advised him to offer the throne to Jayanta Sing. The Raja of Sonepur who pretended to be a faithful friend of both Jayanta and Akbar was made the mediator. Soon the compromise was effected and Jayanta Sing entered the palace with triumph. The reconciliation of Jayanta and Akbar frustrated the plan of Chimnaji. He did not want to take the risk and retreated to Nagpur showering blame on the Raja of Sonepur. After this, coronation of Jayanta Sing was celebrated in Vikram Sambat 1838 corresponding to June 1781 A.D.

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2 Bengal Secret and Military Consultation, 29th March, 1781, (OSA).
3 P.Dubey, op.cit., Canto-VI.
4 Ibid.
Chimnaji retreated, Akbar was put to death and the wickedness of the Raja of Sonepur was exposed. The latter, however, submitted on his own accord and he was pardoned\(^1\).

The rule of Jayanta Sing was, however, not peaceful and by that time Sambalpur had become a great enemy of the Marathas owing to the past activities of Akbar Ray. The recent frustration of Chimnaji rather enhanced the cause of enmity. Akbar, the strong bullwork against the Marathas being removed, the Raja of Nagpur was bent upon bringing Sambalpur under his control. The Marathas harrassed Raja Jayanta Sing by plundering his kingdom from time to time. Jayanta Sing, however, was willing to purchase peace and in 1794 agreed to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 32,000/- in cutcha coins which was equivalent to 16,000 sicca coins\(^2\). This arrangement prevailed till the year 1800 A.D when the fort of Sambalpur was finally occupied by the Marathas\(^3\).

In 1799 Vincaji Bhonsle, the youngest brother of Raghuji II, the king of Nagpur, was passing through Sambalpur on pilgrimage to Puri. Govinda Mohan Sing, the Dewan did not come to greet him. He was also not properly received by the Raja of Baud and Sonepur. On reaching Cuttack he despatched an army under Bhup Sing to chastise the Rajas. After a severe war Bhup Sing succeeded in taking the Raja of Baud Chandra Sekhar Bhanj and the Raja of Sonepur Prithvi Sing Dev as prisoners. He then encamped at Sonepur for the rainy season giving time to Jayanta Sing for preparation. As soon as the rains were over, Bhup Sing appeared at the gate of Sambalpur. He be-seiged the fort continuously for five months without being able to effect an entrance. But by chance, one of his officers named Chindaji discovered

\(^1\) Ibid.
\(^2\) Ibid., p.56.
\(^3\) Ibid.
that the moat near Samalai gate was fordable. Chindaji, while straying "with two rocket-men in the forest of bamboo lanes which surrounded the fort and coming unexpectedly upon it, carelessly guarded and remarked that the wall had fallen into the ditch in one place. He eventually, threw a rocket into the fort by which the thatched building, and its contents, were suddenly set on fire. Observing that the garrison was busy in endeavouring to extinguish the fire, without suspecting the occasion of it, Chindaji sent for troops from the camp, who arrived in time to take the fort by surprise". Sambalpur was, thus occupied by the Marathas in April 1800 A.D\(^1\). Raja Jayanta Sing and his son Maharaja Sai were captured at Debrigarh while they were running away to save their lives\(^2\). They, along with the king of Baud and Sonepur were sent to Chanda as captives. Bhupa Sing remained at Sambalpur to administer the country on behalf of the Maratha Government of Nagpur.

The occupation of Sambalpur immensely increased the strength of the Marathas as it connected the different parts of their dominion which were in a manner cut off from each other while an almost independent chief occupied an intermediate extensive tract of the country. The occurrence was, therefore, deemed of sufficient magnitude and it was announced with a salute, fired from the part of artillery. On the other hand, it startled the British in their attempt to build up an empire in India. Colebrooke, Resident of Nagpur, lost no time to inform the matter to the Governor General\(^3\).

Bhup Sing after occupying Sambalpur could realise that the tributary chiefs and the people of Sambalpur were not prepared to

\(^1\) C.U. Wills, *British Relation with Nagpur State*, pp.150-151.
\(^3\) NRR, vol.I, letter No.1 dated nil., April 1800 from Colebroke to Marshington, p.34.
accept the Maratha rule without opposition. A sense of indignation prevailed upon the people who were determined to resist the Marathas to the last. Rani Ratna Kumari came to the forefront and firmly rebelled against the Marathas. She became the leader of the people during the crisis. Bhup Sing could foresee that he had to be involved in a long-drawn war which he intended to avoid because he had quite a good number of enemies in the Bhonsle court at Nagpur. Being very cunning, he had a compromise with the Rani and accordingly assumed the office of the Governor of Sambalpur.

Bhup Sing, the new Maratha Governor of Sambalpur soon formed an alliance with the Rani and disregarded the orders and warnings of Bhonsle. On being called to Nagpur to account for his conduct he refused to comply with the summons. The Nagpur Raja then sent a large force to punish his contumacy, but Bhup Sing surprised the Marathas in an ambuscade at the Singhora pass which connected the Gandhamardhan-Barapahar ranges and routed them. This was a temporary success. While coming back to Sambalpur after this success, Bhup Sing foolishly plundered the village Garvana and provoked the anger and enmity of Chamra Gountia of that village. Shortly afterwards, when the second Maratha army was sent against Sambalpur, Chamra Gauntia hid them in pass and sent news to Bhup Sing that the area was infested with Maratha soldiers. When Bhup Sing arrived at the pass, the Marathas in ambush fell upon his force and almost annihilated it. Bhup Sing, however escaped death and fled to Kolabira with the two

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1 Ratna Kumari, a princes from Bamanda was the Chief Queen of Jayanta Sing.
Ranis of Jayanta Sing. After he joined the British regiment and helped the English to win Sambalpur from the Marathas.

Thus Sambalpur was occupied by the Marathas for the second time in 1802 and Tantia Phernavis was appointed as the Governor of Sambalpur. But this victory, because of the second Maratha war, was of a short duration.

**ANGLO-MARATHA CONFLICT AND THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF SAMBALPUR:**

The British declared war against the Marathas on the 7th of August 1803. Orissa, being under the Raja of Berar, naturally became involved in the war.

Arrangements were made to attack Orissa from three sides. Capt. Morgan was to occupy Balasore. Lt. Col. Ferguson was advancing to Cuttack from Jaleswar and Capt. Dick with five hundred Bengal native volunteers was to reinforce the troops at Ganjam.

On the 24th of September 1803, the British troops proceeded towards Cuttack and reached on the 10th of October 1803. On the way, the advanced troops of Col. Harcourt’s division were frequently engaged with parties of the enemy’s troops, who were always repulsed with loss.

According to Harcourt’s report to the Governor General of dated 15th of October 1803, a 12 pounder battery together with two howitzers and two 6 pounders was set up at a distance of 500 metres from the outer gate of the fort on the 13th of September. Bombardment was

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started on the morning of the 14th of September. By 11 O'clock the Southern part of the Fort was destroyed. Thereupon Lt.Col. Clayton was ordered to advance with one 6 pounder, a party of artillery men and 200 Europeans. The party had to pass over a narrow bridge and were subjected to heavy fire. At last the gate was forced open and the party had to enter singly in the face of considerable resistance. They also succeeded in forcing the way through the other two gates, thus the fort was captured. Thus the thorough preparation of the English to conquer Orissa bore the desired fruit.

**British Attitude Towards Sambalpur:**

After the conquest of Orissa, the English wanted complete annihilation of the Maratha power. After the fall of Tipu in 1799, the only rival left in the field were the Marathas. Orissa was conquered by the English without much resistance by the enemy. In fact, the Marathas made only a show of resistance. No where it was serious enough to be considered a real challenge. So, after the fall of Cuttack, the East India Company turned its attention towards Sambalpur, the seat of the Marathas in Orissa. It was regarded as desirable and convenient by the Company's agents to acquire the entire hinterland to the province of Cuttack comprising the feudatory States, of Orissa and Chhattisgarh. It would provide, they pleaded, an additional barrier for the Cuttack province. Among all the feudatory states Sambalpur was the chief. Therefore, the conquest of Sambalpur was considered to be a necessity by the British.

Sambalpur, from the political point of view, was of much importance. On the 24th of March 1804, George Harcourt, Commissioner of Affairs for Cuttack, wrote to the Resident of Nagapur

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that it was desirable for them to retain Sambalpur on all political grounds to connect the frontier possession of Birbhum and Bihar. Moreover, Sambalpur being a crucial strategic point, the English never wanted to part with it. Being the centre of Cuttack and Ranchi in two directions and Bundelkhand and Bhonsle in the west, it was easier for the English to operate from here at the time of war. Sambalpur, once occupied, could be converted into an army camp in order to have army link with Nagpur, Ranchi and Cuttack.

Sambalpur was the principal fortress with its important tributaries like Baud and Sonepur to comprise the extensive tract of country between Chhattisgarh (Ratanpur) and Cuttack. The reduction of this strong fortress would enable the English to have a free hand in the field of trade and commerce. Sonepur and Baud, in particular, would be very important possessions as these two would strengthen the security of Cuttack and also afford facility to the commerce of the province. Further, by the possession of Baud and Sonepur, the English would be in a position to hold all the navigable part of the Mahanadi and the cotton goods of Chhattisgarh would find way readily to Cuttack, whereas, if the districts of Sonepur and Baud were retained by the king of Berar, the vexatious and oppressive taxes and exactions that were permitted under the government would materially check, if not wholly prevent, the transit of that commodity through the district. It was also apprehended, should Baud and Sonepur belong to the Raja of Berar, no effectual restraints could be imposed to prevent silk being smuggled from this province, also by which a considerable loss would arise to the British Government. More or less, through the district of Sambalpur moved all the roads which led to the passes northward of

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those in Cuttack as well as to the principal pass leading into the
tributary district of Mayurbhanj.

It was this consideration that the British had in their mind while
inducing the district of Sambalpur to remain under the British
authority.

Conflict with the Marathas and Consequent
Occupation of Sambalpur:

George Harcourt, the Commander of the British troops in Orissa
and John Milvelle, the Commissioner for the affairs of Cuttack were in
charge of Cuttack, which had formed a separate Subah. They at once
took a diplomatic step to conquer Sambalpur, Baud and Sonepur. With
that end in view, they wrote to the Raja of these territories persuading
them to enter into an alliance with the Company in order to establish
friendship. The alliance could be effected on payment of five gold
mohurs annually as a gesture of courtesy and as a result of which they
would desist from paying the tribute or any dues to the Marathas and
enjoy the protection of the Company. To execute the plan they enclosed
with the letter two contracts, one in the name of the Company which
they had signed and another from the Rajas to the Company which the
willing Rajas were to sign.

The Rajas being political prisoners at Chanda during the period,
the agreement was signed by Rani Ratna Kumari of Sambalpur. Rani
Laxmi Priya of Sonepur and Jagdiswar Rao, a relative of the Raja of

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2 NRR, vol.1, p.35, Letter No. 2 dated 13.12.1803 from the Commissioner,
for the affairs of the Subah of Anderi, Cuttack to the Rajas of
Sambalpur, Sonepur and Baud.
Baud. The parties entered into the agreement with the following articles:

a. We engage to receive five gold mohurs annually as a wish of courtesy.

b. It is well-known that the Honourable Company be friend and support, on all occasions, those princes that form an alliance, with them and those who are in friendship with them retain suitable returns. If the said Raja will continue on his part to maintain the friendship required of him, nothing shall be wanting on the part of the Honourable Company to repay such friendship in the most minute manner also.

After this, Major Broughton, in spite of the opposition of the Marathas, occupied the Sambalpur Fort with the help of Rani Ratna Kumari and Bhup Sing on the 2nd of January 1804 and the Maratha Governor Taki Farnavis withdrew to Nagpur.

Meanwhile, the Treaty of Deogaon was signed between the Bhonsle and the British Company on the 17th of December 1803. After the treaty of Deogaon, the dominion of Raghuji shrank very much in extent by the cession he had to make. He had to cede Berar and Orissa and his dominions were practically surrounded by those of the Company and their ally, the Nizam. By the second article of the treaty of Deogaon, Raghuji ceded "in perpetual sovereignty the province of Cuttack including the port and Balasore district" to the Company. But it was regarded as desirable and convenient by the Company's agent to

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1 Ibid., p.38.
3 C.U. Wills, op.cit., p.185.
acquire the entire hinterland to the province of Cuttack comprising the feudatory states of Orissa and Chhattisgarh. It would provide, they pleaded, an additional barrier for the Cuttack province and connect the Northern Sarakars with Bundelkhand. This region comprised certain states which were within the province of Cuttack and therefore, were under the direct rule of the Marathas and certain others which were outside the territorial limits of the Cuttack province, but paid, when required, some tribute to the Marathas. In the first category were the Rajas of Khurda, Angul, Hindol, Dhenkanal and in the second category the Rajas of Baud, Ramgarh, Sonepur and Sambalpur. Apart from these, the Rajas of Bonai, Bamra and Keonjhar were regarded as independent. Those States which were under the jurisdiction of the Cuttack province came under the British as a result of the cession of that province according to the second article of the treaty of Deogaon. Those states that were out-side the Cuttack province or independent of the Marathas had either solicited or were induced to solicit British protection on favourable term. Engagement had been concluded with them even before the treaty of Deogaon and these were covered by the tenth article of the treaty. It was with great reluctance that Raghuji accepted this article of the treaty and that, under a threat of a renewal of hostilities.

This, however, reached Cuttack on the 14th of January, 1804 and Sambalpur still later. Broughton wrote to the Chief Secretary to the Government that on no account the territories conquered by him should be made over to the Raja. He described the tyranny and treachery of the Marathas in Sambalpur and the sorrows and sufferings of the

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2 Ibid, p.38.
3 Ibid.
people for them. "On the whole", he wrote, "I feel it to be my duty most explicit to submit it on my opinion to the consideration of His Excellency in Council that a restoration of the districts of Sambalpur and Patna to the Raja of Berar will be productive of renewal of all ancient grievances to their inhabitants."

The British Government in the Fort William on receiving the letter of Broughton regarding his engagement with the rulers of Sambalpur tract decided to take strong attitude for annexing these territories. They paid no heed to the complaint of the Raja of Berar regarding the occupation of Sambalpur, and that of Keshav Govind who demanded that the disloyal persons and "Seditious Zamindars", for example, Bhup Sing, Sadasee Beydar (Sadasiv Bohidar) and the Rani should be delivered on to him for punishment. The Resident at Nagpur, on the other hand, was directed to convey to the Raja of Berar that the British Government had no interest in establishing its authority over Sambalpur and would gladly restore the territories to the Raja of Berar provided the Chieftains and Zamindars agreed to release the Government from the obligation by which its faith had been pledged to protect them.

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1 NRR, vol.I, p.52, Letter dated 18\(^{th}\) February, 1804 from E.S. Broughton to J.Lumsden, Chief Secretary to Government.


4 NRR, vol.I, letter No.5, dated 4.3.1804 from Secretary to Government to Elphinstone Resident at Nagpur, p.53.
On the 24th of March 1804, George Harcourt, Commissioner for affairs for Cuttack, wrote to the Resident at Nagpur that it was desirable for them to retain Sambalpur on all political grounds to connect the frontier possession of Birbhum and Bihar1 with Sambalpur. Two days later, on the 26th of March, Col. Broughton informed the Rani and Principal Zamindar of Sambalpur that, an agreement had been signed between the English Government and the court of Berar as a result of which these Chiefs would either voluntarily return to the authority of the dominions of Nagpur or they would have to pay the British Government the revenue which they were paying to Raghaji Bhonsle2. The Rani and Zamindars refused to return to the Maratha authority and informed that they were “submissively willing to pay without excuse or irregularity” any sum, the Government would fix upon them3. In a reply to the letter of Broughton dated 26th of March 1804, Rani Ratna Kumari of Sambalpur with other principal Zamindars stated that they had already been reduced to the greatest distress by the Maratha Government and would like to be in the protection of the British authority. They further stated that their family, honour, and property had received much injury during the reign of the Marathas and they wished from their very soul to remain under the British Government. They also agreed that they would pay whatever sum the British Government would fix taking the produce and ability of the state into consideration. At last a request was made to have an arrangement for permanent protection of the British Government. The letter was signed by:

1 Ibid.
2 NRR, p.57, Translation of the letter by Broughton to the Rani and Principal Zamindar of Sambalpur.
3 Ibid, p.58, letter from the Rani and Principal Zamindar of Sambalpur to Broughton, dated 26th March, 1804.
This voluntary submission to the British Government strengthened the hands of Wellesley. Being influenced by the Resident of Nagpur, the Commissioner of Cuttack and Col. Broughton, the Governor General Lord Wellesley gave his final verdict. In a letter dated 18th of May 1804, he directed the Resident of Nagpur to inform Raghuji Bhonsle that the Rajas of Sambalpur, Patna, Sonepur etc. had been taken under the British protection which the Bhonsle had to recognise and ratify formally as a part of the 10th article of the Treaty of Deogaon, failing which war would be renewed against him. In conformity with the determination, the Rani of Sambalpur, the Raja of Patna and others who had been placed under the British protection by the operation of the 10th article of the Treaty of Deogaon were now considered to be the subjects of the British Government and their territories were annexed to the British Government. This arrangement was adopted with a view to enable the British Government to discharge with greater efficacy the obligation of protecting the persons and territories from the authority of the Maratha Government and also in

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid, pp.58-60.
3 Ibid, p.62.
the confidence of experiencing from these persons a course of conduct consistent with the relation with which they stood towards the British Government.

Col. Broughton was directed to station a force with the least practicable delay at Sambalpur both for the protection of that province and of Patna against the reported design of the officers of the Raja of Berar in Ratanpur and for the better security of the frontier of Cuttack in the possible event of renewal of hostilities with the Raja of Berar¹.

With a view to accomplishing the object without disturbing the arrangements for the defence of the Western frontier and for the preservation of internal tranquillity, the 20th Regiment of Sepoys consisting of 590 rank and file and commanded by Lt. Col. Mclean was ordered to march with utmost expedition for the purpose of reinforcing the troops under the command of Lt. Col. Broughton and that regiment accordingly commenced its march. Next batch of force including 194 volunteers of rank and file and force of artillery of two six pounder, one lieutenant, one Sergent, one Corporal and 10 private Lascars etc. marched on the 18th of November 1804².

In July 1805, Lord Wellesley left India and was succeeded by Lord Cornwallis who became the Governor General for the second term. Lord Cornwallis pursued a policy of peace and non-intervention under the direction of the Home Government. Anxious to adhere to the non-intervention policy and to placate the Bhonsle he decided upon "restoring eventually to the Raja of Berar the districts of Sambalpur and Patna without compromising public faith" of the Company's Government. He thought the public faith of the Company would not be

² Ibid, letter No.11 from the Secretary to Government to the Resident at Nagpur dated, 23rd November 1804.
compromised if they were given adequate compensation for the loss of their territory and dignity in case they refused to remain under the Maratha Government. "The engagements having been contracted with the Chief and Zamindars personally, and extending", he thought, "no further on our part than to preclude us from placing them under the dominion of the Marathas without their consent, it may be a question whether we are not at liberty, which they occupy to the Maratha Government even without the consent of those Chiefs and Zamindars, provided we offer them a reasonable compensation and afford them in their own persons the stipulated protection."

Capt. Roughsedge commanding the Ramgarh Battalion was directed to discuss measures for transferring Sambalpur and Patna territories to the Bhonsle and was asked to give his opinion as to the proper manner of effecting it and as to the reactions, the measure was likely to produce. In reply to this proposal, Roughsedge suggested that the measure would be presented by the Zamindars, hence affected thereby. Besides, they were to be assigned Jagirs elsewhere so that their numerous followers and dependents would find a means of livelihood. For this purpose he suggested that they might be assigned jagirs in the Khurda district of the Cuttack province or in Chhota Nagpur.

Roughsedge was deputed to Sambalpur to open negotiation with the Rani and Zamindars and he arrived there on the 15th of January 1806. The apprehensions and distress, as well as, surprise of the Rani and her confidential servants became extreme, and the consequence

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2 *Ibid.*, pp.66-68
4 C.U.Wills, op.cit., p.337.
was a less reluctant acquiescence to the wishes of the Government. The assurance given to the Rani was of a liberal provision for herself and her dependents either of a pecuniary or a territorial nature. The condition of liberating her husband and son soon after the restoration of Sambalpur to the Raja of Berar had a considerable effect in alleviating her distress and the Rani had her consent.

It appeared from Col. Harcourt's despatches to Lt. Col. Broughton that little or no communication existed between the constituted authority in Cuttack and the Raja of Baud. The Raja also had little attachment to the British interest. So it was required in order to retain the Raja's country, to station a detachment above the pass which led to Cuttack. But such a measure seemed almost impossible due to the extreme insalubrity of the climate. The British Government also could foresee some inconvenience if the district of Baud was to be retained. The long dispute between the inhabitants of Baud, Sonepur and adjacent paraganas were likely to produce mutual incursions and injuries. On these grounds the district of Baud was also included in the proposed cession to the Raja of Berar. Regarding the feelings of other Zamindars, Roughsedge wrote as follows:

"The sorrows and consternation with which they listened to my proposition was extreme and after bewailing their unfortunate destiny in every affecting term, they for some time, seemed inclined to remain on their tenures, endeared to them by an uninterrupted possession of many centuries, at all hazards, though firmly persuaded of the inevitable destitution the proposed transfer would expose them to".

1 NRR, vol.1, p.69, Letter No.16 dated, 23.2.1806 from Roughsedge to the Secretary to Government.
The negotiation for transfer opened by Roughsedge was most stubbornly opposed by Jaujar Singh, the Raja of Raigarh\textsuperscript{1}. He was determined to defend his country against the Marathas. His aversion to quit his native country was not more insurmountable than his reluctance voluntarily to return under the Maratha authority and the combination of these sentiments apparently drew to the wild and desperate resolution of attempting to defend his country in conjunction with all who might be similarly disposed against any attempts of the troops of the Raja of Berar to regain possession. Roughsedge also feared that Jaujar Sing who had a great influence in Sambalpur, would attack the Rani as the latter had agreed to the proposal\textsuperscript{2}. He took precaution against a possible attack and suggested that the transfer would be effected excepting Raigarh\textsuperscript{3}.

Finally, the conditions of engagement between the British and Bhonsle according to which the transfer was to be effected were outlined. According to it Raja Jaujar Sing would be excluded from transfer unless he should ultimately consent to accept a provision with the Company's territory. All the Zamindars with whom engagements were contracted, excepting Jaujar Sing, gave their consent to relinquish their tenure and to accept a provision within the Company's territory. Lastly, it was the condition that Jaujar Sing must not be molested\textsuperscript{4}.

The agreement with the Raja of Berar was done according to the following form:

i. "Declaring that with a view to compensate in some degree to the Raja for the loss which he sustained in war, the British

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid., pp.73-76.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., pp.77-81.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p.82.
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid.
Government has employed its endeavours to persuade all Zamindars of Sambalpur and Patna and their dependencies with whom engagements were contracted to accept a provision within Company's territory, for the express purpose of transferring the provinces to the dominion of the Raja of Berar, without a violation of public faith, and that by this arrangement the British Government has acquired a right to transfer and does accordingly, to the Raja of Berar, the district communicated in a separate schedule.

ii. That the Zamindari of Raja Jaujar Sing being expected from the transfer, the Raja Jaujar Sing shall on no account be molested in the possession of his territory by the Raja's officer, and that they shall not in any manner interfere with his possessions or in his concern, that they shall exact no tribute or revenue from his territory nor exercise any authority over him and that his territory shall be considered as the territory of the Honourable Company.

iii. That the husband and son of the Rani of Sambalpur be released from confinement and permitted to join their wife and mother, the British Government engaging that they shall never return into the province of Sambalpur or excite disturbance in the Raja's territory.

The agreement was finally signed and the plan was executed on the 24th of August 1806. Keshav Govind, Subadar of Ratanpur, came to occupy Sambalpur on behalf of the Bhonsle. All the Zamindars with whom he had communicated, expressed themselves entirely willing to

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1 Ibid., 80, letter No.22, dated 15.5.1806 from Edmondstone to M. Elphinstone.
submit but he was opposed by the Chieftains under the leadership of Jaujar Sing of Raigarh and Bharat Bariha of Borasambar.

By that time the Bhonsle was engaged in putting down the Pindaris in his territories, and therefore, was unable to send any large force to Sambalpur. His minister Yasovant Rao Ramchandra solicited the assistance of the British Government, but the latter did not desire intervention. The Bhonsle demanded that Jaujar Sing whose influence had entirely prevented the peaceful occupation of Sambalpur would no longer be allowed to British protection. The British Government took it as vague accusation. R. Jenkins, the then Resident at Nagpur reported to the Governor General the substance of his conference about the complicity of Jaujar Sing in instigating hostility of the Rani of Sambalpur against Nana Saheb's attempt to take possession of these tracts. He stated that the very conduct of Jaujar Sing whose influence was supreme in Sambalpur prevented the success of Nana Saheb's negotiation for the peaceful occupation of Sambalpur. Before sending a troop Nana Saheb intended to know the attitude of the British Government about the conduct of Jaujar Sing. According to the agreement by which the provinces of Sambalpur and Patna were restored to the Raja, it was agreed that if Jaujar Sing should be intrigued or otherwise, instigated the Zamindars to opposition, the British Government would no longer consider that chief to be entitled to its protection, and that, the Raja might in his case adopt whatever measures he thought proper towards Jaujar Sing.

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1 Ibid., pp.88-89.
2 J.T. Wheeler, op.cit., p.93.
3 Ibid., pp.88-89.
R. Jenkins further told Yasovant Rao that he had perfect recollection of the communication which had been made to Elphinstone. This communication with relation to Jaujar Sing stated only in general terms that the Zamindars had formed a confederacy of which Jaujar of Raigarh was the real head, but no other circumstance which were alleged to substantiate the charge, and consequently he did not see, with what regard to justice, so vague an accusation could be deemed conclusive against Jaujar Sing or that Government had been called upon to pass any decision where no troops were brought forward to constitute ground even for an enquiry.  

The Marathas also disregarded the agreement by not releasing Raja Jayanta Sing and his son from the captivity at Chanda.

The Maratha authority at Nagpur did not think it proper to use force under the circumstances and decided to proceed through negotiation and Janoji Bunsor was sent to Sambalpur. The Rani submitted to receive a small party of about 25 men with Janoji Bunsor, who stationed in her country, although she would not receive them in the fort. Negotiations continued for three months. Meanwhile, the Marathas remained encamped at Sauri Narayan on the bank of the Mahanadi.

The Rani had the demand that she was to be left solely in the management of Athargarh of which she would engage to collect and pay annual tributes to the Maratha officer appointed to remain at Sambalpur. But the release of her husband and son formed the only term upon which she would consent on giving up the fort. She threatened, that inspite of this, if she would be attacked by the

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2 Ibid., p.60.
Marathas, she would defend herself to the last and would cause disaster by taking shelter in the mount and forest.

Lastly when the force failed and negotiation did not succeed, the troops of Nana Saheb under Ramachandra Wagh occupied the fort of Sambalpur by an act of most deliberate treachery in November 1803. To achieve this, the Sardars of Nana Saheb, a few hours before the attack of the fort had “entered into a specific agreement with the Rani, in which the sum to be paid in arrears and the future amount of revenue claimable from her were determined and the stipulations of both the parties were confirmed by oaths of most-binding nature administered in a Hindu temple within the fort regarded as peculiarly sacred”. Having thus lulled her suspicion, the Marathas on the following morning suddenly attacked the fort. After some resistance, the Rani was not only defeated, but prevented from regaining the fort. The disaster deprived the Rani of all hopes of maintaining her position, and she escaped at mid-night. She took the route to Chhota Nagpur and after much fatigue and privation succeeded in gaining a retreat offered by a faithful Zamindar among the hills which form the boundary of that district with the purgana of Jespore and Ganjpur.

Lastly amidst destitute situation the Rani had sought the British protection. She was given protection and a pension of six hundred rupees per month to support her dignity. When the Bhonsle demanded the surrender of the Rani, the British Government resisted it and insisted on the release of Raja Jayanta Sing and his son Maharaja Sai.

1 \textit{Ibid.}

2 \textit{Ibid., p.76.}


5 \textit{Ibid., p.81.}
In the absence of her husband and son, Ratna Kumari was the de-facto ruler of Sambalpur. It was she who gave leadership to the people of Sambalpur against the Marathas. Therefore, when she left Sambalpur in distress and disappointment, the resistance against the Maratha died. The Marathas, after the Rani escaped, occupied the fort of Sambalpur and became the sole master. About eight years after this event, the Rani died on a pilgrimage to Kasi.

The withdrawal of the British protection caused great distress to all classes of the inhabitants and many attempts were made to induce the Raja of Berar to exclude them from the treaty and to receive an equivalent from them in some other part of the British domain. He, however, remained obstinate and the British, being unwilling to create jealousy or discontent by further urging of the question, endeavoured to satisfy the people by promising that in the event of further circumstances bringing them again under the British power, they would be permanently attached to the British dominions. However, Sambalpur remained under the Maratha rule for nine years, and their administration was in the last degree tyrannical. Raghuji, deprived of a large part of his territory, tried to compensate the loss by incessant exactions. The rapacity of the Maratha Governors knew no bounds.

The conditions of India, during the period, were definitely far from satisfactory. The Maratha Chiefs, though defeated had not been subdued. Sindhis, Holkar and Bhonsle had taken advantage of seven years of Minto’s peace to strengthen themselves in a final bid to overthrow the British power. The Peswas were showing growing signs of restiveness against the restrictions of the Subsidiary Alliance. Central India was in a state of chronic disorder worsened by the Pindari leaders. There were growing signs of hostility everywhere.

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against the British power. It has always been the course of an aggressive imperialism that by riding roughshod over the independence of others it generates a feeling of hostility leading to a cycle of wars which acquire an air of being defensive against states that rise to win back what they had lost. The wars of Hastings were sequel to those of Wellesley. Because of such preoccupation the British could not divert their attention specifically to the affairs of Sambalpur upto 1817 A.D.

Of the Maratha states, Hastings first turned his attention towards Nagpur, then in the midst of internal dissensions. Raghunath Bhonsle had died on the 22nd of March 1816 and his son Parsoji was infirm of mind and body. There was a struggle for regency between Bukabai, the widow of Raghunath and Appa Saheb, the next male heir to the throne after Parsoji. The English saw their chance in these internal dissensions and hooked in Appa Saheb with a support to conclude a subsidiary alliance which was signed in May 1816. The stroke dealt a blow to the Maratha coalition and increased the offensive and defensive means at the disposal of the English.

The Peswa was the only Maratha Chief who had entered into the Subsidiary Alliance with the English, and sacrificed his position as the head of the Maratha states. But by 1814 a growing coldness in the attitude of the Peswa towards the English became discernible. This was ascribed to the influence of Trimbakji Dangla who was openly hostile towards the English. In order, to clip the wings of the Peswa, Baji Rao II was forced to sign a new treaty on the pain of being declared an enemy of the English. On the 13th of June 1817, the Treaty of Poona was signed and the severity of the terms drove the Peswa to war which ultimately led to the downfall of his power.

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1 Sardesai, *The History of the Marathas*, Chapter XI-XIII.
Appa Saheb, who had ascended the throne after the murder of his ward Parsoji, followed the example of the Peswa and attacked the Residency on the 26th of November 1817. The battles of Sitabaldi and of Nagpur decided the fate of Appa Saheb. He was deposed. All territories of the Bhonsle states, to the north of Narmada including the Western Orissa were annexed by the British and a minor grandson of Raghuji II was installed as the ruler over the remnant of the State. Thus Sambalpur again came under the British suzerainty.

Jayanta Sing had been kept in confinement by the Marathas with his son. Maj. Roughsedge pleaded his case so energetically that Sir Richard Jenkins, the Resident of Nagpur obtained his release from Chanda in 1817. He was restored to power in the same year, but died in 1818. The country was then administered by the British for a year. The widow Rani Mukta Devi petitioned to the British Government in favour of her stepson Maharaja Sai's accession to the throne. Her claim was recognised and he was made the Raja in 1820 though without the feudal superiority which the former Rajas had held over the chief of the neighbouring states. These Chiefs were given separate sanad by the British Government in 1821.

It is not known where Rani Mukta Devi was living during the period from 1808 to 1817 A.D but it was sure that she was not with her husband at Sambalpur at the time of her death. It appears that Mukta

2 Letter No.171, dated 5.5.1854, from J. Emerson, Assistant Agent to Governor General to J.Allen, Agent to Governor General, Chhota Nagpur, (BRR).
3 Letter dated 4.5.1826 from Agent to Governor General to Swinton, Secretary to Government (Imperial Records Department).
4 R.C. Mullick, op.cit., p.204.
Devi was living at Panchagarh in Khurda from 1808 A.D\textsuperscript{1} till she returned to Sambalpur after the death of his husband. However, Maharaja Sai was made the Raja in 1820 and the Chiefs of the neighbouring states were granted separate "Sanad" in 1821\textsuperscript{2}. Thus Sambalpur annulled the dependency of the other chiefs.

The Sanad of Maharaj Sai was renewed from the 1\textsuperscript{st} of January 1826 for another five years. But about one year after this, the Raja died leaving behind him his widow Rani Mohan Kumari and two daughters\textsuperscript{3}. In order to continue the line, the British Government installed the widow Rani Mohan Kumari on the Gaddi of Sambalpur\textsuperscript{4}. Though Sambalpur lapsed to the British Government finally in 1849, they virtually became the master of Sambalpur since 1827 when Maharaja Sai breathed his last.

\textsuperscript{1} Letter dated 26.12.1818 from Robert Ker, Commissioner of Cuttack to J. Adam, Chief Secretary to the Government.
\textsuperscript{2} L. S. S. O'Malley, op. cit., p. 29.
\textsuperscript{3} S. P. Das, op. cit., pp. 333-334.
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid.