

## **SOURCES OF MARATHA HISTORY: INDIAN SOURCES**

### **Unit Structure:**

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Maratha Sources
- 1.3 Sanskrit Sources
- 1.4 Hindi Sources
- 1.5 Persian Sources
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Questions
- 1.8 Additional Reading

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### **1.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After the completion of study of this unit the student will be able to:-

1. Understand the Marathi sources of the history of Marathas.
2. Explain the matter written in all Bakhars ranging from Sabhasad Bakhar to Tanjore Bakhar.
3. Know Shakavalies as a source of Maratha history.
4. Comprehend official files and diaries as source of Maratha history.
5. Understand the Sanskrit sources of the Maratha history.
6. Explain the Hindi sources of Maratha history.
7. Know the Persian sources of Maratha history.

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### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The history of Marathas can be best studied with the help of first-hand source material like Bakhars, State papers, court Histories, Chronicles and accounts of contemporary travelers, who came to India and made observations of Maharashtra during the period of Marathas. The Maratha scholars and historians had worked hard to construct the history of the land and people of Maharashtra. Among such scholars people like Kashinath Sane, Rajwade, Khare and Parasn timer were well known luminaries in this field of history writing of Maratha. Kashinath Sane published a mass of

original material like Bakhars, Sanads, letters and other state papers in his journal 'Kavyetihās Samgraha' for more eleven years during the nineteenth century. There is much more than contribution of the 'Bharat Itihas Sanshodhan Mandal', Pune to this regard. In 1910, Rajwade founded this institution and began to publish several reports and journals in Marathi. They are considered as an important source material of the study of Maratha history. Historians like Thakore, Rawlinson, Patwardhan and many other Indian and Western historians tried their level best to amass the source material of Maratha history.

Regarding the source material of the Maratha history, there has been ample documentary record of the Peshwa period where as the period of Shivaji is concerned there is much scarcity of the source material. There are several reasons for this scarcity of source material as the period of Shivaji was a formative period of the Maratha history. The rulers never spared any time for maintaining any records. These rulers were to fight against the enemies from the north and the south. In this state of affairs, whatever was available they got destroyed. The general illiteracy and lack of printing presses contributed to the apathy of written documentary evidences. Naturally, paucity of source material regarding the Royal period is there. Even then the available sources of Maratha history can be studied as under: -

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## 1.2 MARATHA SOURCES

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There are several official papers, diaries, accounts, Shakavalies and various tables which form an important source material of Maratha history. The Bakhar has proved useful itself as important document in the construction of Maratha history. The Bakhar means to tell the news or record of happenings. The Bakhar is also called as biography of eminent state persons of the Maratha period. Such eminent persons only ordered to write Bakhars, which naturally became little more eulogy of these people. It is said that it was the order of the day of the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-century India and considered such record as a source of writing of history.

V.K. Rajwade and S.N. Joshi say that Bakhars are written in Modi script of Marathi Language after the period of Yadavas. Generally, some historians are critical about the Bakhars as they are based on hearsay and secondary information and cannot be relied upon them. Dr. Herwadkar says that Bakhars deal with historical and political matters and resemble with history. (The main task of the historian has been to interpret the fact and fiction scientifically to convey the people the prowess and spirit of their kings and heroes of the past to inspire them for nationalism.) Bakhars are conveniently studied as follows:

**1. Sabhasad Bakhar:-** This is the prime and most important source of Maratha history. It was written by Krishnaji Anant Sabhasad, a minister of Chhatrapati Rajaram at Jinji in 1694. Krishnaji Anant Sabhasad has described the following events detail, as the position of Maloji, the grandfather of Shivaji, circumstances during the time of birth of Shivaji, Shivaji's initial campaigns, the Abzal Khan episode, Shaiste Khan's attack

on Poona, Diler Khan and siege of Purandhar, and Shivaji's visit to Agra. The writer has mentioned in it the Kharkhanas functioning during the period of Shivaji, the Chandrarao More incidence, Shiledars, Subhedars, forts, their income and expenditure. There are some subjective statements like Goddess Bhawani visited and blessed Chhatrapati Shivaji with a sword and Shivaji flew to heaven after his death. Despite these references, Sabhasad Bakhar has been one of the primary source materials of the history of Marathas.

**2 Chitnis Bakhar:-** Chhatrapati Shahu ordered Malharrao Ramrao Chitnis, to write a bakhar one hundred twenty five years after the death of Shivaji. Malharrao Ramrao Chitnis was a contemporary to Chhatrapati Shivaji. In this bakhar, the writer has shed light on a genealogical order of the Bhosale dynasty, the birth of Rajaram, Chhatrapati Shivaji's infantry, artillery, organization of army, Karnataka campaign and his coronation ceremony of 1674. Although, there are some lapses in the chronology of the events, this bakhar has been a valuable source material of the history of Marathas.

**3.Chitragupta Bhakhar:-**Chhatrapati Sambhaji of Kolhapur ordered Chitragupta to write this bakhar during the period between

1760 and 1770. Chitragupta was in close relation with Balaji Avaji a Chitnis of Chhatrapati Shivaji. This bakhar is much more similar to the Sabhasad Bakhar. It means, Chitragupta elaborated the writings of Sabhasad and also added some of his own information. The most important additional information mentioned in this bakhar is that the duties of the secretariat officers in the Maratha administration.

**4 Shivdigvijay:-** Khando Ballal, the son of Balaji Avaji wrote this bakhar in 1718. Although this bakhar has been the most voluminous work of the writer, has not made any mention about the working of Shivaji's administration. Khando Ballal was familiar with the western literature but the genealogy of Bhosale family, which he prepared on the basis of Mughal and Rajput sources, has proved inconsistent. The writer has given detail information regarding the first Bhosla who came to Deccan was a man of ruling family of Mewar, Rajasthan. Shivaji's campaign on Javali, Rajapur and Shaiste Khan, the maternal uncle of Aurangzeb, the contribution of Kayastha Prabhu to Royal period and their heroism in various wars against the enemies of Shivaji. Although, the writer has used highly sankritised and rich language, his references regarding Tanaji Malusare's visit to Hyderabad and Raja Jaising's death at Jaipur in 1667 are totally contradictory with the truth.

**5. Shedgaonkar Bakhar:-** Although more than one writers have contributed towards the completion of this Bakhar, it gives reliable and consistent information about the Royal period. This bakhar mentions Sajjan Singh was the ancestor of Chhatrapati Shivaji, who came from Rajasthan and settled down in the Deccan. The bakhar has also given detail information of genealogy of Shivaji up to Chhatrapati Pratap Singh Bhosale of Satara. This bakhar therefore has been treated as one of the important sources of Maratha history.

**6. Chandrarao Moray Bakhar:-** This is one of the well-known bakhars giving authentic information regarding the Royal period of Marathas. This bakhar deals with the battle of Rakshastagadi, kingdoms of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, process of assigning watan of Javali and the title of Raja Chandrarao Moray by Adilshah and the circumstances leading to Shivaji's campaign on Javali in 1655.

**7. Sashti Bakhar:-** This is the Bakhar written about Chimaji Appa and his conquest of north Kokan. Chimaji Appa was the brother of Peshwa Bajirao I, who helped him to conquer the area. Chimaji Appa attacked Sashti or Salsette in 1737 and Vasai in 1739 and brought them under the control of Marathas. This bakhar deals with the way Chimaji attacked the above places, the fall of Vasai fort, the manner in which Gangaji Naik, the lieutenant of Chimaji helped him in these affairs and the circumstances which led Chimaji to attack Sashti, which was then under the Portuguese.

**8. The Peshwa Bakhar:-** It is said that Shrinivas Daji, a well-wisher of the Peshwa family ordered Krishnaji Sohoni, to note down all important incidents of all Peshwas till the decline of the Marathas in 1818. Krishnaji Sohoni discharged his duties towards the Peshwa family with much love and caution in language and style in writing rather than caring to historicity.

**9. Shahu Bakhar:-** Govind Khanderao Chitnis one of the close associates of Peshwa, has written this bakhar. As the title suggests, this bakhar deals with the problems and situation Shahu faced when he was in the Mughal Court as prisoner with his mother.

It is said that Aurangzeb called Shahu as Shah and Shahu is the corruption shah. Shahu being prisoner in his childhood could not get any formal education in his childhood. The writer has mentioned these things in detail in this bakhar.

**10. Bhausaheb Bakhar:-** It is said that Mahadji Shinde ordered to write this bakhar as soon as the disaster of Panipat. Although, the reliability of this bakhar is doubtful it gives some detail ideas about the existing socio-economic scenario of the Maratha country. Another bakhar in the name of Panipat is also referred to. Gopikabai Peshwa, the wife of Nanasahab Peshwa ordered Raghunath Yadav an employee in the court of Peshwa to write this bakhar as soon as the tragedy was happened. Since, it had been ordered by the Peshwa family, its reliability is doubted. However, it gives detail information about the people, who participated in the war and lost their wives in it.

**11. The Shahanavkalmi Bakhar:-** This is the bakhar written by unknown writer but it was a part and parcel of the official records of Anno Datto, a Sachiv of Shivaji. He was the officer who carried revenue survey of Konkan area under the guidance of Chhatrapati Shivaji. This bakhar deals with all political events of the Marathas. After considering its originality, Chandorkar published it in his periodical 'Prabhat' is an important source of Maratha history.

**12. Rairi (Rajgad) Bakhar:** - This is the Bakhar found at Rairi. In 1811, Prof. Sir Forrest Scott-Waring translated it into English. Forrest Scott-Waring says that this Bakhar is highly authentic. It deals with several events of the Royal period as well as the Peshwa period. Justice Telang doubts about its English translation, because of its inaccuracy and inadequacy of the language. Even then, this bakhar has been important source of the history of Marathas.

**13. Tanjore Bakhar :** - There is one more Bakhar, whose writer is not Known. This is the bakhar carved on the walls of the temple of Brihadishwar of Tanjore. Raja Sarfoji Bhosale of Tanjore Maratha branch had ordered to write the Bakhar. Naturally, this bakhar covers and deals with each event of this ruling family. V.K.Rajwade and G.S.Sardesai substantiated the importance and originality of this bakhar. Rajwade published the bakhar in Marathi periodical 'Prabhat'. Hence, this is also one of the sources of the history of Marathas.

**14. Shakavalies:-** There are several Shakavalies available of Maratha period. They are treated as important source material of the history of Marathas. These Shakavalies give references regarding the political conditions in Maharashtra before the birth of Shivaji, his life, important events, during the life of Shivaji as his campaign on Javali, Afzal Khan episode, his administration and his policy towards his people. There are several Shakavalies which repeat one another; therefore, they stress upon biographical details and family matters. Among such Shakavalies Jedhe Shakavali is there. This Shakavali describes the activities of Jedhe family only. Hence, it is the history of Jedhe family. As Jedhe Shakavali, there is one more document, which was written during the period of the Marathas. That is called genealogical table. This also describes the family history and, the achievements of the eminent members of the family. Even this document talks about military career, political position and status as well as the property of the family. Naturally, this document can be used as an important source material of the history of Marathas.

**15. Official files and Diaries:** - The objective source of Maratha history is the administrative record, which was prepared during the course of administrative functioning. Although, these have been more facts and naked statements, income and expenditure tables, they are not corrupted or diluted documents. They were written daily in office only. They give exact picture of wars, campaigns moved, soldiers killed, strategies undertaken, judgments delivered and the area brought under control during these campaigns. This is with the historian to interpret those facts and build the history of Marathas.

### Check your progress

- 1 What is Bakhar? Why the Sabhasad Bhakar is called an important source material of the history of Marathas?

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### 1.3 SANSKRIT SOURCES

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As Marathi sources are there, there are some Sanskrit sources for the history of Marathas. These sources can be divided into several heads as under:-

**1.3.1 Parnala-Parvata-Grahan-Akhyanam:-** It means the chapter of the fort of Panhala. This is a poem in Sanskrit found to S. M. Divekar in Saraswati Mahal, Tanjore. Sadashiv Mahadev Divekar published the poem in 1923 with its translation into Marathi language. The poem consists of 350 stanzas. Jayaram Pinde, a Sanskrit scholar composed in Sanskrit. The scholar poet was a contemporary poet to Vyankoji, the Maratha ruler of Tanjore and brother of Chhatrapati Shivaji. The poet composes in it that how he met Shivaji, his return journey to Tanjore, Shivaji's sack of Surat, the meeting of this poet with Chhatrapati Shivaji at Raigad and the battle of Umrani, which was fought in 1673. Hence, this is one of the important sources of the Maratha history.

**1.3.2. Radha Madhava- Vilasa- Champu:-** Jayram Pinde has also written this poem in Sanskrit. V.K.Rajwade has published this poem with its translation into Marathi. In this poem, the poet has composed stanzas on Shivaji's early life, his second sack of Surat, his attack on fort Tryambak, city of Karanja, fort of Salher, Harich and Raigad, Kingdom of Jawhar and Shivaji's raid on Shaista Khan.

**1.3.3. Shiva-Bharat:-** This is one of the most important poetical biography of Shivaji. Chhatrapati Shivaji ordered Parmananda to compose a poem on the Raja, Parmananda referred to the early history of the Bhosale family which is from the period of Maloji. He has also dealt with the period of Shivaji. It, therefore, is called as poetical biography of Shivaji.

**1.3.4. Rajvyavahar Kosh:-** This is a Sanskrit dictionary compiled by Raghunath Pandit-at the instance of Chhatrapati Shivaji. This document deals with the prevalent conditions during the period of Shivaji. The writer has provided Sanskrit synonyms for all Persian and Arabic word in the practice. The writer was well versed with all institutions, Karkhanas and their functioning under the Marathas. In addition to this, the writer has given ample information on the civil and military organizations of Maratha. Kashinath Gangadhar Shastri, a well-known Sanskrit Scholar published this document in 1860. Thus, this is one of the most important sources of the Maratha history.

#### Check your progress

- 1 What is mean by Pranala- Parvata-Grahan-Akhyanam?

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### 1.4 HINDI SOURCES

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Although, there are very few Hindi sources about the Maratha period, they add some information about the history of Shivaji. They deal with the life and career of Shivaji, his conflict with the Mughal and the Muslim rulers of the South. Among such literary pieces, the work of poet Bushan is name



worthy. His work as 'Shiva Raja Bhushan' and other poems of the same poet considered master pieces in the literature. Although, Shiva Raja Bhushan and 'Chhatra Prakash' of

Sources of Maratha History:  
Indian Sources

Lalkavi do not provide substantial information about the Maratha administration but they radiate much light on the Socio- political conditions during the period of Marathas.

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## 1.5 PERSIAN SOURCES

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The Persian was the official language of the Mughals who were contemporary to the Marathas. It is but natural that almost all record of that period is written in this language. There is one more reason to have many records of Marathas in the Persian language that, the Mughal emperors often launched campaigns against the Deccan of Marathas.

The Mughal officers who were on such campaigns wrote their experience and maintained correspondence with the Marathas. Among such officers of Mughal, the names of Diler Khan and Raja Jaising are important. These officers were involved in the conflict with Shivaji. Apart from this, there are several other literary works, which can be studied as under: -

**1.5.1. Tarikh-i-Firishta:-** This is the history of Muslim rule in India. It is written by Muhammad Qasim Hindushah alias Firishta. The writer has noted down the relations between the Mughal and the Deccan. The writer says that he accompanied several Muslim campaigns to the Deccan. Therefore, he was an eye witness to these campaigns and many other events in the Deccan. Although, this is the work based on the history of Nizamuddin Ahmad, it gives detail information of the Maratha rule in the Deccan.

**1.5.2. Masir-i-Alamgiri:-** Persian writer, Saqi Mustad Khan has written this book on the events between the Marathas and the Mughal. This writer was highly influenced by Aurangzeb and used to accompany the Mughal army in the Deccan. Naturally, the writer described all exploits of Aurangzeb minutely and not noted down the facts which were adverse to the emperor in the south. Even then this work has one of the important source materials of Maratha history as well as it gives ample information about the Mughal Maratha relations.

**1.5.3. Muntakhab-ul-Lubab:-** Muhammad Hashim alias Khafi Khan is the writer of this book. He was in the court of Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb. Jadunath Sarkar said that Khafi Khan's account has been authentic and far from being a dry record of events in the Deccan. He had been a petty revenue officer in the court of Mughal. He used to accompany the Mughal army to Deccan and was an eye witness of all conflicts between the Mughal and the Marathas. Apart from the information of military and administrative activities, he described about the then existing systems like Mansabdari and Jagirdari as well as on agrarian crisis. Hence, this has been an important source of Maratha history in Persian language.

**1.5.4. Nuksha-i-Dilkhush:-** This is the work of Bhimsen Burhanpuri, who was in the service of the Mughals for a long time. He has written about the Mughal-Maratha relations between 1700 and 1707. Although he was in the Mughal court, his writing bears no influence of the Mughals. His works on Maratha leaders during the above period is well known and considered one of the important sources of Maratha history.

**1.5.5. Fatuhat-i-Alamgiri:-** This is the work of a Gujarathi scholar, known as Ishwardas Nagar. The author of this book was popular for writing on the achievements of Rajputs, the Mughal activities in the South, murder of Sambhaji, the relations between the Marathas and the rulers in Karnataka, Rajaram's journey to Jinji, the problems Rajaram faced at Jinji and his shift from Jinji to Raigad. Therefore, the work of Ishwardas Nagar has considered one of the important sources of the Maratha history.

**1.5.6. Siyal-ul- Mutakharin:-** The author of this work was in Mughal Service. He was posted in Bengal for the whole span of his life. His work has not been biased or subjective. Although, he was not a trained writer of history, whatever he wrote, is called as an authentic information. Among his writing, the work on the conflict between Tarabai and Shahu, the role of Nizam and other petty Maratha Sardars and the civil and military administrations of the Marathas are noteworthy. Naturally, the writer, Sayyad Gulam Hussein Tabatabai was an important source of the history of Marathas.

#### **Check your progress:**

1. Who was the author of Tarikh-i- Firishta
2. Bring out the importance of Masir-i-Alamgiri and Muntakhab- ul- Lubab as source material of the Marathas.

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### **1.6 SUMMARY:**

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The history of Marathas can be best studied with the help of first-hand source material like Bakhar, State papers, Court histories, Chronicles and accounts of contemporary travelers, who came to India and made observations of Maharashtra during the period of Marathas. The Maratha scholars and historians had worked hard to construct the history of their own land and their own people.

Regarding the source material of the Maratha history, there has been ample documentary record of the Peshwa period, whereas the period of Chhatrapati Shivaji is concerned, there is scarcity of the source material. In this state of affairs, the state, whatever material had with it got destroyed. The general illiteracy and the lack of printing press contributed to the apathy of written documentary evidences. Naturally paucity of source material regarding the royal period is felt too much.

Among the Marathi sources, there are several official papers, diaries, accounts, Shakavalies and various other tables which help as source material of the Maratha history. Along these letters Bakhars also are



important in the construction of history of the Marathas. Some other historian say that Bakhars are based on hearsay and secondary information and cannot cent percent be relied upon them. In Marathi language, Shakavalies and official files and diaries also are treated as sources of this history.

Sources of Maratha History:  
Indian Sources

Apart from Marathi sources, there are some Sanskrit sources also. Among the Sanskrit sources Parnala- Parvata- Grahan -Akhyanam means the chapter of the fort of Panhala, Radha Madhava Vilasa Champu. Shiva-Bharat and Rajvyavahar Kosh are important documents, which deal with all events of the Chhatrapati Shivaji's life career and his relations with the neighboring rulers of that period.

There are some Hindi Sources also regarding the Maratha period. Among them Shiva Raja Bhushan has been considered the masterpiece in the literature. Along with this literature Chhatra Prakash of Lalkavi also gives important information about the socio- political conditions of the Maratha period.

In addition to Hindi Sources there are some Persian sources, which give detail information about the Marathas. The Persian was the official language of the Mughal empire and the Mughals had continuous conflict with the Marathas, this led to have much correspondence between the Mughal officers in Deccan and the Mughal emperors, this referred to the situation in the Deccan and that can be treated as the source material of the history of Marathas. Among the Persian volumes, which give first hand information about the Marathas are Tarikh-i-Firishta, Masir-i-Alamgiri, Muntakhab-ul-Lubab, Nuksha-i-Dilkhush, Futuhat-i- Alamgiri and Siyal-ul-Mutakharin. The writer of Tarikh-i-Firishta is Muhammad Qasim Hindushah alias Firita.

Iswardas Nagar has written about Rajaram, his journey to Jinji, the problems he faced there and again his shift to Raigad. Thus, the account of the Gujarati scholar is an important source of Maratha history. Sayyad Gulam Hussein Tabataba'i noted down the information about the conflict between Tarabai and Chhatrapati Shahu and their civil and military administration. Thus, these volumes written in Persian language form the important source material of the Maratha history.

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## 1. 7 QUESTIONS

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1. Critically examine the sources of Maratha history written in Marathi language.
2. What do you understand by Bakhar sources? How far they are treated as sources of the Maratha history?
3. Give a brief account of the sources of Maratha history written in Sanskrit language.
4. Enumerate the sources of Maratha history written in the Persian language.

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## 1.8 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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- a. R. P. Patwardhan and H. G. Rawlinson, Source Book of Maratha History, K. P. Bagchi and company, Calcutta. 1978.
- b. J. N. Sarkar, Shivaji and His Times.
- c. S. N. Sen, Shiva Chhatrapati
- d. V. S. Bendre, Sadhan Chikitsa and Maharashtra of Shivshahi Period, Bombay, Phoenix Publication, 1946.



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## EUROPEAN SOURCES

### Unit Structure:

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 French Sources
- 2.3 Portuguese Sources
- 2.4 English Sources
- 2.5 Dutch Sources
- 2.6 Summary
- 2.7 Questions
- 2.8 Additional Readings

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### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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After the study of this unit, the student will be able to :-

1. Understand the sources of Maratha history written by the French people, historians and travelers.
2. Explain the sources of Maratha history written by the Portuguese travelers, historians and missionaries.
3. Perceive the sources of Maratha history written in English language.
4. Summarize the sources of Maratha history written in European languages.

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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**European sources:-** There were several European companies functioning in India on the orders of their mother countries. Naturally, there were many Europeans from various walks of life in India who were pursuing their own business for profit. These people noted down and referred to the rules in India, the general conditions prevailed there and existence of the Marathas as an important power in the country. The writing of these people can be categorized as 1. Factory records 2. Memoirs 3. Travelogues. The European people who came to India and whose writing has been considered as an important source of the history of Marathas can be divided as under: -

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## 2.2 FRENCH SOURCES:

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There were a numerable French people who came to India for various purposes. They were as under: -

**2.2.1 French Physician Dr. Dellon:** - This French physician came to India during the period of Marathas. He travelled throughout India specially Maratha territory of the country. He interacted with many people over there. He published his travel account when he reached Paris. His account on the Marathas is very significant for the student of Maratha history. He has dealt in detail the campaigns of Shivaji, his administration, his military strength and his policies towards his subjects. Although, his writing is based on the hearsay, it is quite authentic. It, therefore, is considered one of the important source of Maratha history.

**2.2.2. Bernier, Tavernier and Thevenot:** - These French travelers visited India when Shivaji was in power. They witnessed many things in the administration of Chhatrapati and noted on Shivaji's attack of Surat in 1664, his concern towards the subject and the learned people in kingdom, his military exploits, his treatment to the people of character and piety. Although, these travelers wandered through out the Maratha kingdom and collected detail information about the Marathas but the account of Thevenot is based on hearsay and is proved incorrect. Thevenot says that Shivaji was born at Vasai, he was only thirty-five when he sacked Surat for the first time and He captured the daughter of Shaista Khan. These references are totally wrong. Thevenot's account of Shivaji's escape from the Mughal court, Agra is again highly inaccurate. Even then, these accounts are called important sources of the history of Marathas.

**2.2.3. Martin's Memoirs:** - Francois Martin a French traveler and administrator has noted down several incidences which we experienced in India. He was born in 1634 in the family of a rich trader. Martin left Paris in 1650 and reached India with the group of French missionaries. He married his friend Marrie Cuperey. In the year 1665, Martin joined French East India company at Surat. His memoirs in India as a French administrator on various events of Marathas bear much significance. They are about Shivaji's Karnataka campaign, second sack of Surat, Rajaram's government at Jinji, his ministers, Rajaram's death in 1780, subsequent administration of Marathas under Tarabai and the Maratha Mughal conflict after Rajaram. Apart from the Martin's Memoirs, the account and letters written by Jesuit Missionaries are important sources for the history of Marathas.

**2.2.4 Valentine's Account:** - One more French traveler Francois Valentine joined the French East India Company and noted down his observations about the then situation in India. His observation regarding the sack of Surat in 1670, Aurangzeb's approach towards Shivaji, Shivaji's Visit to the Mughal court at Agra, Aurangzeb's treatment to Shivaji, Shivaji's escape from the Mughal court, the activities of Marathas while Shivaji was in north are authentic and reliable. Therefore, they are called important source material for writing history of the Marathas.

**2.2.5 Abbe Carre's History of Shivaji:** - In 1668, Abbe came to Surat with a Dutchman, who came to be known as Caron later. Colbert appointed Caron as the Director of the French East India, Company and held him responsible for the activities of the company. Caron supported Abbe Carre for his stay at Surat and other parts of India. Abbe Carre collected every minute information about Chhatrapati Shivaji and prepared two volumes. Abbe Carre's account on Shivaji is considered important and authentic. He was a great admirer of Shivaji and spent maximum time on writing of Shivaji's qualities. Abbe Carre referred to Shivaji as one of the greatest men in the East. He dealt in detail the sack of Surat by Shivaji, his army, his navy, civil institutions, his way of dispensation of Justice, his courage and administrative abilities. He also mentioned that Shivaji has very good places under him as ports and forts which were defended very well. He treated his guests with honour and respect. Abbe Carre further says that Shivaji was great general and firm on his decision, which led him for victory in several campaigns. Abbe Carre moved from place to place. He described Chaul as one of the prosperous ports and marts during the Maratha period. Thus, the description of Abbe Carre is very important source of Maratha history.

### **Check your Progress:**

1. Discuss briefly the accounts of the French travelers as one of the sources of the Maratha History.

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## **2.3 PORTUGUESE SOURCES:**

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Students of history should refer to the European sources to understand the history of Marathas, because it is considered that these sources are impartial and without bias. The writers of these sources were unaware about the conditions and culture prevailed in the country. They noted down the information as they observed apparently and committed several lapses but their accounts are informative and accurate in several other aspects. The people who visited India from Portugal were many and were from various sections of the Portuguese society. The description of some of them can be studied as under: -

**2.3.1. Guarda's life of Shivaji:** - Cosme da Guarda was one of the earliest Portuguese biographers of Chhatrapati Shivaji. He was a citizen of Mormugoa, which was under the Portuguese rule then. The writer claims that he wrote this biography of Shivaji in 1695- but it was not published for a long time. Cosme da Guarda dealt in detail about Shivaji's Judicial administration, his approach towards the welfare of common people, Shivaji as the youngest son of Shahaji and how he was named as Shivaji in the honour of the lord Shiva. Guarda was a staunch admirer of Shivaji. He described that Shivaji took quick actions intelligently. He was like a magician and was present at all places. Shivaji's campaign against Afzal Khan scared the rulers and powers during that time and nobody tried to defeat him. He further mentioned about Shivaji's relations with the Mughals, the Treaty of Purandhar, his Agra visit and escape from Agra. Guarda's accounts on the birth place of Shivaji, references regarding

chronology are confusing and wrong. He has also written about the trading places during the time of Shivaji and mentioned about his death. Thus, the account of Guarda proves one of the important sources of the Maratha history.

**2.3.2 The Work of some prominent writers:** - There are several prominent historians and writers who have written about the Maratha country. Among them the name of Justice Biker, Lopes Menedes, Cunha Rivara, Phillipe Xavier and Ismael Gracias are worthy. Justice Biker's work contains Shivaji's political and administrative setup, diplomatic dealings with various neighbors. He has also written about the Treaties in 1667 and 1670 between the Portuguese and the Chhatrapati Shivaji. The Portuguese were neighbor to the Marathas for many centuries. The original letters regarding the relations are placed in the Historical Records at Goa and Lisbon, which are important as source material for writing and studying the history of Marathas.

The Village community has been one of the outstanding features of the Maratha history. This arrangement had been continued from the ancient period. The village community enjoyed all rights and prerogatives. The Portuguese government held enquiries about the rights and privileges of the village community under their jurisdiction. Lopes Menedes, Afonso Mexia noted down in detail the conditions of the Village community under the Marathas. Thus, it is one of the important sources of the Maratha history. Along with Lopes Menedes's writings, the work of Saldanha, Moniz, and Amancio, Gracia give us substantial information regarding the Maratha history.

Another Portuguese writer Cunha Rivara has written about the Maratha period. He has dealt in detail the civil, administration, Military and diplomatic relations of Shivaji. The original work of Cunha Rivara has been translated in various other languages. Thus, this is also important for the study of the Maratha history.

Ismael Gracias is one more Portuguese writer and historian. He has written about the proceedings of Shivaji, his civil institution, eight ministers, his naval organization and the whole military set up. He also mentioned various campaigns of Shivaji against his enemies. Ismael Gracias gave a good description about the campaigns of Sambhaji on Goa. He narrated about the strategy, diplomacy and the area covered by Sambhaji. Gracias further writes about the naval power of Marathas, their officers, activities they undertook and major achievements of the navy. There is much more important campaign of Marathas, which is known as the Maratha conquest of Bassein. This writer has written every aspect of that campaign in detail. Thus, this document also is called as important source of Maratha history.

**2.3.3 Marquis of Alorna:-** Being contemporary to Marathas, he has written about the conditions prevailed under the Marathas. Marquis was a Portuguese Governor of India. While, he was in office, he described in detail the Maratha administration, their military system, their military



strength, civil organizations, tax system and the lapses committed by the Marathas while executing them. He has also referred to the Weakness, which were inherent in the administration of the Maratha rulers. The work of Marquis is translated in English by F.N.Xavier. Danvers has written a book, which is known as 'Portuguese in India'. In this book, the writer mentioned about the Maratha administration. Thus, this is also as one of the important Sources of the Marathas.

### Check your Progress:

Q.2. Who were the Portuguese travelers visited India during the period of Maratha history?

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## 2.4 ENGLISH SOURCES

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The English people came to India to establish their trade relations with the country. The initial attempts of the British people led them to establish their factories in India. Several factors and agents began to stay in the country, under the banner of the East India Company. These people in the process of trade and commerce, began to prepare the record of Indian situation, rulers, their own factories and activities, which they used to send to England on regular basis. Thus, this was the record which was required by the Government stationed in England. This record consisted the reports of their administration, their decisions, reasons on which decisions were taken, proposals, minutes of their meetings, proceedings and consultations.

Although, these dispatches were rules, regulations, explanations, and letters of British Presidencies in India, they were the free and frank opinions of the British people in India, about their contacts, their relations or the treatment they received from the Indian rulers. Thus, these facts are used as the source of history of Marathas. Initially, when the company had only commercial interest in the country, did not concentrate their attention on other matters but knowingly or inadvertently there were some references or remarks regarding the political organizations or administrative set up of the indigenous rulers. For example, the factors mentioned the incident of Killing of Afzal Khan by Shivaji and the Company relations with him. The reason, which brought the Marathas in contact with the Company, was that Shivaji needed some guns from the Company but the Company did not supply the guns to him. Therefore, Shivaji attacked on Konkan towns of the Company including Dabhol. The second reason was that the Subhedar of Adil Shah, who was enemy of Marathas sought refuge at the Company establishment of Rajapur. The Maratha official over there, informed the Company to hand over the Adishahi Subhedar as well as his ship stationed at Rajapur to the Marathas. But the Company officials refused to do the same. The Maratha official arrested the Company officials at Rajapur, who were rescued later. The same Company officials at Rajapur sold some ammunition to Siddi and helped him to siege the fort of Panhala and created difficulties for Shivaji. Naturally, Shivaji wanted to teach the Company official a lesson,

he sent his contingent, arrested the Company officials, put them in prison and shifted them from place to place.

The factory records also refer to Shivaji's encounter with the Company officials second time in 1664. When Shivaji had been to Surat, he required some money from the European traders including the British, the demand of Shivaji was as per the tradition existed during that time, but the British traders did not help Shivaji. When Shivaji went to Surat in 1670, the European traders and merchant helped Shivaji with Some money and presents. Chhatrapati promised them to protect their possessions at and around Surat. Shivaji came into contact with the East India Company when the Siddi of Danda-Rajapur had become quite troublesome for him. Shivaji wanted some help from the Company officials at Bombay. Although, the East India Company at Bombay wanted to help Shivaji, due to the apprehension of the Mughal emperor, the Company officials did not help as the Siddi was the protégé of the emperor. Thus, such references regarding the Maratha history are available in the Company records, which are considered as sources of the Maratha history. There are several other English writers, travelers and historians, which can be studied as below:-

**2.4.1 Fryer:-** Although, there are several English travelers who visited India and noted down the information they came across. The information collected by Fryer has much importance in the history of Marathas, Fryers, a British Physician came to Bombay, visited several places of the East India Company and the Marathas. He also went to Chaul, a town in Alibag taluka of Raigad District in Konkan region. Dr. Fryer writes that Chaul, was a thickly populated town and flourishing trade centre during the period of Marathas. It was controlled by Chhatrapati Shivaji in 1670 and remained with him still it was totally ruined in the wars with the Mughals. It was a great mart of all commodities of South India and distanced two miles away from the Portuguese city lower Chaul. In the year 1674 there were around three thousand houses in the upper Chaul gutted into fire. The fire affected people were forced to take shelter in lower Chaul and in the British controlled island of Bombay. Naturally, the trade and commerce of that place was shifted to Kalyan. Dr. Frayer describes that he Visited Kalyan in 1675 and found that it was a flourishing trading centre during the period of Marathas. Thus, it was easy for any one to slip into Maratha territory from Bombay. Hence, the account of Frayer has been important source of Maratha history.

**2.4.2. Mannucci's Storia Da Mogor:** - There is one more English version of travel account of Nicolo Mannucci an Italian traveler, who wrote Storia Mogor. Mannucci had come to India for a considerable time between 1658 & 1708 and visited several places of Marathas. Mannucci mentions in his writing that he accompanied Raja Jai Singh in his Deccan campaign and met Chhatrapati Shivaji at the time of Treaty of Purandhar. Naturally, the account of Mannucci, is treated one of the important sources of Maratha history. This valuable account is translated into English by Major Jervis a British revenue officer, who had conducted revenue survey of whole Konkan.

**2.4.3. Major Jervis's Geographical and statistical Memoir of the Konkan :-** He was in the service of the East India Company during the time of Elphinstone's , as Governorship of Bombay Presidency . Major Jervis was assigned the duty of conducting revenue survey of the Konkan region. During this survey , Major Jervis came to understand many things about the Maratha rule in the country . He has given detail account of the land revenue settlement of Shivaji and Annaji Datto's survey and revenue assessment system .Major Jervis says that the barren or fallow or warkus land was assessed by the plough and not by the bighas . It was measured loosely , as six to seven bighas of this land was considered as one bigha for the revenue settlement . Many a times , the revenue of barren or banjar land varied and was not based on the fertility of the land but the nature of the crops grown in such land . Major Jervis also noted down the information of assessment of second crops at a special rate as Turmeric and Hemp five maunds per bigha while sugarcane 6 1/4 maunds per bigha. Major Jervis has also written about the revenue system of Malik Ambar, who was basically an Abyssinian and adopted India as his own country. Major Jervis says that Malik Ambar worked hard with open mind under the Nizamshahi kingdom of Ahmednagar. During the Mughal attacks on this kingdom, it was on the verge of total collapse due to exhaustion of all economic resources. Malik Ambar then undertook the revenue system in such a way that the Nizamshahi Kingdom could withstand the onslaughts of the Mughal successfully. Thus, the account of Major Jervis is treated as one of the important sources of Maratha history.

**2.4.4. Scott- Waring :-**He is one more English historian, who tried to write a detailed history of the Marathas. His account on Chhatrapati Shivaji's revenue system, administration, navy and armed forces is an important source of the Maratha history. He says that although Shivaji was busy in several campaigns throughout his career, he was never inattentive to the growing interest of his people and the state. He secured and defended the land in the region of Konkan. He always took suitable measures for the extension of cultivation and improvement of agriculture in his kingdom. Scott-Waring's history of Marathas was published in 1811 which met the needs of the readers of the political history of Marathas.

**2.4.5. Grant Duff:-** Captain Grant Duff came to India in the third decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century and worked as a political agent of the British Government at various places under the Governorship of Elphinstone. He was able to refer to various original papers of Marathas placed at several places. Grant Duff, while working as a revenue officer at Satara, had been in direct access to all the papers like Bakhars and diaries kept in the Satara archives. Chhatrapati Pratap Singh, the descendent of Chhatrapati Shivaji helped him in every possible manner and handed him over all the important state papers. Thus, Grant Duff has written two volumes on the Marathas which are treated as important source material of the history of Marathas.

**2.4.6. Kincaid and Parasnis:-**These joint authors have written the history of Marathas on the basis of huge document that Rao Bahadur

D.B.Parasnis possessed. These historians used published as well as unpublished material to write the history of the Marathas. They have given detail information about the history of Chhatrapati Shivaji. Thus, this has been called important- source of the history of Marathas.

**2.4.7. Mahadeo Govind Ranade:-** A western educated Maharashtra historian attempted to write a comprehensive history of Marathas . Ranade worked in various capacities and wandered throughout the state for his multi-dimensional responsibility and collected important document for his writing the history of 'Rise of the Maratha Power'. Ranade's work has been treated authentic source of the Maratha history because he was destined to know the language, traditions, customs and conventions of the Marathas as well as he was fully conversant with the methodology of writing of history. As he had worked at different places, he was in access to all original papers of the Marathas. Ranade dealt in detail all battles and conflicts and searched out the circumstances and reasons of those conflicts. He could find out the causes and factors which led to the rise, progress, expansion and decline of the Marathas. This forced him to survey the whole administrative set up, civil institutions of Chhatrapati Shivaji. It is very well made known by Ranade that Chhatrapati was the most genius Maratha ruler, who manifested the Maratha aspirations. Ranade is the first historian, who has written in detail about Chhatrapati Shivaji's administrative system and compared Shivaji with Napoleon in organisation and building of civil institutions, Thus, Ranade's history of Rise of Maratha Power has been the most important source of Maratha history.

There are several other historians whose writings can be treated as sources of Maratha history:-

**2.4. 8. H.G. Rawlinson:** - Prof. H.G. Rawlinson's book 'Shivaji- the Maratha' Gives ample information about the history of Marathas.

**2.4.9 Takkhav and Keluskar:** - These two professors have written on the life of Shivaji Maharaj, which gives detail information about Chhatrapati Shivaji , his administration and civil institutions.

**2.4.10 Henry Oxinden:-** He was an employee of the East India Company. He visited Raigad, the capital of Chhatrapati Shivaji in 1674. He attended the coronation ceremony of Shivaji and witnessed the glory of the celebration. The Diary of Henry Oxinden is one of the important sources of the Maratha history.

**2.4. 11. Sydney Owen:** - He has written a book titled India on the Eve of the British Conquest. In this book the writer has taken a survey of Chhatrapati Shivaji's life and career, his conquest, administration and his policy towards his people.

**2.4.12. Pringle Kennedy:-** He is the author of the book History of the Great Mughals. In this book he has depicted clearly the achievements of Chhatrapati Shivaji and the existing conditions in Maharashtra. The

book gives detail information about the civil institutions of the administration of Chhatrapati Shivaji.

European Sources

**2.4.13. Jadunath Sarkar:** - His book, Shivaji and His Times is based on the various sources of the Maratha history. It, therefore, is an important source for the study of the Maratha history.

### **Check Your Progress:**

Q.3. Elucidate the sources of the Maratha History written in English.

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## **2.5 DOUCH SOURCES:**

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As there are various sources in English language, there are also some sources which are written by Dutch travelers and people, they can be classified as under:-

**2.5.1. De Graaf:** - He was a Dutch Surgeon and adventurer. He travelled very widely in the Eastern countries for more than six times. He visited India for the last time in 1679 during the period of emperor Aurangzeb. When he was in Bengal, he learned about Chhatrapati Shivaji's campaigns in the territories of the Mughal and developed keen interest about the Chhatrapati's adventure, and administration. De Graaf began to collect the detail information about the Chhatrapati's institutions, campaigns, strategy and his relations with his neighbouring rulers like the Mughals and the Portuguese. The account of De Graaf also gives information about trading centres under the Mughal and the Chhatrapati. Thus, this account can be treated as one of the important sources of the Maratha history.

**2.5.2. Goutier Schouten:-** He was the second Dutch traveller, who visited India and referred to Chhatrapati Shivaji as one of the important rulers of the country. Goutier Schouten descended the territories of Marathas in the year 1658. He travelled widely in Konkan and the places of Portuguese. He had been to Surat and collected every minute information about the trading position over there. Goutier Schouten was present when Shivaji attacked Surat to teach a lesson to the British traders for the issue of non-payment of taxes to the Chhatrapati. He says that the Chhatrapati's attack on Surat created long lasting positive consequences in the history of India which would be remembered for a long time by the people. Thus, this account also treated as a source of Maratha History.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:**

1. Assess the Factory Records, proceedings; consultations and travelogues as the sources of the Maratha history.
2. Comment on M.G. Ranade's writing as one of the important sources of the Maratha history.

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## 2.6 SUMMARY

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The Europeans came to this country for various other purposes and one of them was trade with the country. Those Europeans established their companies in India and pursued their trade as per the orders and commands dispatched by their mother countries. On other hand the European companies in India began to send the whole report of their activities in the country to their governments. Those reports were in various forms as factory reports, Memoirs and Travelogues. Naturally, those reports were not the reports of their naked activities only, but they reported directly or indirectly the existing conditions in India, the accounts of native rulers, their administration. Their strength, their relations with various neighbours and the chances of trade of European people. Among the French officials, armed forces, merchants and traders, there were some travelers who were from every section of the society, as physicians and missionaries. Bernier, Tavernier and Thevenot were other French travellers, who also visited Chhatrapati Shivaji's kingdom during his lifetime.

As the French sources, there are some Portuguese sources also, which are written by Portuguese officials and travelers, when they were in India. Among them Cosme da Guarda was well known Portuguese traveler, who came to India and became a citizen of Marmugoa, which was under the Portuguese control that time. Cosme da Guarda wrote a biography of Shivaji in 1695.

Among such eminent personalities Judice Biker, Lopes Mendes, Cunha Rivara, Phillipe Xavier and Ismael Gracias were well known. Judice Biker's account contains the treaties of 1667 and 1670 between the Marathas and the Portuguese. Lopes Mendes Affenso Mexia, another Portuguese writer dealt in detail about the village community, its rights and powers in travel account.

Ismael Gracias referred to the civil and military administration, campaigns of Shivaji and Sambhaji against the Portuguese. Marquis of Alorna was a Portuguese Governor of India. He had his own observation of the neighbouring rulers of Marathas, and the goofs they committed by them in the administration.

In addition to these sources there are some British sources for the study of the history of Marathas. After British established their factories, the Company officials began to send the report of their activities in India to England. Along with these reports, proceedings and consultations of the Company activities in India, there were several references regarding to the local conditions and indigenous rulers. As Chhatrapati Shivaji wanted to purchase some guns from the British East India Company, but the Company officials did not sell them to Shivaji.

Apart from these references and correspondences, there were some travelers and historians who came to India and have written about the Marathas. Among them Fryer was an important traveler, who visited



various places under Chhatrapati Shivaji . Major Jervis ,Scott Waring , Grand Duff , were some of the prominent writers.

European Sources

Kincaid and Parasnis have jointly authored the history of Marathas on the basis of original document Rao Bahadur D. B. Parasnis possessed, which treated as source material of the history of Marathas. Ranade M. G. a westerner educated Maratha historian

As justice has done a detail study of the Marathas.

Like Ranade, G. S. Sardesai also has written in detail about the Marathas. There are several other historians as H. G. Rawlinson, Takkav , Keluskar, Henri Oxinden, Sindney owen, Pringle Kennedy and Jadunath Sarkar have their own writings, which are treated as source material of the Maratha history.

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## 2.7 QUESTIONS

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1. Briefly discuss the French sources of the history of Marathas .
2. Examine the Portuguese sources of the history of Marathas .
3. Analyse the English sources of the history of Marathas.
4. Enumerate the European sources of the history of Marathas .

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## 2.8 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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1. R.P. Patwardhan and H.G. Rawlinson, Source Book of Maratha History .
2. Sen S. N., Foreign Biographies of Shivaji, Administrative system of the Marathas.
3. Rajwade , Marathayanchya Itihasachi Sadhane.



## INFLUENCE OF GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS ON SOCIO- ECONOMIC LIFE OF MARATHAS

### Unit Structure:

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Geographical Features of Maharashtra

3.3. Geographical Influence on the Economic Life of Marathas

3.4. Influence of Geography on Social Life of Marathas

3.5 Summary

3.6 Questions

3.7 Additional Reading

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### 3.0 OBJECTIVES:

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After the study of this unit the student will be able to:-

1. Understand the geographical conditions in Maharashtra.
2. Explain the geographical regions under the rule of Marathas.
3. Know the influence of geographical factors on the economic life of the people during the period of Marathas.
4. Explain the influence of geographical factors on the social life of the people under the Marathas.

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION:

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In order to understand the whole set-up of the Marathas including their rise to power, reasons and their expansion, it is necessary to understand the geography of the area in optimum detail. As a matter of fact, the people in any piece of land are shaped, nourished and nurtured by their own geography. Not this much, the environment of the area fixes the way of deeds and development of the people. Accordingly, the people in Maharashtra are determined by the geography of Maharashtra. Whatever geographical advantages the people in Maharashtra enjoy are denied to the people of low lands, the people of valleys of Ganges and other rivers, which flow into the Arabian Sea or the Indian Ocean.

Maharashtra lies between 15- and 23-degrees latitudes and connected with the Deccan lavas above the Ghats. It, therefore, forms a part and parcel of the Indian geological division which is known as the Deccan – Trap. This Trap gave rise and life to many mountains of black rock, black soil and to many more rivers. The characteristics of the geography of Maharashtra are its mountain ranges as the Sahyadri ranges which run from the north to the south and other ranges are of Satpura and Vindhya, which run from the east to the west. There are some other minor ranges which are offshoots of these big ranges and spread unevenly. These minor ranges created rugged outline of the area and bereted many streams and rivers which finally joined Godavari and Krishna, the big rivers of Maharashtra. The terrain of Maharashtra is divided by the western Ghats into the low and the high-level tracts. The table land of Maharashtra, runs parallel to the coastal-line till the end of the border of Maharashtra. The western coastal line below the ghats is known as Konkan. This is the strip between the Sahyadri and the Arabian sea. Another tract towards the eastern side from the ghat is known as the Deccan Plateau or popularly known as Dash. This is the table land or ghat matha or the top of the mountain ranges, which includes the valleys lower down the river. This table land has almost all hill-forts which protected the land and people of Maharashtra from the onslaughts of the enemies from time to time.

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### 3.2 GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF MAHARASHTRA

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The geography of Maharashtra has two divisions namely the Deccan Plateau and the Konkan. The Deccan plateau is the part and parcel of the Deccan table land while the Konkan is a strip between the Deccan plateau and the Arabian sea. The ranges of Sahyadrian mountains formed the western rim of the Deccan plateau . It is the main water divide and separating the drainage of the Godavari and Krishna rivers from the rivers of Konkan. There are other ranges of mountains like Satpuras which are in the north of the Deccan plateau. While other several minor hill ranges are spread mostly with a west -north –west to east- south-east and the Deccan plateau.

The geological composition of Maharashtra is made of rocks of volcanic origin or lavas. The south western part of Maharashtra in the Ratnagiri area belonged to a complex formation of metamorphosed rocks. While the geology of area covering the districts of Bhandara, Chanda , Nagpur and Wardha is made of Archaean and the Dharular rocks. The rocks outcropped in the Wainganga basin are the oldest exposed rocks in Maharashtra. Then the rocks in Vidarbha, the Lava cover in the state the alluvium in the Tapi basin and the alluvial accumulations in the coastal area come successively in the age. The main geological event that influenced the physical structure of Maharashtra is one which threw up lava on a wide regional scale and brought up the formulations which affect the life of people the most. Among such changes are the Sahyadris , the Satpuras, the Tapi and Narmada valleys and the Arabian seacoast. There are several other hills, mountains and

valleys which are created due to climatic changes and the flow of running water from one end to the other end. The joints and fissures developed on the basaltic surface are the initial features of the geographical changes in the state. These features through their weathering and stream actions introduced other features like deep and shallow valleys, which also exercised the stream pattern and created a lineament of the landscape in the state.

There are some common features of geography of Maharashtra as staircase like appearance, domed peaks, flat summit plateaus and terraced flanks. They are created by horizontal lava flows which spread in succession one upon another. These ups and downs in the geography of Maharashtra helped the Marathas during the royal period as well as in the Peshwa period to protect themselves and withstand onslaughts of mightier enemies. As a matter of fact, the lava beds are the distinctive features of the geography of Maharashtra. These lavas became black and massive girdles to the Sahyadri ranges. The landscape created by lava beds in Maharashtra separated the broad river valleys from that of residual ranges under its recurrent theme. In the same way the streams flowing on flat beds are developing shallow courses, wide banks and meanders to the geography of Maharashtra. The streams also affect the upper and lower beds radically through their strong gorges and a series of cascades. Unless a study of outstanding features of the geography of Maharashtra one cannot understand its influence on the socio-economic life of the people in Maharashtra. The outstanding features are as under :-

**3.2.1 The Maharashtra Plateau:** - This plateau has covered around nine-tenth area of Maharashtra and tilted towards the east and the south-east directions slightly. There are several rims on the western side where its elevation is 900m above the sea level and has several peaks like Mahabaleshwar, Saptashri and Kalsubai whose heights are 1438m. and 1646m. respectively. But the central and the average elevation of the Maharashtra plateau is around 300 to 400m from the sea level .

**3.2.2. The Sahyadri Ranges :-** The western edge of the Deccan plateau, which is extended from Maharashtra to Mysore and has two flanks which are sharp relief but contrast to each other, came to be known as the Sahyadri ranges. The lava flows made the western face of the ranges, that is dark, bare and with alternative slopes. These slopes are made of weathered beds and covered with monsoon vegetations. The eastern flank of the ranges is rounded and low gradient. There are several peaks as the ranges as Saptashri, Rajmachi and others are attractive and bear natural beauty.

The tops of these helped the Marathas to build forts and secured establishments. Such tops were like Rajmachi near Lonavala . There are several saddles in the ranges which are known as ghats routes. These ghat routes are connecting the Konkan regions and the Table land of Maharashtra. The Marathas used these routes only during the emergency

and faced their mightier enemies. They also defeated them and forced them to retire from the land of Marathas.

The Marathas also used the other ranges like ghatmatas, Balaghat and Mahadev, which were developed due to lavas and have elevation around 200 to 300m. Although they are extension of the Sahyadri ranges, their trend is west-north-west and east-south-east. The top of the area and the saddles developed helped the rulers in warfare strategy as and when required by the circumstances.

**3.2.3. The Satpura Ranges:** - These ranges are occupying the northern part of the Maratha territory. It is said that the Satpura ranges are connecting the rift valleys generated by Narmada and Tapi river basins. As a matter of fact, these ranges are jugged out between the parallel rift valleys of these two rivers. There are many cliffs and peaks in these ranges, one of them is Toranmal, whose height is around 1000m. There are other tops also, which are in the Melghat ranges. The Melghat ranges are in the Vidarbha region. They are connecting Tapi and Chikaldara plateau. In this region there are several rocks like granite, limestones and associated rocks which have developed irregular hill features of the land. There are other hills known as hummocky hills in the districts of Chanda and Bhandara. They are also called the irregular hills, which were often used for military activities. Generally, these hills have elevation of around 400m. While tops in this area have heights up to 1200m.

**3.2.4. The Konkan:-** This is a littoral region between the wall of Sahyadri and the Arabian sea, which varies from 45 to 75m in its width. This Konkan strip is nestled between the Damanganga River in the north and Terekhol river in the south. It is hilly criss-crossed and furrowed region due to the fast-flowing streams from various ranges, mostly Sahyadri ranges. It is, therefore, said that these ranges from the Konkan support the Sahyadrian ranges. Naturally, this landscape proved advantageous to the Marathas variously. One most important benefit was from the estuarine rivers for their communications and security. It is said that the middle belt and the coastal headlands are known as the lateritic plateaus. They are bleak, project a slaggy heap-appearance and singularly infertile. This has taken place due to heavy deforestation of this area and still be continued. Konkan, therefore, has not been developed economically. The Konkan land has several characteristics as low- running hills, bulging convex slopes on side, its tapering ends and hogback appearance. This landscape of Konkan helped the Marathas on and often while fighting with the enemies.

**3.2.5. Local Landscape:-** There are several features of the local land of Maharashtra which came to help the Marathas in emergency and difficulties. These features are as 1. Occasional rounded summits on lava hills 2. Particular knobs 3. one or two terraces 4. Some shoulders on ledges 5. small amphitheaters created by streams flowing 6. Emanated talus cones 7. Several junctions of hills 8. Rough surface as gentle sloping apron of outwash material and 9. Gullies developed by water flowing

from the hills. As the hill ranges from the prominent features of the elevated landscape of Maharashtra, in the same way, streams and river valleys are the low level counterparts of the same landscape. The streams sluggishly meander on the resistant surface of a lava flow. This meandering stream cannot easily cut into the land surface but the actions of side sweeping waters create several features, which helped the Marathas in their daily life of ruffled period.

The sun's heat loosens the rock, the chemical rot sets in due to rain water, the rain water washes the loose material downhill. All these erosion and deposition in the hill ranges and the river valleys introduced good variation in the landscape of Maharashtra. These variations generated several implications as affected the human use of the land, the eroded surfaces hardly supported grass, depositional features sustained a luxuriant forest and good agriculture. There are several exposed faces of the lava sheets, some of them work as natural ramparts and bear some important historic forts of Marathas.

**3.2.4 Rivers and River basins:** - The rivers in Maharashtra drain both to the Bay of Bengal as well as to the Arabian sea. There are several rivers of the Maharashtra plateau. Among the major rivers of the plateau are Tapi, Godavari, Bhima, Krishna, Wardha, Wainganga and Narmada. Tapi has 31,360 KM drainage area while Narmada has around 54 KM drainage area in the state. Tapi river flows westwards in a valley which lies between two faulted edges of the lava plateau of Maharashtra. Thus, river created bad land at various places, its south margin is fertile while the northern margin is sandy. Godavari is the principal river of Maharashtra, which has several tributaries, as Manjra and Pranhita rivers which join Godavari River at Andhra border, while Pravara river flows through the whole length of the state. Wardha and Wainganga originate from Madhya Pradesh hills, flow through the central part of Vidarbha and join each other after the drainage of 295km southwards. Penganga is the tributary river joining them after draining through Buldhana and Yeotmal plateau. Bhima and Krishna are other two big rivers of Maharashtra; they join each other in Karnataka. Bhima originates from Bhimashankar and has two main tributaries as Sina and Nira. Krishna river originates in Mahabaleshwar, flows through the state. This river has three main tributaries as Koyana, Varna and Panchganga. Naturally, these rivers helped the Marathas at each and every movement during their period.

As in the plateau, there are several rivers in Konkan, some of them are as Vaitarna, Ulhas, Savitri and Vasisthi. They originate from Sahyadri tracts, flow fast and they are mostly seasonal in their regime. These rivers at the point of joining the sea, became wide, shallow and their mouths sandy due to the action and reaction of the sea waves. There is one more characteristic of these rivers of Konkan that they developed ravines and deeply entrenched water courses with shallow mouths. Thus, these rivers helped a lot to the Marathas in the period of exigency.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

- 1 Highlight the Geographical features of the Maratha country.

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### 3.3. GEOGRAPHICAL INFLUENCE ON THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF MARATHAS

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Maharashtra comes under typically monsoonal character, as it has hot, cold and rainy weather. Due to this atmosphere, the plateau as well as the Konkan regions are in extreme heat during the months of March, April and May of the year.

Although, the months of April and May are torrid, they experience the moderate thunderstorms mostly, which bring relief from the heat and the dust in the atmosphere. This is also supportive to irrigation, irrigated crops and fruits. But when the moderate thunderstorms turn into gale and hailstorms, they damage the crops and the fruits like mango and other fruits.

As a matter of fact, the southwest monsoon is onset in the month of June. It is followed by a sultry weather, thunder-showers and heavy rains. In this month only the rains spread from the south- western and western side means through Konkan to all over the state. This is the month and the atmosphere helps the people in the state to start sowing activities. Although there is variation in rains in June, almost the whole state comes under the process of sowing and plantation of kharip crops. If any part of the state has no sufficient rains for sowing season, the subsequent month that is July gives good amount of rains throughout the state and support the sowing activities positively. Although, there are several crops of different period and seasons, July is the best month for all parts and regions in the state for sowing season. The subsequent month of August is almost rainy heavily, which is boosting nurturing the crop. Although, the month of September weakens the south-west monsoonal current, it brings moderate showers to nourish the maturing crops. The month of October is the transition from the rainy season to the winter season. This month is the beginning of Rabbi season means sowing of wheat, gram, and other crops. The Rabbi season is mostly harvested in the area of Desh means presently the western Maharashtra. This month brings high humidity and greater sunshine which create a peculiar atmosphere to sustain the familiar October heat and push up the Rabbi crops. Maharashtra experiences a cool dry spell from the month of November to February. These months bring gentle breezes, pleasant weather and some very urgent showers badly required for the winter crops. Many a times, this period fetches cyclones from the Bay of Bengal, that persist for a while even after crossing the coast and travel through the inland.

This is open secret that the most important factor that affected the life of people and economy is the rain fall, in its regime, amount and variability. Konkan and Sahyadrian ranges receive the major rain fall during the period of four months i.e. from June to September. Whereas the Central Maharashtra and the Plateau has little lower precipitation.

That is spread from the month of June to October. The month of September is much more important because the majority of rain fall is received in this month in the central part of Maharashtra. The heaviest and the highest rain fall in Maharashtra occur in the main Sahyadris that is Mahabaleshwar, it is around 6226mm; while the Konkan region receives the rain fall around

2500 to 3500mm. But the most remarkable feature of the rain fall is its tendency of rapid decrease towards the east of the Sahyadris. Panchgani is only 15km to the east but receives only 1865mm rain fall, while Phaltan is around 30km from the Sahyadri ranges receives only 500mm. This transition affects the whole economic set up, as composition of population, revenue, industry and the trade and commerce. The total annual precipitation is little improved towards the further eastward because of two factors as one there is a little reduction in the shadow effect of the western Ghats and second the little extension of the Bay of Bengal monsoonal currents westwards. For example, Solapur area receives the precipitation around 678mm.

Generally, the agricultural production depends on the annual rain fall and its distribution the area under consideration. These matters only create various agricultural zones as rice zone, millet zone, cotton zone, sugarcane zone and others. These zones help the people and in general Government to prosper themselves. Many a times, the Marathas had abundant agricultural production. But that was not realized due to various wars during the period. Jervis, the British officer once said that Chhatrapati Shivaji's subjects enjoyed the plenty of agricultural production but not peace due to the threat of external attacks. But the most striking features of the rain fall has been the variability and irregularity throughout the state. It has been experienced that the monsoonal rains in many years has not arrived on normal time but there were long and unexpected breaks in it, which affected the average and the percentage of the agricultural production. In some years the rain fall was not on time, it was delayed and disturbed the whole season and the production was failed. In some years there was heavy downpours, that also contributed to the failure of the production of agriculture. Although this unpredictable behaviour of the monsoonal rainfall has been common thought the Maratha kingdom but the economic distress and the suffering of the people was much greater than any other elements. Naturally, in some area of Maharashtra, the economic setup has been very delicate and offers no surplus for any purposes. For example, this thin and weak economy did not permit the people under the Marathas to utilize fully the total rainfall. In other words, the people in Maharashtra have not been utilizing the total rain fall occurred in the state. The disturbing factor has been experienced since the ages that the major portion of rainfall in the Sahyadri ranges and Konkan area goes to the sea. In the torrential rains, the economy in Konkan reaches to the ground. On the other hand the same Konkan area suffers acute shortage of water during the summer. Hence, it affects on the performance of the economy.

**3.3.1. Forest and the Maratha Economy :-** Forest has been one of the important sources of revenue for any Government since the time immemorial. In the same way , it helped the Maratha economy variously . It played the protective and bio-aesthetic role in the economy of the Marathas . It supplied wood for various purposes and commercial products , which fetched considerable revenue to the rulers. The area covered by the forest was around 75000 sq.km. The main sources of income were the timber , fuel-wood, and forest products as Hirda , Catechu , Katha , sandalwood ,tendu leaves and various fruits . It also gives revenue by way of orchard , silviculture and grazing facilities.

The larger forest tracts directly influenced the economic position of the local communities to a considerable degree. Such communities were in the tracts of Thana –Kolaba and Sahyadri ranges . Their economic life is based on the surrounding forest. Among such communities warlis of Thana district formed an important group of tribal people, who played very important role in the Maratha administration and army . The Marathas also had to pay attention towards the destruction of forest due to heavy soil erosion and laterization.

Although, the Marathas did not utilize mineral deposits in the underlying geological formulations of their territory, there were several minerals available in the geological belts of Marathas . Among them were coal, iron-ore , china- clay , chromate , limestone and manganese leading and abundant minerals. There were some other minerals of economic significance and could be used for the manufacture of fire-bricks, refractory crucible and hard porcelain. The minerals like Felspar, copper, tungsten, Cyanide, and other were also located in Ratnagiri and Thane districts. The most important mineral was salt manufactured in the northern strip of Konkan coast, it was not only important in human consumption but also supported fertilizing the land and generating chemicals.

**3.3.2. Geography and the major crops under the Marathas: -** The production of crops depend upon several factors as the local climate, criteria of soil , rainfall , irrigation and other factors. The Geography under the Marathas did not support all crops in all regions evenly. Hence, some areas were popular for some crops, while other strips supported specific crops. The study of the crops and regions under the Marathas can be done as under :-

**1 The crops in Konkan Region :-** Farming is difficult in this region, it is intensive and visible in many facets due to the hilly and mountainous landscape. It is a small holding restricted to small estuaries and their extensions along the river valleys. There is some land on the terrace of lower hill-slopes and, some other is reclaimed from marshland, which is known as Khar land. Farmers used to construct seasonal bunds across river courses for irrigation. That was specifically done to increase agricultural production or yield. This is the region of rice, coconut, nachni and mango crops. Rice is a main crop produced as a single crop in the north and double crop in the patches of land in the south Konkan.

Coconut is the second major crop, it is extensively planted in loamy land and on the embankment. Nachni is also equally sowed but in interior and lateritic soils. Mango is the most commercial product, popular in and outside of the country, raised on lateritic soil.

**2. Crops in The Sahyadris:-** This region being totally forest , agriculture is restricted to scattered clearances in the mountain ranges . The farmer has to prepare the clearance in the abandoned patches of the ranges every year because the soil loses its fertility every year due to heavy rainfall. Although this trouble exists in this region, the stable agriculture is there since the ages due to innumerable bottoms of various valleys. Mostly, rice in a rich soil and nachni in the inferior soil are produced, Since the beginning, apart from rice and nachni , the piedmont slopes of the Sahyadri ranges support to the fruit trees , chillies, onions and especially the local mangoes .

**3 Crops in the Bhima Valley and Plateau Region :-** This tract is a semi-arid area, cultivation is done in valley flats and their immediate flank abutting the residual hills and the plateau . Jowar and the Bajra are the main crops of this region. Oilseeds, pulses and fodder crops are also produced. Although, the area is arid and plateau, the crop like sugarcane is grown in the valley of Nira, a tributary of Bhima river.

**4 Crops in the Krishna Valley :-** This is the belt of fertile , and alluvial soil as well as of adequate rainfall. Although, Bajra and Jowar are the principal crops. Sugarcane , turmeric and tobacco are raised in the Varna and Panchganga valleys. These two rivers are the main tributaries of Krishna River. This is the belt popular for dairy since the beginning.

**5 Crops in the Godavari Valley: -** This is the region of moderate and reliable rainfall. Jawar and Bajra are grown here. Bajra is specially seen in the drier area of the north west, i.e., in and around Nasik stretch of the valley. Pulses and oilseeds are raised everywhere in this area. Cotton is grown in the Marathwada region of the valley. Godavari valley is divided in upper and middle valley on the basis of crops. In upper Godavari valley, crops like jowar, bajra , wheat , sugarcane, grapes, as well as fruits like sweet lime, guava, are grown in the area like Pravara valley. In the middle Godavari valley crops like jawar, wheat and cotton are raised.

In general almost all crops were grown during the period of Marathas, among them jawar, bajra, pulses, wheat, cotton, sugarcane, oilseeds, tobacco were there. Among the fruit crops, mango, orange, grapes, bananas, figs were there.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:**

Q.2. What was the contribution of the Sahyadri ranges to the development of strategic warfare of the Marathas?

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### 3.4. INFLUENCE OF GEOGRAPHY ON SOCIAL LIFE OF MARATHAS

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Influence of Geographical  
Factors on Socio- Economic  
Life of Marathas

India was attacked and ruled by several foreign rulers and tribes since the ancient period. Among them were Shakas, Hunas, Kushanas, Greeks and Persians in the ancient period, and Turks, Gazhani, Ghor, Gulam, Abyssinians, Pathan, Khilgis, Sayyed, Tughlak and Mughals in the medieval period. Maharashtra being a part and parcel of India, it also came under these rules successively. These Muslim rulers made India their residence with no specific policy of making them exclusive in the social life of the country. It seems, there was an intense rivalry among the Muslims in the country. Because the Muslims who came from outside had been in almost all good positions which had been the bone of contention among them. But these differences did not percolate to the people living in the rural area of the country.

India is the country of Hindu people in general. They have been more than eighty three per cent in the country. In Maharashtra, under the Marathas, the social atmosphere of the Vedic civilization was prevailing. That means the social structure was based on the Varna and Ashram systems. In the Varna system, Brahmin, Kshatria, Vaishya and Shudras were predominant in the society. Naturally, much importance to caste system was given i.e. superiority and inferiority was maintained. Following to the caste system, there was much rigidity in the occupation and the sources of income, which were purely based on the castes and carried on generation to generation. As a matter of fact, the people in lower castes were exploited by the people in the higher castes since the ages, for which, the Maratha period was not exceptional. On the contrary, the rigidity of the caste system increased due to several factors in the society. Considering the inhuman treatment to the people in lower castes, several saints in various sections in the society began to criticize the caste system and advocated the movement to reform in the situation of the people in the lower castes. But there did not take place any change in the society and the composition of society. On the other hand, the rule of distance or untouchability was being maintained very strictly. These less privileged people had no mobility; even geographical conditions did not help them to increase their mobility beyond the boundaries of the country.

R.V. Nadkarni in his book, *The Rise and Fall of the Maratha Empire* observes that in Hindu society the theocratic principles are predominant. The idea of god is all pervading that everything else is subordinated to it. The Hindu is a religious minded entity and he will perhaps be ready to do for dharma what he will not do for his country. This theocratic principle or idea of dharma and god is in the social instinct of the Hindu. The king is divine, the cow is divine, the preceptor is divine, his sacred books are divine and the mother is divine. Thus, the idea of divinity is ingrained and lapidary in the social life of the country, especially the social life of people in Maharashtra. That is in some proportion contributed by the mountainous, crag geography of

Maharashtra. The social life under the Marathas was based on the caste system whose origin was believed to be divine. It, therefore, was not changed. The caste system was handed down undisturbed from father to son for generations together. It became hereditary and a new principle of stagnation was introduced in the social life of the Marathas. That social structure became so stationary that it seemed beyond any change in near future. The upper caste looked after the need of education but there was no competition from any other castes, therefore, there was no advancement in knowledge. The upper caste transmitted whatever they received from their preceptor. There was a firm belief in the social life of the Marathas that the Vedas, the books of revealed knowledge contained every aspect of knowledge which is required to satisfy the needs of the existing society for ever. Buckley says that there is clear evidence that the society which perfectly ignores the physical laws definitely refers to the supernatural causes and all the phenomena by which it is surrounded. It is said that the social life of the Maratha period was somewhat superstitious.

If we consider the above viewpoints, it is clear that there were conflicting influences of geography of Maharashtra and impact of myriad social system on the man during the period of Marathas. He did not understand his own mind in a critical moment. He kept himself meek, accepted the traditional theory of Karma and believed that he must abide by the norms of his own caste. Means there was no incentive for him to make any Endeavour to better his social lot. Naturally, the social life did not leave any choice to the person, he never exercised his reason and lived life under the pressure of traditions.

uckley further says that about the woman the less said the better. The woman led her life from the beginning to the end as a dependent. Her social position is no better than that of a slave and when ignorance added to the slavery it became a mighty restraining force on the society. On the other hand, the woman in Maratha period had committed remarkable work in the politics and administration. The list of such women is considerable as Tarabai, Jijabai, Ahilyabai, Radhabai, Gopikabai, Laxmibai and Yamunabai. Captain Broughton observes about the Maratha women that there is a strikingly difference displayed by the Maratha woman in the ride on horse without taking any pain to conceal her face, she gallops about and makes her way through the throng with as much boldness and perseverance as the man. This boldness developed in the woman due to the impact of environment and geography of Maharashtra.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:**

1. Enumerate the advantages and disadvantages of forests towards the Maratha economy.
2. What were the major crops grown during the period of Maratha?



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### 3.5 SUMMARY

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In order to understand the whole setup of the Marathas from their rise to power to the down fall, it is necessary to study the geography and its features in detail. Because it is the geography which shape, the people who live in the specific piece of land.

Naturally, the people in Maharashtra are carved by the geography of Maharashtra. They used each and every feature of the land for their own advantage.

Maharashtra lies between the 15 and 23 degrees latitudes. It is connected with the Deccan Lavas above the Ghats and forms the part and parcel of the Indian geological division known as the Deccan- Trap. This trap gave rise and life to many mountains of black rock, black soil and many rivers. The most Striking feature of the geography of Maharashtra under Marathas are its mountain ranges as Sahyadri, Satpuras, Vindhyas and some other minor ranges. The minor mountainous ranges are the offshoots of the bigger and wider ranges. They are spread unevenly, created rugged outline of the area and bereted several streams and rivers, which ultimately join Krishna and Godavari the big rivers of Maharashtra. The terrain of Maharashtra is divided into the low and high level tracts by the Western Ghats. The table land of Maharashtra runs parallel to the coastal line till the end of the border of the state. The Western coast line below the Ghat is known as Konkan. Konkan is the strip between the Sahyadri ranges and the Arabian sea. The tract towards the eastern side from the Ghats is known as the Deccan Plateau or Known as Desh. This is known as Ghatmatha, which has almost all hill- forts of Maharashtra.

The geographical composition of Maharashtra is made of rocks of volcanic origin or lavas. There are some common features of Maharashtra as staircase like appearance, domed peaks, flat summit plateaus and terraced flanks. These features are created by horizontal lava flows which spread in succession. This geography of Maharashtra helped the Marathas to protect themselves during the emergencies. To assess the influence of the geographical features on the Life of Marathas, it is to be studied as under:-

1. The Deccan Plateau of Maharashtra, which has covered nine-tenth area, tilted towards the east and the south east directions slightly. Its elevation is 900m above the sea level and has several peaks like Mahabaleshwar, Saptashri and Kalsubai.
2. The Sahyadri Ranges: - The western edge of the Deccan plateau, extended from Maharashtra to Mysore has two flanks. These flanks are sharp relief but contrast to each other and are known as the Sahyadri ranges. The western face of the ranges is made of lava flows, it is dark, bare and alternate slopes. The eastern flank of the ranges is rounded and low gradient. There are several peaks on these ranges as Saptashree and

Rajmachi. They all are attractive and bear natural beauty. These tops helped the Marathas.

3. The Satpura Ranges:- These ranges have occupied the western part of the Maratha territory. These are connected to the rift valleys of Tapi and Narmada rivers.

4. The Konkan:- It is a littoral region between the walls of Sahyadri and the Arabian sea. This is between the Damanganga river in the north and Terekhol river in the south. It is a hilly criss-crossed and furrowed region due to the fast flowing streams from various hills of Sahyadri ranges

5. Local landscape :- This landscape has features as occasional rounded summits on lava hills, particular knobs, terraces, some shoulders on ledgers, small amphitheatres, emanated talus cones, several junctions of hills, rough surface and gullies developed by water flowing from the hills

6. Rivers and their basins: - The rivers in Maharashtra, drain both to the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian sea. These are Krishna, Bhima, Tapi, Godavari, Wardha, Wainganga and Narmada. There are several tributaries to big rivers as Penganga, Manjara, Koyana and Varna. The rivers like Vaitarna, Ulhas, Savitri and Vashisti, which origin from the Sahyadri ranges and flow in Konkan region. These rivers have developed ravines and deeply entrenched water courses with shallow mouths, which helped the Marathas variously.

Maharashtra comes under a typically monsoonal character as it has hot, cold and rainy weather. As the result the Konkan and the plateau are in extreme heat during the months of March, April and May and experience some time the moderate thunderstorms. Generally, the agricultural production depends on the amount of annual rain fall and its distribution during the year. This only creates zones like rice zone, millet zone and so on. Forest has an important role in the economy of the region. During the period of the Marathas it played a protective and bio-aesthetic role and also helped in generating good revenue. The Konkan region had rice, coconut, nachni and mango as main crops. While the other regions produced almost all crops ranging from jowar to sugarcane and cotton to nourish the people and generate good revenue. The geography and the climate created several zones on the basis of production as the rice-coconut –nachni –mango region of Konkan. Coastland, the rice – nachni tracts of Sahyadris, The jowar-bajra-oilseed-sugarcane zone of the Bhima and Krishna valleys and jawar-bajra-wheat-cotton-sugarcane zones of Godavari and Tapi valleys. In short, almost all crops were raised during the period of Marathas subject to the good monsoon and evenly distribution of rainfall throughout the year.

The Maratha social life had several features based on geography and its factors, which helped to nourish all communities, groups, religions, castes and cultures. As there were Muslims in India, they were under the Marathas, in their administration and army. According to R.V. Nadkarni, in the social life the principle of theocracy predominated means all other things subordinated to it. Buckley made an observation about the Maratha social life that the society which ignores the physical laws refers to the supernatural causes and the phenomena by which it is surrounded.

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### 3.6 QUESTIONS :

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- a. Examine the geographical influence on the socio- economic life of Marathas.
- b. Bring out the geographical features of Maharashtra under the Maratha rule.
- c. How did the geographical conditions influence socio- economic life of Marathas?
- d. Trace the special features of Geography of Maharashtra. Discuss its impact on the socio- economic life of people during the period of Marathas.

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### 3.7 ADDITIONAL READINGS:

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## BHAKTI MOVEMENT

### Unit Structure:

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Causes of The Rise of Bhakti Movement
- 4.3 Important Features of The Bhakti Movement
- 4.4. Important Saints of the Bhakti Movement
- 4.5. Effect of Bhakti Movement
- 4.6 Summary
- 4.7 Questions
- 4.8 Additional Readings

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### 4.0 OBJECTIVES

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After completing the study of this unit, the student will be able to:

1. Understand the meaning, origin and concept of Bhakti in Hindu religion.
2. Explain the causes responsible for the rise of Bhakti movement.
3. Know the basic and important features of the Bhakti movement.
4. Brief about the major exponent saints of Bhakti Movement.
5. Bring out the significant changes or effects brought out by the Bhakti movement.

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION:

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Bhakti is the Hindu concept of supreme love and devotion to the God. It is the most popular way of achieving salvation in the Life of Hindu people. As a matter of fact, devotion to God is meaningful only if it is blended with love towards all human beings and creatures in the world, without any bias or reservations. Such devotion is bound to be reflected in the devotee's personality radiating powerful and luminous divine energy. This Bhakti or devotion leads to ecstasy and expels all forms of hate, envy, lust, greed and attracts only truth, goodness and righteousness. It is often observed that such devotion or Bhakti culminates the

devotees in dancing exuberantly with the name of God on their lips, which always attracted and inspired the observers towards them.

Bhakti movement was a movement of realization of God with in oneself and the union of the individual with God through the loving devotion of the devotee towards God. This Bhakti movement began in India before the rise of Sufism in Islam and its percolation in India. The origin of Bhakti was traced in the Vedas and the Upanishads. It was an established element in the post-Vedic age and the Bhagwat movement. During this period Bhakti was considered with Jnana and Karma as paths to Salvation. There are two aspects of Bhakti as one is the path of devotion based on service to God. The devotee throwing himself completely at the mercy of God, which is known as the path of surrendering to God. The other one is the bond based on pure love and equality rather than service to God. This is exemplified in the legends of Vishnu and Bhagwata Puranas.

Bhakti as a loving devotion to Siva and Vishnu was emphasized by a series of flourished saints in South India. During the period of Pallava rulers of Tamil land, Bhakti movement spread to Pandya Kingdom of South Tamil land and the Chera kingdom of Kerala-with its new and popular features. The saints who preached and spread the Bhakti came to be known as Nayanars and Alvars, who were the worshipers of Shiva and Vishnu respectively. The broad based character of this movement was that the saints mentioned above were not only Brahmins but were from all castes and sex. It gave a clear message that the loving devotion was not meant for any one section but for all segments, irrespective of caste, family or sex in the society and based on egalitarian approach in denigration of caste system. They preached Bhakti in a simple language of common people and could make a strong emotional appeal to them and converted the Bhakti movement in to a mass movement.

In the 12th century, the Bhakti movement was represented by the followers of Vir Shaiva or Lingayats, who were the worshippers of Shiva. They laid emphasis on love towards God and Bhakti as the means of attaining the goals of human life. They attached great importance to the guru and rejected fasts, feasts and pilgrimages. they propounded human equality and denounced caste system and disapproved all social ills.

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## **4.2 CAUSES OF THE RISE OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT**

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As mentioned earlier, the Bhakti movement originated in South India and spread to each and every corner of the country. It became a mass movement in North India from the 13th to the 16th centuries as the result of fermentation made in those parts of the country. There were several other factors responsible for the rise of Bhakti movement, important some of them are explained as under:- About the origin of the Bhakti movement two distinct periods are given as the first period starts from the earliest time to the 13th century. The second period starts from the 13th century to the 16th century. In the first period there was a concomitant of two tendencies as the pantheism of the intellectual

people and the deistic polytheism of common people. In the second period the influence of Islam religion forced Hindus towards monotheism. Naturally the emergence of Islam in India posed a great danger to Hinduism. The Muslim rulers destroyed a large number of Hindu temples, converted maximum poor people in the country to Islamic faith forcibly and offered them then some concessions and posts of monetary advantage. On the other hand, the Islamic message of universal brotherhood and equality was a serious challenge to the Hindu society which was based on the caste system and untouchability. In order to thwart this challenge, the Hindu religious leaders and philosophers began to reform Hindu religion and tried to eradicate all evils and outdated practices from Hinduism. Thus, the rise of Bhakti movement took place in the country.

Prof. K. M. Pannikar says that the Hindus were incredibly fed up with the atrocities of the Muslims for several centuries. They, therefore, sought solace in Bhakti and the movement began in the country. It means, the Bhakti movement was the direct result of the impact of the Muslim rulers. Even, it is also said that Ramananda, a great saint of India, who initiated this Bhakti movement, was influenced by the principles of universal brotherhood, human equality propagated by Islamism. But this argument is not accepted by majority of historians in the country. Prof. A. L. Srivastva, one of the scholars and authority on this movement says that the Bhakti movement was not a totally new involvement in the India society and it did not owe its origin to the advent of Islamism to India. However, he says that the Bhakti movement definitely received great impetus from the tactics of iconoclastic Muslims in India during the 13th and 14th centuries. However, Prof. A. L. Srivastva further says that the history of the Bhakti movement goes back to the great reformer, Shankaracharya, whose philosophy formed the solid background for the rise of Bhakti movement in the country. Shankaracharya who was placed at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 9th century, systematized the Vedanta philosophy and was the great exponent of the philosophy of non- dualism (advaitas). Shankaracharya further says that the separation of God and the phenomenal world was due to ignorance and the way to salvation was through realization of them by way of knowledge (Jnan), that God and the created world was one. Thus, this was the beginning of the movement, according to Prof. A. L. Srivastava.

Max. Weber, a well-known sociologist says that an apocalyptic movement like Bhakti movement was often the ideology of a defeated ruling class, with some aspects of quietism and suffering due the defeat by the foreign powers. But this argument is not agreed by most of the scholars. They say that this argument hardly explains the rise of the mass movement of Bhakti in the southern part of India.

There is one more argument in the northern part of India that Bhakti movement grew and spread in north India as a defense mechanism to save Hindu society from the threat of the foreign invasions and the challenge of their Islamic ideology. But Nizamuddin Auliya says that although the Muslim invaders captured Hindus, war prisoners, women and children converted and enslaved them in the initial period, the Hindus did not



face any problem after the initial phase of warfare came to an end. Nizamuddin further says that the Hindu religion is too strong to be affected either by any threat of force or the ideology of brotherhood and equality of Islamism. As a matter of fact there was no equality sustained following the conversion of artisans and low castes Indian to Islamism. According to Nizamuddin Auliya the Turkish rulers looked down upon the Hindu converts. Even then this was considered one of the causes for the rise of Bhakti movement in the north India.

Following the Muslim invasion on India, a number of Indians were converted to Islamism by force. This fact convinced the Hindu saints and reformers that unless they carry out certain reforms in the country. It was not possible for them to withstand the Islamic ideological challenge and retain the low castes Hindus in Hinduism.

There is also an argument that some of the people were not happy with the highly philosophical exposition of Hinduism, which they were not able to understand it. Therefore, the saints and reformers turned towards a set up which these people easily comprehended. This led to start Bhakti movement in the country.

The major reason for the rise of bhakti movement was the medieval Hindu society, which was under several social problems, systems, tradition and customs. These social evils did not keep social harmony but increased severe differences in it. Among them the problems of caste, untouchability and subservience of women were there. These elements were to sustain several atrocities and were to be victims of dominant segments. Therefore, the Hindu saints and reformers were convinced that there should be a movement to topple or mitigate these ill-treatments and create a new setup which would not believe in these outdated systems.

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### **4.3 IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT**

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Although, there were several factors ascribed to the rise of Bhakti movement, several philosophers propounded several principles. There was some kind of uniformity among them on stressing upon eradication and condemnation of some social evils and practices. These principles, practices and social evils were as under:-

As mentioned above, the most of the philosophers and saints of the Bhakti movement strongly opposed to the caste system and untouchability as the social evils and impediments in the development of social harmony. These saints stood for the eradication of those evils from the society. They professed that God could be pleased and attained by way of bhakti by any person of any section in the society, irrespective of his caste, colour, race, or sex. Naturally, they emphasized on the principle of brotherhood and equality among the people.

The second important feature of the bhakti movement was that the saints of the movement denounced idol worship and professed that God has no colour, no shape, and no sign. God needs pure bhakti or devotion. Therefore, they criticized the people who were involved in idol worship. Namdeva, a bhakti saint from Maharashtra said that a stone god and false devotee cannot please each other. The Turks, who invaded India, broke such gods into pieces and threw them overboard. These stone gods neither cried nor cursed the iconoclasts. In the same way Kabir, one of the pioneers of the bhakti movement, satirically said that if God were a stone then I would worship mountains. Naturally, these saints wanted to reform the Hindu religion and bring rationality in it.

The third feature of this movement was that these saints protested against the redundant rites and rituals followed in the Hindu religion. They opposed to outdated religious practices and wanted to discard them totally from the religion. They also put stress on the pure, sincere and unalloyed bhakti or devotion of God.

The fourth feature of the bhakti movement was that of the adoption of local language. The common people were unable to understand the literary language of that period which was Sanskrit. Naturally to propagate their philosophy, the bhakti saint used the language spoken by common people. They said that God knows no language except the language of heart.

The fifth outstanding feature of the bhakti movement was that these saints did not claim that they were initiating any new religion or they were accepting any religious scripture blindly. They only tried to reform the Hindu religion for which, they propagated their ideology in the language of common people.

These saints and reformers were in favour of unity of God means the worship of monotheism or one God. They were against the multiplicity of God or polytheism or the theory of various incarnations. They bent upon the contemplation or recitation of the name of God rather than the ritual-for ultimate satisfaction of the devotee and attainment of God.

The bhakti saints stressed upon the importance of Guru because Guru is the linkage between the devotee and God. Guru only leads the devotee from darkness to light from ignorance to knowledge and enables the devotee to detach itself from the worldly attachment and also convinces the importance of total submission to God for the attainment of moksha or God itself.

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#### **4.4. IMPORTANT SAINTS OF THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT**

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There were many saints from various part of the country who involved themselves in this movement and contributed a lot towards the reforms of Hinduism to meet the Islamic ideological challenges.

**Saint Dyaneshwar:-**He was the most revered and the prime saint of 12<sup>th</sup> century Maharashtra. He came to prominence due to his commentary on Gita, the holy book of the Hinduism. Saint Dyaneshwar made equal stress on Dyana, Karma and bhakti of devotee towards his God as ways for attainment of God. The most important contribution of Dyaneshwar inter alia to the bhakti movement was that he wrote the Dyaneshwari in the language of common people, that is Marathi. Had he written in Sanskrit, the message, which he wanted to give, would have not reached to each and every man of the state.

**Namdeva: -** Saint Dyaneshwara had several successors but Namdeva was eminent among them. Namdeva popularized the bhakti movement through out Maharashtra as well as India Dr. Tarachand says that the whole credit of changing mind of priest- ridden and ceremonial creed of people towards the love of God- goes to Namdeva. Namdeva who was born in 1270 A.D in Maharashtra preached intense love and devotion to God. He opposed to idol worship in religion and caste system in society. Namdeva asserted that salvation could be achieved through bhakti or devotion to God and not through any religious ritual. He often declared that a true devotee neither needed any pilgrimages nor fast or austerities, but he needed to concentrate his attention on the name of Hari i.e. God. Namdeva travelled a lot in the northern parts of India and engaged himself in discussions with many saints of that period. Naturally, his followers belonged to all sections of society.

**Ramananda: -** He contributed a lot to make the bhakti movement popular in various parts of the country. Ramananda was born at Prayag, Allahabad and followed the philosophy of his guru Ramanuja. He popularised the worship of Rama as one of the incarnations of Vishnu. Means he believed in the philosophy of Vaishnavism. Although, Ramananda did not isolate himself from the traditional value in the society, he disregarded caste barriers and preached equality in society. He encouraged common kitchen for people belonged to different castes and eating together without observing any distance. Ramananda had chosen his followers from various sections of the society as Ravidas was a cobbler, Kabir was a weaver, Sena was a barber and Sadhana was a butcher.

Naturally, these saints sent the message of equality and Hindu- Muslim unity to each and every part of the country.

**Kabir:-** He was being one of the closest disciples of Ramananda, could learn Vedanta philosophy very well from him and involved himself in bhakti movement more than any other saints. He spread the message of bhakti to his optimum possible among the people and became the propagator of Hindu- Muslim unity. He strongly criticized on idol worship and caste system in the society. Although, he was a great saint of bhakti movement. There is no certainty about his early life and his birth. There are stories galore about him. Historians say that he was Hindu by birth but he was brought up by his adopted father, a Muslim weaver at Kashi. While Kabir began to follow his father in weaving profession, he came into contact with bhakti saints that led him to denounce image worship,

pilgrimage and all religious rituals. He said that in order to attain God, there is no need for any one to abandon his normal life for the sake of saintly life, he can attain God by his devotion in his routine life. Although, Kabir had considerable influence of the Nath-Panthis, he did not profess asceticism and yogic practices for attaining God. He strongly criticized the religious leaders of both the Hindus and the Muslims, who exploited common people for their own sake. Therefore, the common people should not fight among themselves on religion because the Hindu and the Muslim religions are different paths to attain the same goal. He emphasized the unity of God and called them by different nomenclatures like Rama, Hari, Govind, Allah, Saint and Sahib. He said that the highest goal of man should be his absorption with the supreme God. Kabir had his disciples from various sections of society as well as from Hindus and the Muslim religion. This fact created a scuffle after his death among his disciples on his last rites and ritual. But there is a legend that the sheet which covered his dead body was disappeared and replaced by a heap of flowers, which were divided equally between the Muslim and the Hindu disciples for his last rites as per their faith. Thus, Kabir created unity among the Hindus and the Muslims and was himself the symbol of humanity, which continued for ages to guide the posterity.

**Guru Nanak :-** He was the most important saint of the bhakti movement. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born in 1469 on the bank of river in a family of Khatri community. The village Talwandi, where Guru Nanak was born, now came to be known as Nanakana. Although, Guru Nanak was trained and groomed for the profession of his father, he had no interest in that and preferred to be in the company of saints, sadhus and holy people. He had a bent of contemplative mind and began to compose various sacred hymns and sang them for the people. Guru Nanak had travelled widely and visited various parts of the country with his faithful attendant and attracted a large number of people around him. Guru Nanak denounced image worship, pilgrimages and rites and rituals.

He emphasized on the one God and attaining salvation by way of love and devotion without distinction of caste, creed or any sect. He advocated that one should have a purity of character as pre condition for approaching God and attaining salvation. He strongly denounced the caste system and believed in human equality, brotherhood, peace, good will and unity between Hindus and Muslim.

**Ramanuja:-** One of the exponents of Advaita philosophy was born in the year 1017 A. D. at Sri Perumbudur, in present Tamil Nadu State of South India. After his initial education at Canjeevaram and Shrirangaon, became a staunch disciple of the Vaishnavite saint Yamunamuni. According to Nilkant Shashtri, Ramanuja contradicted the argument of Shankaracharya of Mayavad and propounded the philosophy Visishtadvaita i.e. the soul of man is a part and parcel of God, he can achieve bliss by way of existence of soul near God and not by assimilation of soul with God. He said that individual soul is a particle

of Brahma, the supreme God. The individual can attain salvation by way of bhakti irrespective of his caste, creed, colour, sex and his position in the society. It means, Ramanuja protested against the caste system. Thus, this created a stir in the society and generated several saints, who followed Ramanuja. It, therefore, is said that the bhakti movement, in real sense, began from Ramanuja.

**Madhava Charya:-** He was one of the learned saints of the bhakti movement from southern part of India and travelled widely to every corner of the country for propagation of his philosophy. Madhava Charya propounded the philosophy of two beings as independent and depended beings i.e. dualism. He says that God is the only omniscient and therefore, is independent being. The all others i.e. matter and soul are dependent beings. He further says that the individual soul is absolutely dependent on Brahma and can be divided into three categories as viable to achieve final bliss, rotating the cycle of birth and death and sinner, viable for eternal hell. He emphasized on the importance of Guru in the attainment of salvation through love and bhakti towards God. Madhava Charya had several books to his credit on Brahma Sutra, Upanishidas, Bhagwat Gita and Mahabharata. Thus, Madhavacharya was the most influential saint of the bhakti movement.

**Nimbarka:-** He was one of the well-known saints of bhakti movement from south India and spent almost all his life in north India, Nimbarka was a contemporary to Ramanuja and a writer of commentary on Brahma Sutra. Nimbarka dealt in detail about Brahma, soul and matter in his book Dasa sloka. He also made it clear that the individual soul is a part and parcel of Brahma, the supreme God and popularised the Radha- Krishna Cult throughout India. Nimbaraka tried his level best to combine the philosophy of Dualism and Advaitism. Rama Chaudhari says that Nimbaraka tried to satisfy man's heart and head as well as intellect and feeling in the process of attaining God by way of bhakti. He did not over emphasis head on the heart or intellect on the feeling he tried to keep them balanced.

**VallabhaCharya:-** He was one more philosopher from South India, who had involved actively in the bhakti movement and came to be Known as one of the philosophers of Advaita philosophy. Vallabhacharya propounded the philosophy of pure non dualism without the idea of Maya and universal religion irrespective of caste, sex creed and nationality. He emphasized on the doctrine of grace, the ideal of self-dedication and sublimation of human life. Vallabhacharya wrote several commentaries on Brahma Sutra, Jaimini Sutra, Anubhashya, Tattvarthadipa and four vedas. Naturally, Vallabhacharya had exerted much influence on his large followers, which he selected from various corners of the country and from various sections in the society.

**Chaitanya:-** He was a Bengali bhakti saint, and became a wandering monk after receiving initiation from his Guru at the age of twenty two. Chaitanya went on pilgrimage to holy places of India like Mathura, Dwarka, Vrindaban, Somnath, Pandharpur, Kashi and Rameshwar.

He protested against the caste system in the society and laid stress upon the principle of universal brotherhood among people of the country. He said that any individual can attain salvation by way of bhakti of Krishna or Hari, the supreme God. Chaitanya emphasized on the importance of Guru in the attainment of Salvation by way of bhakti. He said that the Guru only could release his disciple from the maya or illusionary world and could lead him to the feet of supreme God, whom he called Hari or Krishna. He said that the presence of that supreme God could be felt through devotion or love towards him. According to Radha Kumud Mukherjee, Chaitanya's contribution to bhakti movement was his emphasis on the morality, good character and celibacy of the monks and saints, throughout their lives, which exercised much more influence on the people in general.

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#### 4.5. EFFECT OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT

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As there were several bhakti saints from various parts of India. The scope of this movement was the whole of country. It spread each and every province of our country. This movement tried to achieve regeneration in Hinduism in order to make it enough strong to withstand the attack of Islamism and consequently conversion of Hindus to Islamism. The bhakti movement also aimed at the cordiality and brotherhood between the Hindu and the Muslim communities. As a matter of fact, the movement could liberalize Hinduism in order to include all segments in the country in to it and either stop or minimize the proselytization of Hindus to Islamism. Although, the movement failed in reconciliation between the Hinduism and the Islamism, it brought out several consequences as under:-

**Development of Local and Regional languages:-** The saints and philosophers involved in this movement were from various parts of the country and belong to various local or regional language background. They used the local or mass language to propagate the message of the movement among the people. Therefore, the bhakti movement created literature in the local language, which stimulated the development of local and regional languages.

**The Rise of Sikhism:-** During the bhakti movement the Sufis and bhakti saints challenged the old traditions, customs and conservative principles of the Hinduism and the Islamism on the basis of liberality of Sufism and nirgun devotion of bhakti movement, which forced the orthodox segments in both religions to find out common meeting points and redefine their old faiths to tackle these challenges. The Sikhism got birth from the confluence of two trends as one the liberal and non-sectarian and the other orthodox and traditional. The teaching of Guru Nanak was the result of these two trends. Guru Nanak wanted to create an atmosphere of peace, good will and mutual interaction between the Hinduism and Islamism. He postulated an ideal State presided over by a moral, just and a philosopher king. He never wanted to found a new religion but his catholic approach, his teaching which based on



human equality, brotherhood, morality and justice led his disciples to start a new religion. Thus, the Sikhism came into existence.

**Social Change:-** At most all bhakti saints professed the philosophy of social cordiality, friendliness, universal brotherhood and the unity of god. They also criticized and protested against the out dated and useless traditions, customs and systems like caste and untouchability. Naturally, this led to reduce the austerity of these social evils and weakened them considerably. Thus, the bhakti movement paved the way of change in society.

**Bhakti Movement Stimulated change in religious thinking.** When almost all saints began to attack on the orthodoxy of the religious, then the period of soul-searching exercise began in the religions minded people. These saints also tried to align them with some other philosophers and sects other than their own traditional faith.

As the bhakti movement created stir in society and religion, it also enhanced the change in the approach of rulers then in India. Due to bhakti movement only, the rulers were forced to understand the religion of the masses for their smooth and uninterrupted administration in the country. Although, the bhakti movement did not bring revolutionary and radical changes as the Reformation brought about in Europe, but it created a deep lapidary impact on the mind of each and every person in India of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries which was towards the positives changes and was based on the human equality.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Discuss briefly the background of the bhakti movement.
2. Enumerate any four causes of the bhakti movement.

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## 4.6 SUMMARY

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Bhakti is the Hindu concept of supreme love and devotion to the God. It is the most popular way of achieving Salvation in the life of an individual in Hinduism followed since the ages. Bhakti or devotion has meaning only if it is blended with love towards all human beings and creatures in the universe without any bias or reservations. Such bhakti is bound to be reflected in the devotee's personality, radiating powerful and luminous divine energy, aiming at welfare and compassion towards human beings. Bhakti or devotion leads to ecstasy and expels all forms of hate, envy, lust, greed and attracts only truth, goodness and righteousness.

The origin of bhakti movement was traced in the Vedas and Upanishidas. It was an established element in the post-Vedic age and the Bhagwat movement. During this period, it was considered that bhakti, Jnana and Karma were three different paths to Salvation. There are two aspects of bhakti as one is the path of devotion based on Service to God, i.e. the devotee throws himself completely at the mercy of God, which is known as the path of surrendering to God. The other one is the bond based on

pure love and equality rather than service to God. This is exemplified in the legends of Vishnu and Bhagwat Puranas.

Regarding the origin of the bhakti movement, two distinct periods are given as one from the earliest to the thirteenth century and the second from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. These periods had some distinct characteristics- as the first period represented the combination of pantheism of the intellectuals and the deistic polytheism of commoners and the second period bore the impact of monotheism of Islam religion. Naturally, the presence of Islam in India posed a danger to the Hinduism. Hence, the bhakti movement was one of the solutions to the problems in the then India. The second reason was the defeat of Hindus at the hands of the Muslim rulers. Prof. K.N. Panikar says that the Hindus were incredibly fed up with the atrocities of the Muslims for several centuries. They, therefore, sought solace in the bhakti and the movement began. Max Weber says that bhakti movement was the ideology of a defeated ruling class. Some other scholars say that bhakti movement grew and spread as a defense mechanism in north India. As a matter of fact the Muslim invasions on India converted Hindus to Islamism forcibly, this fact awakened the Hindus philosophers and saints, who began to advocate reforms in the religion. Thus, the movement began in India. Even, there was a group of people that was not happy with the highly philosophical exposition of Hinduism. Therefore, the saints advocated a set-up which was easily comprehended by the people and the movement began in the country.

As there were some several factors responsible for the rise of the movement, there were some important features of the movement. As the bhakti movement saints opposed to the several social evils in the society and paved the way for reforms in the society. These saints criticized on the idol worship and professed that God has no colour, no shape and sign; they protested the rites and rituals and said that God needs pure devotion only. The saint never claimed as they initiated any new religion but they were in favour of unity of God and the importance of Guru in the attainment of Salvation.

As the bhakti movement was initiated by several saints, among them saints like Dyaneshwara, Namdeva, Ramananda, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Ramanuja, Madhavacharya, Nimbarka, Vallabhacharya and Chaitanya were very active and due to their contribution only, the movement began spread and flourished in every part of the country. Bhakti movement brought out several consequences as it developed the local and regional languages, the rise of Sikh religion took place there, it brought about social regeneration as these saints criticized on the out dated rites, rituals, castes, untouchability and many other social evils.

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## 4.7 QUESTIONS

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1. Explain the meaning, origin and concept of Bhakti movement.
2. Examine the circumstances that led to the rise of Bhakti movement.
3. Discuss briefly about the major saints of Bhakti movement.
4. Analyze the important features of Bhakti movement. What were its effects?

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## 4.8 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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1. Satish Chandra, Medieval India, Haranand Publications Pvt. LTD. New Delhi
2. Satish Chandra, Introduction to Savitri Chandra's social life and concepts in Medieval Hindi-Bhakti Poetry, Delhi. 1983.
3. Satish Chandra, Parties and Politics at the Mughal court. Delhi.
4. A. L. Srivastava, The Sultanate of Delhi, Delhi.



## SUFISM

### Unit Structure:

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Origin of Sufism
- 5.3 Nature of Sufism
- 5.4 Concepts and Teachings of Sufism
- 5.5 Silsilas or orders in Sufism
  - 5.5.1 Chishti Silsilah
  - 5.5.2 Subravardi Silsilah
  - 5.5.3 Sufism in Deccan
- 5.6 Bhakti Cult and Sufism in Maharashtra
- 5.7 Summary
- 5.8 Questions
- 5.9 Additional Readings

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### 5.0 OBJECTIVES:

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- To trace the origin of Sufi cults and philosophy in India.
- To understand the nature of Sufism in India.
- To make student aware about the concepts and silsilas (orders) in Sufism.
- To analyze the relation with other religious groups.
- To observe the spread of Sufism in Deccan
- To trace the spiritual coexistence in Maharashtra

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### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

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The most interesting aspect of Islam in its medieval Indian environment is Sufism. The medieval period witnessed the rise and development of a large number of Muslim religious movement, mystic organization (zawiya), religious cult and attitudes. The Islamic mysticism was known as

Sufism. As a matter of fact, both Hindus and Muslims had mutual admiration for each others culture, since the early days of the advent of Islam into India. Famous Muslim scholars and saints lived and laboured in India during the medieval period. They helped the dissemination of the ideas of Islamic philosophy and mysticism in India. The early Sufis traced their ideas to some verses of the Quran and Tradition of the prophet (Hadis). However, they gave a mystic interpretation that they differed from the orthodox Muslims who insisted upon a literal interpretation. They lived as ascetics, wearing garments of coarse wool (suf) as a badge of poverty. From 'suf' derived the name sufi. The spiritual coexistence established with Bhakti cults in North India has difference colors in medieval Indian culture which has unity and secular values in Indian society for national integration.

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## 5.2 ORIGIN OF SUFI MOVEMENT

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Sufism is typical mysticism. According to Tarachand, 'sufism is a complex phenomenon, it is like a stream which gather volume by the joining of tributaries from many lands. Its original source is Quran and the life of Muhammad. Christianity and neo-platorism swelled it by a large contribution. Hinduism and Buddhism supplied a number of ideas and the religions of ancient Persia Zoroastrianism etc. brought to it their share is. The Islamic mysticism, known as Tasawwaf or sufism, was as old as Islam itself. It was born in the bosom of Islam. It is said that during the very lifetime of Prophet Hazarat Muhammad there were some men of virtue and of retiring nature who embraced Islam with pleasure but showed laity in the observation of its ritualistic or dogmatic aspects. Such liberal minded men of God drew their inspiration from the Quran and the life of the Prophet. But instead of parading about their religious orthodoxy, they laid greatest stress on the purification of one's inner self in order to attain acting spiritual.

Sufism had no creed or dogma other than that of Islam and for a long time, it had no organization or monastic order. It is said that it assumed the form of a regular movement in Persia in the ninth century as a reaction against the rigid formalism of Islam. It received a theosophical basis during the age of Abbasid caliphs of Bagdad and the sufi saints drew freely from the mystic concepts of other peoples and religions, including Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. The credit for bringing about reconciliation between orthodox Islam and sufism goes to Al Ghazali (1057-1112 A) an Arab Philosopher. He provided a metaphysical basis to mysticism as a part and parcel of the Islamic theology.

In Eight century, the Arabs and Iranians (Persians) who sailed from Yemen and the Persian Gulf controlled the trade between Indian subcontinent and China in the East Asia, middle East and Egypt - Mediterranean Sea region. The Zamorin of Calicut is believed to have patronized Arab merchants in Kerala coast. Many locals of Kerala, Lakshadweep Islands and Ceylon embraced Islam. The Sufi orders and the saints from various cults came to India with these merchants. These Sufis worked as experts in religious law (Sharia), Imam in congregational

prayers (Salat or Namaz), spiritual guide for passengers and intermediaries between merchants and locals in social tasks. Many Khanqahs (sufi hospice) of Abu Ishaq Kaziruni established all Islands between Yement to China. Traveler Ibn Battuta mentioned about Sufi khanqahs at Kerala coast to Canton in China during his journey in Asia. Before twelfth century in India, many Sufism came and established Sufi Taqiyas or Khanqahs from Sind, Kathiyawad to Kerala, Ceylon and Lakshadweep, Maldives Islands. Sufism gained a foothold in Punjab before the establishment of Muslim rule there by Sultan Mahumad of Ghazni. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries Lahor and Multan attracted many well know sufis from countries outside India by land route. The greatest figure in the history of sufism in India, Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, arrived at Lahor from Ghazni in 1161 and settled at Ajmer during the reign of Prithviraj. There he died in 1235, his tomb continues to attract many pilgrims even now. After the establishment of the Muslim rule in northern India, the sufis from the Muslim countries of Central Asia, began to migrate to India in large numbers. They moved about in the robber and styles of the Indian sadhus and established their hermitages at a number of places. They set up their abode in the residential quarters or colonies of the low castes on the periphery of the Hindu towns. Their first object was to win their love and confidence and reconcile them to the alien rule. Secondly, they persuaded them to embrace Islam on merit. The sultanate of Delhi was confined to only a part of India most of the time but sufis spread themselves throughout the country and carried on peaceful propagation of Islam.

In Islam, the term 'Mysticism' is synonymous with Ihsan (embellishment of conduct), Qurb (approaching Allah), Tariqat (road, i.e., the Journey unto Allah), Suluk (journey, i.e. unto Allah), and Tasawwuf (etymologically means – to don woolen cloth). This last term, oddly enough is most commonly used. Sufism or Tasawwuf is variously defined.

These are many opinions regarding the origin of this word. They may be summarized as follows:

**Ahl us Suffah:** Some Sufis like to link the name to Ahlus Sufaah (people of As Suffah) who was at the time of the Prophet (pbuh). They claim that there are read resemblance between the sufi adept and Ahlu Sufa. These were poor people from the Muhajireen who migrated from Mecca to al Medina fleeing the persecution of the pagan Arabs. They were driven away from their homes and had neither money nor families, nor a place to stay. The prophet Muhammad and the companions assisted them and he allowed them to stay in a courtyard by his Masjid, Masjid e Nabwi. The Sufis would like to establish a linkage with the Prophet's era and claim as well that Muhammad approved the early weed of Sufism exemplified in Ahlus Suffah (followers seated on the bench of the Mosque at Medina in the time of the Prophet).



**As – Saf al-Awwal:** Some Sufis claim that Sufism comes from As-Saff al-Awwal (First Row) ‘standing before the Hands of Allah, the Most Mighty and Most, Majestic, by virtue of the high determination and eagerness towards Allah in their hearts and by positioning their inner most before Him’.

**As – Safaa:** On the Sufis claim that the term is derived from As – Safaa which means clearness, purity, sincerity.

**As-Suf:** Many Sufis from the past and present consider that the term Sufism refuse to the wearing of woolen clothing (soof). This is also the opinion of Shaykh ul-Islam Ibn Taymeeyah. Also Ibn Khaldoon inclined to this opinion in his famous Muqaddimah.

Tasawwuf, an Arabic term, is generally translated as Sufism. The term for the process of realizing ethical and spiritual ideals; meaning literally – becoming a Sufi. The ideal Qualities evoked by their derivations are the key to the concept of Tasawwuf as formulated by authors of the tenth century, such as Sulami (d. 1021 AD), while acknowledging that the term Sufi was not current at the time of the Prophet. Sufi theorists maintained that this specialization in spirituality arose in parallel with other disciple such as Islamic law and Quaranic exegesis. But the heart of Sufism, they maintained, lay in the ideal qualities of the Prophet Muhammad and his association with his followers. Sufism described ethical and spiritual goals and functioned as teaching tools to open up the possibilities of the soul. In practice, the term Sufi was often reserved for ideal usage, and many other terms described particular spiritual qualities and functions, such as poverty (faqir, darvish), knowledge (alim, arif), mastery (pir) etc.

### **Check your Progress:**

- 1) Give an account of origin of Sufi Movement.

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## **5.3 NATURE OF SUFISM**

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The sufis were men of deep religious feelings. They led ascetic lives and laid emphasis on the practices of self discipline. They sought personal communion with God through self-surrender, meditation and total dedication to the service of mankind. The sufis did not form an organized sect. They neither had a Prophet, nor a sacred book, nor a uniform code of religious doctrines. They accepted Muhammad as their prophet and the Quran as their sacred book According to an observation, the orthodox Muslims depend upon external conduct while the sufis seek inner purity. The orthodox believe in blind obedience to, or observance of religious rituals while the Sufis consider love to be the only means of reaching God. The sufis used singing and dancing, forbidden by the orthodox as means

of inducing a state of ecstasy which brought a sufi nearer to his goal of union with God.

There is different opinion about the term 'sufi' derived from. According to some, the term sufi was derived from 'safa' (pure) because of the purity of their thoughts and the nobility of their action. Other derive the term from saff (line, queue) and hold that the sufis were so called because they were in the forefront of the line or queue before God. According to a third definition, the sufi has been derived from the word suffa (a bench) as the virtuous character and qualities of these saints were similar to those of 'Ashab al suff- or 'People of the Bench' who were attached to the prophet. They were called his companions (sahaba).. The term sufi also bears resemblance with the word suf or coarse wool, suggesting thereby that the sufis might have been so called because of their habit of wearing a woollen blanket purpose sheet of cloth.

The Sufis were the peaceful scholars, missionaries and preachers of Islam. They used local languages to explain the Quran and traditions of Prophet Muhammad (Hadis message). Also spread the message of humanity and equal rights without any cast and creed system. They established Khanqahs which was Sufi hospice of lodge with educational and religious duties. They established orphanage, services for humanity during flood, famine and war time. They dedicated their lives to the service of making and the spread of the Islamic faith. The propagation of Islam was regarded by them to be the greatest and the most meritorious service to be rendered to the people. Many text and written material regarding Sufi cults during medieval period has historical importance. The social and religious sources of medieval history give importance to the Sufic literature in many languages. The Arabic, Persian, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali and other many vernacular languages have Sufi literature or source material in India too. Sufi literature has been classified in various categories by different historians and scholars of Sufism. The broad categories include the following:

1. Malfuzat (the collection of conversations and discourses of the Sufis compiled by their disciples.
2. Maktubat (the collected correspondence of the Sufis).
3. Treatises written by the Sufis on themes related to Sufism.
4. Tadhkirat (compilation of anecdotes and biographical accounts of the Sufis composed by the disciples or devotees of the Sufis; often referred to as hagiographical literature).

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## 5.4 CONCEPTS AND TEACHING OF THE SUFISM

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Most of the Sufi saints belongs to the liberal school of thought. Their popularity in India was due to their understanding of the Indian conditions and the religious attitudes and aspirations of the Indian people. They adopted many Hindu customs and ceremonies in the initial stages of the development of their silsilas in India. They laid much emphasis on the service to mankind. The monistic philosophy of Sufism was based on the theory of wandat ul wajud or 'the unity of Being' according to which the

creator (Haq) and the created (Khalq) were identical. Means God was the Unity behind all plurality and the Reality behind all phenomenal appearance. Sheikh Muhiuddin Ibnul Arabi, the author of the theory, explain it in these words, 'There is nothing but God, nothing in existence other than He, there is not even a there', where the essence of all things is one.'

The sufis stood for the establishment of harmonious relationships with God could be attained in this very mortal life (Khaki Jame) through intense love for and total surrender and dedication to the Supreme Power. The sufi saints, in their capacity as pirs were the living teachers or spiritual guides. They showed the path and suggested the means to their followers, called (murids) for the attainment of eternal bliss which was called union (ma'rifat and wasl) by them. According to sufi saints, the presence of the God could be felt by any one who attended to his call with a loving heart. The Sufis held that God was an invisible. Absolute Reality and an Eternal Beauty which they named as Jamal and this universe was not a mere illusion either. It was the visible manifestation of God and it was named as Husn (lovable beauty). They argued that 'self manifestation and desire to be loved was an essential attribute of the Eternal Beauty. Thus the sufi philosophy was based on the principal of 'Love' which was the essence of all the religions.

Sufis felt that purity of heart was far greater than rituals and ceremonies and that it was only way by which truth could be realised. According to one version, a sufi had to pass through ten stages of dedication to God before he could attain communion with him, these were Tauba (Repentance), ware (Abstinence), Zuhd (Piety), Faqr (Poverty), Sabr (Patience), Shukr (Gratitude) and Khauf (fear), Raja (hope), Tawakkul (contentment) and Riza (submission to the Divine will). Some of the sufi saints observed celibacy while other married and lived as ordinary householders. Like the bhakti reformers, most of the sufis renounced the materialistic pursuits of the world. it was called 'Tark Ki Dunya'. They mostly depended on 'futih' or 'unasked fort charity'. Some of them took up to the cultivation of waste land as the means of their livelihood. The sufis lived in the hermitages, called 'khanqahs' (monasteries) or jamaitkhana.

### **Check your Progress :**

- 1) Describe nature and meaning of Sufi movement.
- 2) Comment on the concept and teaching of the Sufism.

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## **5.5 SILSILAS OR ORDERS IN SUFISM**

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Just like the bhakti reformers, the sufi also differed with one another in many respects as regards their methods of teaching. That is why, in the final phase of its development sufism came to be organised into a number of silsilas or orders. The founder of each silsila was said to have made some special contribution. They gave an individualistic touch of the

mystic philosophy or organisational set up of his disciples. The sufis were divided into number of sects, called silsilahs or orders. According to one estimate, as many as 175 such orders of sufis came into existence in the Muslim world. Abul Fazal lists 14 orders of the sufis which apparently found their way to India. Out of which only two took deep roots in the Indian soil. These were Chisti and the Suhrawardi orders. The Suhrawardi silsilahs made its presence felt in sind and north-western India. Whereas the Chistis silsilah became most prominent throughout the country.

### 5.5.1 CHISTI ORDER

The chisti silsilah established itself at Ajmer and gradually spread to other parts of Rajasthan, Punjab, Utter Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Deccan. The chisti order was founded by khwaja Abdul chisti. It was introduced in India by Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti, a native of Sijistan in Persia. He reached India and settled down at Ajmer which was a place of considerable political and religious importance. He worked amongst the low caste people and spent his life in the service of the helpless and down-trodden. He died in 1236 A.D. Thus, he won over the hearts of the people around him by selfless service to the poor and needy. He made many converts to Islam through peaceful means. Since then Ajmer became an important centre of pilgrimage for Hindus and Muslims alike. Sheikh Hamiduddin and Sheikh Farid or Baba Farid, Shaikh Qutbuddin Bhaktiyar Kaki, Shaikh Nizmuddin, Auliya Chishti of Delhi, Shaikh Salim Chisti and many other disciple popularized chisti order throughout the India.

The Chishtis favoured asceticism and isolation from public life. Most of the Chisti saints belonged to the liberal school of thought. Their popularity in India was due to their understanding of the Indian conditions and religious attitudes and aspirations of the Indian people. They laid much emphasis on the service to mankind. The Chishti mystics were believers in pantheistic monism, which had its earliest exposition in the upanishad of Hindus. Many of the Chishti saints lived in utter poverty and refused to accept any grants from the state. They were of the opinion that possession of any kind of private property was an obstacle to spiritual advancement.

### 5.5.2 SUHRAVARDI SILSILAH

It was the second most popular order of the sufis which flourished in north western India. It was founded by Shihabuddin Suhrawardi (1234), a teacher in Bagdad. Its foundation on Indian soil were laid by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya of Multan. He carried on his missionary work at Multan for about twenty-five years and rose to be the most prominent muslim divine of his age in north-western India. The Chishtis and Suhrawardis differed in respect of religious practices as also their attitude towards secular activities. Unlike the Chishti saints, the exponents of the suhravardi order did not believe in excessive austerity or self-mortification. Rather they constituted an influential and affluent priesthood of the muslims. They lived comfortable family live's and felt no scruples in accepting expensive presents and patronage from the muslim aristocracy. They took active part in the state politics. Thus

Surhvardi silsilah was confined mostly to upper strata of the Mughal society.

Sufism

Many other sufi mystic orders also were introduced in India. But they did not make much impact on the people of India. Some others silsilah were limited to certain regions only some of them were:

The QadiriSilsilah - introduced in India by ;Iyyid Muhammad Gilani (1517), The Firdausi Silsilah Shaikn Badruddin. The Shattari Silsilah - Shaikh Abdullah Shattari. The Nagshahandi Silsilah - Khwaja Baki Billah.

In the fourteen century the influence of the sufis declined. They were weakened by doctrinal differences among themselves as also by the unfriendly attitude of some of the muslim rulers. However, sufis played an important role in spreading the muslim culture among the masses in various parts of the country. Sufism also contributed to a great extent in moulding the character of the medieval Indian society.

**5.5.3 Sufism in Deccan:** After the Khilji and Tughluq dynasty Deccan ruled by Bahamani rulers. Bahamanis conquered Telangana in 1373 AD and Warangal in 1421, and the coastal Andhra 1472 AD. On the dissolution of the Bahamani Empire in 1482, its dominions were distributed into the five Muslim states of Golconda, Bijapur, Ahmednager, Bihar and Berar. Berar Imadshahi had been annexed by Nizam Shahi Ahmednager in 1572, and Bidar (Baridshahi) was absorbed by Bijapur in 1109. Ahmednager was conquered by Mughals in 1616 AD, Bijapur, in 1686, and Goldkonda in 1688. Nizam ul Mulk established the seat of an independent government at Hyderabad and Aurangabad in 1724. In thirteenth century, Ala ud Din Khilji conquered Deogiri Yadava state (now Daulatabad, in Dist. Aurangabad). That time many disciples of Nizam ud Din Auliya Dehlawi migrated to Daulatabad, Khuldabad (Rauza) and Aurangabad. Shaikh Nizam ud Din Auliya sent to Khwaja Aziz ud Din Chishti and Kamal ud Din Chishti to Deccan. They were grandsons of Shaikh Nizam ud din Auliya's spiritual master Shaikh Farid ud Din Ganj I Shakar. Khwaja Aziz ud Din settled at Daulatabad.

Muhammad bin Tughlaq took historic decision to make Devgiri (Daulatabad) 'a second administrative city / capital', of his Empire. He forced the 'ulama and the mashai'kh of Delhi to migrate to Daulatabad (Deogiri). Many of the Saints who left for Daulatabad like Shaikh Burhan ud Din Gharib Maulana Fakhru ud Din Zarradi Amir Hasan Sijzi, Syed Yusuf Raju Qattal Husaini (father of Syed Muhammad Gesu Daraz of Gulbarga), Khwaja Husain, Khwaja Umar and other Chishti saints were brought up in the Chishti mystic traditions of Shaikh Nizam ud Din Auliya and had imbiied from him the Chishti mystic principles. Shaikh Burhan ud Din Gharib was the senior most disciple of Shaikh Nizam ud Din Auliya. Maulana Ghulam Ali

Azad Bilgrami calls him Sahib i-Walayath of the Deccan, which shows that his supreme position amongst the mystics was recognized even by the later generations.

In Deccan since Thirteenth century to Seventeenth century, many Sufi Silsilas and Khanqahs established including Chishti, Qadiri, Rafai, Naqshbandi and Suharawardi. In Deccan, Khuldabad, Daulatabad, Aurangabad, Burhanpur, Balapur, Bidar, Gulbarga, Bijapur and Hyderabad has number of Sufi shrines. Many Hindu Muslim devotees visited regularly for occasion of Urs festivals or death anniversary of the saints.

Khuldabad and the Daulatabad region was the early center of Sufism in Deccan. During Khijli and Tughlaq dynasty rule, Deccan region has saw the spread of Sufism in Daulatabad, Khuldabad, Gulbarga, Bijapur, Bidar, Balapur, Burhanpur and Hyderabad. Burhan al-Din Gharib's Dargah has situated at South Gate of Khuldabad town. He was studied under Nizam ud Din Auliya (Awliya) of Delhi. He was Khalifah (spiritual successor) of Nizam ad-Din Auliya in Deccan. Contemporary writers states, that the death of Shah Munajabu-udDin at Daulatabad, his brother Burhan al-Din was sent to succeed him, and was sent to succeed him by Nizam al-Din Auliya, and was accompanied by 1400 disciples (Murid). It appears more probable however, that Burhan ud-Din succeeded the Sultan-i-Mashaikh as Khalifah, and that he immigrated to the Deccan (Dakhan) when Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq transferred the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. After Burhan al Din Gharib, many Sufis settled and spread spiritual ideas in Khuldabad, Daulatabad and Aurangabad region. Shah Muntoji Bahamani, Muntjib Zar Zari Baksh, Hamid Qalandar, Rukn al din Kashani, Farid Adib Chishti, Zayn al Din Shirazi (1301-1369), Shah Jalaluddin Chishti, Yusuf Husaini, Amir Hasan Sijasi (author of Fawaidul Fuwad book) etc. Sufism settled in Khuldabad and buried there in many shrines. In Daulatabad region, Hazrat Momin Arif Suharawardi was famous sufi saint. Shaikh Chand Bodhale Qadiri was another famous Sufi in Daulatabad town. Khwaja Sarwar Maqdoom Haji Sayah Rafai was the famous sufi saint who came from Iraq and settled at Kandhar fort area in Nanded during Bahamani period. Sayed Nizamuddin Chishti and Shah Muizuddin Chishti sufi saint settled in Paithan. Khwaja Abul Fazl Kochakshah Shahenshah Wali was famous in Beed region. Mansur Shah sufi shrine was regularly visited by Maratha ruler Mahadji Shinde during Peshwa Period. Malik Ambar established new town near Khadki village beside Daulatabad fort in 1608, which known as today Aurangabad. This town developed during Nizamshahi and Mughal rule. Many Sufism settled here and established Khanqahs and Sufi shrines. Shah Noor Hamwi Qadiri came from Iraq and died here in 1692. His shrine is very famous today in Aurangabad. Baba Shah Musafir and Shah Palangposh Naqshbandi came from Central



Asia to Aurangabad during Mughal rule. Their shrine known as Panchakki Naqshbandi Dargah in Aurangabad today. In the 1860, one British visitor, Major Robert Gill, wrote about Panchakki in 1864 that, 'the place is much resorted to by the English for purposes of eating and drinking: by the Moslems, and even Hindoos, in honor of the Peer (Shah Musafir), and for purposes of veneration'. Nizamuddin Chishti Aurangabadi Dargah also famous in Aurangabad. These shrines has many grants and properties sanctioned by Sultanate period to Maratha rule. Shivaji Maharaj also visited the Khanqah of Baba Yaqoot Sarwari of Kelashi, near Suwarndurg, Ratnagiri. He granted land for mosque and shrine there. Baba Yaqoot died in 1681. His Dargah is famous today in Konkan region.

### **Check your Progress :**

- 1) Assess the achievements of Chisti Silsila.
- 2) Explain the Sufism in Deccan.
- 3) Write the Sufi centers of Maharashtra.
- 3) Explain the Suhrawardi Silsilah in Sufism.

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## **5.6 BHAKTI CULT AND SUFISM**

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Hinduism particularly Bhakti cult and sufism largely borrowed from each other. They were complementary to each other in several respects. Bhakti cult in medieval times was radically different from old traditions. Many Sufi Silsilas has spiritual relations with Yogi Nath cult people in North India. They practices breath control practices for recitation (Zikr). String similarities between sufism and Bhakti cult were as follows.

Concept of lanai in Sufism was originally a Hindu idea. Approach to God is through love and intelligence or Yogic exercises or 'Karma' are hurdler, is the central idea of Bhakti, which we find reflected in sufism also. Submission to pir or Guru, recitation of sacred names of God is both common in Bhakti and Sufi Cults. Vedent Philosophy of Shankaracharya found in Sufism also. It is due to the simplicity and broad humanism of Sufi Saints, Islam received its largest number of converts. These two parallel movements based upon doctrines of love and self-less devotion, helped a lot in bringing the two communities closer together. The eastern version of Sufism which was in Bengal, Assam and Bihar was an offshoot of Vedanta of the Hindus. These two cults also brought cultural synthesis. Bhakti cult and Sufism emerged and became powerful forces because both Islam and Hinduism became orthodox, rigid. Saints in Bhakti and sufi cult found a personal method of self-expression, a convenient vehicle for intellectual, philosophical and emotional enjoyment for spiritual attainment.

The Marathi school of Vaishnavism or the Bhagavata Dharma has a long history. By the close of the 13th century, steady enrichment and vigor was imparted to the Bhakti movement in

Maharashtra by a number of poet-saints. The most outstanding of these was Dnyaneshwara a Brahmin who is considered to be the greatest exponent of the Maratha Vaishnavism. He wrote a Marathi commentary on the Bhagavadgita called Bhavartha Dipika or Jnanesvari. The main centre of the movement started by him was Alandi – Newasa, Pandarpur region. The shrine of Vithoba of Pandarpur later became the mainstay of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra. The Krishna Bhakti movement of Pandarpur was intimately linked to a temple and a deity, but it was not idolatrous in nature. Vithoba was more than a simple deity; its importance lay in its symbolism. The main features of the Vaishnava religious devotion-anti-ritualism and anti-castes (ism) in Maharashtra-were similar to those of other non-conformist movements in the North India.

The poet-saints tried to bring religion to the lowest strata of the society. By interpreting the Bhagavad-Gita in melodious Marathi tunes, Jnyaneshwar laid the basis of the Bhagavata Dharma in Maharashtra by giving a fillip to the Varkari sect which had initiated and instituted regular popular pilgrimage to the shrine of Vithoba (the form of the great God Vishnu) at Pandarpur. Vithoba was the god of the Varkari sect. Its followers were householders who performed pilgrimage twice a year to the temple. Its membership cut across caste boundaries. The movement in Maharashtra witnessed mass participation by different social groups such as sudras, Atisudras, Kumbhera (potter) Mali, mahar (outcaste) and Alute balutedars. Some of the saints belonging to lower strata of society were Harijan Saint Choka, Gora Kumbhar, Narahari Sonara, Banka Mahara, etc. In the post-Jnyaneshwar period, Namdeva (a tailor by caste), Tukaram, and Ramdas, were important Marathi saints. Eknath (a Brahman) furthered the tradition laid down by Jnyaneshwar. Tukaram and Ramdas also raised anti-caste and anti-ritual slogans. Eknath's teachings were in vernacular Marathi. He shifted the emphasis of Marathi literature from spiritual text to narrative compositions. He wrote the Hindu Turk Samvad in Dakhani. His philosophy influenced by Sufism in Daulatabad and Paithan region. Tukaram's teachings are in the form of Gatha, very influencing in society. It is an important source for the study of the Marathi Vaishnavism. The Varkari Maratha saints developed a new method of religious instruction, i.e. Kirtan and the bhajan. The Maratha movement contributed to the flowering of Marathi literature. These saints used popular dialect which paved the way for transformation of Marathi into a literary language. The literature of the Varkari School gives us some idea about the plebeian character of the movement. It addressed itself to the problems of the Kunbis (farmers), Vanis (traders) and the artisans, etc. M.G. Ranade points out that this movement led to the development of vernacular literature and up-liftment of lower castes, etc.

According to Tara Chand, the Marathi literature and culture developed in Medieval Maharashtra region with the synthesis of Muslim mystics and ruling elites. From the end of the thirteenth century and the middle of the fourteenth century, Muslim rulers had not only completely conquered the Deccan but the established an independent Muslim kingdom there. The Bahamani rulers of the Deccan like their contemporaries in Bengal, fostered the growth of the literature and art of the people whom they governed. The Marathi language was used in the offices of the Adilshahi and Qutb Shahi kingdoms, and Marathas were employed as revenue officers and even as commandants. Qutb Shah was a patron of culture and himself a poet of considerable power, and wrote extensively in the Dakhani language which was a mixture of Hindu and Persian. The Marathi saints and hymn singers affected the same kind of synthesis of the two faiths as was done by Kabir and Nanak in the north India. The poetry of Baba Farid Chishti has been noted in Guru Granth Sahib of Sikh religion.

Mahadev Govind Ranade described the beginning of the movement thus: ‘The severity of the monotheistic creed of the Muhammadan was distinctly impressed upon the minds of these personalities (Kabir, Nanak and others). The worshippers of Dattatraya or the incarnation of the Hindu Trinity, was often clothed their God in the garb of a Muhammadan Faqir. Kamal, the son of Kabir wrote about Namdev in his poem (Hindi):

“Dakhanmai Nama darzi, Unko Banda Vitthal hai,

Aur seva kuch nahi jaane andar bhitar keshav hai ||

Uchar Myaane Bhayo Kabira ramacharankaa bandaa hai

Unko put hai Kamal donoka bolbalaa hai ||”

Kamal, the son of Kabir said that, Saint Namdev was bounded by the Bhakti of Shri Vitthal of Pandharpur. He had the Bhakti of Keshava inside and outside. And Kamal has the very respects about Kabir and Namdev.

This same influence was at work with greater effect on the popular mind in Maharashtra, where preachers, both Brahmans and non-Brahmans, and ensure their freedom from the bonds of formal ritualism, and caste distinctions, and unite in common love of man and faith in God. As early as the twelfth century the Marathi language had pushed Sanskrit out of the administrative and literary spheres. A significant role in the cultural development of the region and in heightening the people’s self-consciousness was played by Dnyaneshvar (end of the thirteenth century) who wrote a Marathi version of the Bhagvadgita. After him Marathi literature developed rapidly and one of the main themes was praise for the Marathi language and patriotic pride

for Maharashtra. Mukteshvar, a seventeenth century poet said: 'Maharashtra is the most important of all lands and even gods fear it and are put to shame by it'.

Maharashtra was an important centre of Bhakti. Varkari cult worshipped the local deity Vithoba who was supposed to be an incarnation of Krishna. The main centre of Varkari tradition was the city of Pandharpur, to which the devotees still make annual pilgrimages. This school of Bhakti gave birth to a galaxy of poets like Namdev, Narhari, Bahinabai, Chokha Mela and of Course, Eknath and Tukaram. They made a rich literature, which exists on the Marathi saints and Bhakti poets. Their life stories, based on the eighteenth century works by Mahipati were translated and published by Justin E. Abbott.

These Marathi Bhakti traditions had the biggest support in the villages' area from Maharashtra in historical times. Dnyaneshwar completed his Marathi commentary of the Bhagvad Gita in 1290 AD. Dnyaneshwar had tremendous influence on the language and thought of Maharashtra, but the first of the saintly array of men who changed the faith of the country and turned the minds of men from the priest-ridden ceremonial of a narrow creed to freedom and love was Namdev (1270 – 1350 AD). He is remembered by every saint of Maharashtra, North India, Rajputana and the Punjab as the first historical name in the long list of Bhaktas. The Bhaktas or Bhakti in Maharashtra centred round the shrine of Vittoba at Pandharpur on the banks of Bhima (Dist. Solapur). Tukaram was contemporary of Shivaji Maharaj. He was born at Dehu, near Poona, about 1608 AD. He wrote:

“Allah deve, Allah dilaave, Allah deve, Allah khilave, Allah bin nahi koy,

Allah kare sohi hoya.” “Jikir karo Allah ki, Baba Savalya Andar Bhes.

Tuka jo nar buze sohi darvesh.” “Nabi Ek tu. Allah ek tu, Nabi Ek tu.”

(Allah, you are only one, and Muhammad (nabi) you are also one).

Saint Eknath was the another famous saint in Marathwada after Dnyaneshwar. He born at 1533 in Paithan. He was the disciple of Saint Janardan Swami of Daulatabad fort. His books named 'Eknathi Bhagavat' and 'Bhavarth Ramayan', are famous today. According to Nandapurkar N.G., Eknath was the 'Ek' (the one) 'Nath' (saint god / guide) of the Maharashtra Varkari cult devotees. Samadhi of Eknath situated at Paithan near Godavari river bank. Chand Bodhale Sayyad Qadiri was the Muslim poet in seventeenth century. His guru was haikh Raje Muhammad

Qadiri. His name is quoted in 'Shijara-i- Quadiri', by Shaikh Muhammad Shrigondekar Sayyad as Sayyad Chandsaheb Qadiri. Chand Bodhale was the Guru of Shaikh Muhammad Shrigondekar and Swami Janardan of Daulatabad.

Shaikh Raje Muhammad Qadiri

↓

↓ Shaikh Chand Bodhale Qadiri ↓

Shaikh Muhammad Shrigondekar Swami Janardan → Saint Eknath of Paithan

The tomb of Chand Bodhale Qadiri situated at Daulatabad near Fort. This Dargah visited by Hindu and Muslim devotees.

Many Marathi and other regional language literature with folk touch had been developed between fifteenth to Nineteenth century. Number of Muslim poets and author has been contributed Marathi literature in Medieval Maharashtra. These authors were influenced from Jain, Shaiv, Mahanubhav, Nath, Bhagvat Varkari sects. Shaikh Muhammad, Shah Mundi, Husain Ambar Khan, Jamal Shah, Allam Khan, Shaikh Sultan etc. authors had contributed Marathi literature. These curious literature facets had made synthesis culture with harmony in Medieval Maharashtra. Allamkhan was the devotee of Nagesh cult in medieval Marathwada. Bhanji Trimbak Deshpande wrote the book on Nagesh cult, 'Nageshlilamrut', in 1824. In this book, he wrote the 'Alamkhan Aakhyan', in 39<sup>th</sup> chapter. The Samadhi (tomb) of Alamkhan situated at Karali Karle in Osmanabad District of Marathwada. He wrote the spiritual Abhang on Nagesh Nath. He was very famous today in this region.<sup>253</sup> Ajam was the Muslim Marathi poet in seventeenth century Maharashtra. He was one of the disciples of Shaikh Muhammad Shrigondekar. Ajam's folk Aarti lyrics are famous today to the glory of Shaikh Muhammad Shrigondekar Saheb, in District Ahamadnagar.

Hazrat Ladle Mashaykh Raghavchaitanya (c. 1460 – 1560) was the Marathi saint of Datta sect in Marathwada – Karnataka frontier region. Muslim called him as Hazrat Mashaykh Aland Sharif Awliya. Hindu, Jain and Lingayat Veershaiv devotees called him as 'Sadguru', the best teacher / guide. His tomb or Samadhi situated at Aland, District Gulbarga.<sup>255</sup> Shah Muni alias Sahsen (1730 – 1808) was originally from northern India. His parents migrated to Maharashtra and settled at Shrigonda, Ahmadnagar. He had born at Shrigonda. He wrote Sindhant Bodh. He died at Shah Gad, Beed. Husain Ambarkhan (1603 – 1653) was famous Marathi poet in seventeenth century Maharashtra. He wrote 'Ambarhusaini', the edited book on Gita, after Dnyaneshwar. His gitatikaa was contained 871 lines in Marathi. In his words, that was the Gita Bhavarth Dipika. His

father Yakut Khan, was a servant at Daulatabad fort in Nizamshahi of Ahmadnagar. Vaijyanath of Tanjor (Tamil Nadu) has written in his book 'Chidambarjayanti Strot', about Ambar Khan.

Shaikh Muhammad Shrigondekar was the famous Marathi Muslim Sufi saint in seventeenth century Marathwada. He was from Dharur village. He wrote Yogsangram, Nishkalank Bodh, Pawan Vijay and Dnyansagar. His devotees are both Hindu and Muslim come to his Dargah / Samadhi at Shrigonda. Shaikh Muhammad known as 'Kabir' of Maharashtra. His father was Raje Mahammad and mother Phulai. He was belonged to Qadiri Sufi silsila.

**Spiritual Genealogy of Shaikh Muhammad Shrigondekar**

Abdul Qadir Jilani (Baghdada, Iraq)



Sayyad Abdul Razzak Tajoddin Qadiri



Sayyad Mahammad Gaus Gwalihery Qadiri (Gwalior)



Shaikh Raje Muhammad Qadiri

Sayyad Chand Saheb Qadiri (Spiritual guide of Swami Janardan of Daulatabad)

Sayyad Shaikh Muhammad Shrigondekar.

Shaikh Muhammad wrote in 'Yogasangram':

“Namo Shri Chand Bodhale.

Yani Jyanopanta Angikarile.

Jyanobane Ekaa Upideshile.”



<b>Name</b>	<b>Place of Death / Region</b>	<b>Features / Writings / Relations with Sects</b>	<b>Political Dominion</b>
Allam Khan alias Allam Prabhu (14 <sup>th</sup> Century)	Karali-Karli (Dist. Osmanabad) Shrine	Nagesh Sect, Devotees come both Muslim and Hindu	Tughlaq Period in Deccan
Hazrat Ladle Mashaykh Raghvachaitanya (1460-1560)	Aland (Gulbarga)	Relation with Datta Sampradaya.	Bahamani Empire
Shah Allam Prabhu (1478-1538)	Daulatabad Dist. Aurangabad	Famous as Malang Fakir of Datta Cult	Bahamani Empire
Husain Ambarkhan	Marathwada periphery	He wrote 'Ambarhusaini', in Marathi, the translation of Bhagvad Geeta	Nizam Shahi of Ahmednagar
Chand Bodhale Sayyid Quadiri	Daulatabad Fort	Sufi Pir	Nizam Shahi of Ahmednagar
Shah Muni (14 <sup>th</sup> Century)	Shah Gad (Beed)	Marathi poerty	Nizam Shahi
Shaikh Muhammad Shrigondekar (17 <sup>th</sup> Century)	Samadhi / Dargah at Shrigonda in Dist. Ahmednagar, originally from Dharur, Beed	Well Known as 'Kabir' of Maharashtra. Author of 'Yogsangram'.	Mughal Empire

**Check your Progress:**

- 1) Write a note on Bhakti cult and Sufism in Maharashtra.
- 2) Explain the contribution of Muslim authors in Marathi literature.

## 5.7 SUMMARY

They early Sufis were known for their asceticism. They thought that it was the world that distracted their attention from God. The Chisti and the Suhrawardi order helped the rulers in their own way by creating a climate of opinion in which people belonging to different sects and religious could live in peace and harmony. While Mecca remained the holy of holies, the rise of popular sufi saints provided a useful point of veneration and devotion to the mass of Muslims within the country. Even today many Hindu and Muslim devotees visited the Sufi shrines on occasion of Urs festival (death anniversary). District administration announced local holidays for the Urs festivals in many places. Many rulers sanctioned Waqf

properties or grants for the administration and financial assessment for the Khanqahs and Dargahs (Sufi Shrines) in medieval India from Bahamani, Tughlaq to the five Shahis of Deccan, Marathas, Asafjahnin Nizam and later Mughals.

In the fourteen century the influence of sufi declined. They were weakened by doctrinal differences among themselves as also by unfriendly attitude of some of the Muslim rulers. However, Sufis played very important role in spreading Muslim culture and its brotherhood policy among the masses in various part of country. The interaction with various Bhakti cults, the Sufi practices also influenced vernacular culture, literature and music tradition. Specially the Chishti Silsila made the classical synthesis with Indian music with Samaa and Qawwali tradition. Sufism is the symbol of communal harmony and cultural synthesis with spiritual coexistence in the subcontinent.

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## 5.8 QUESTIONS

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- Q1 Discuss the Philosophy of Sufism? To what extent sufism was influenced by Bhakti Movement?
- Q2. Write a critique on religion and spiritual trends during Mughal rule?
- Q3. Critically examine the religious policy of Sufism in India?

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## 5.9 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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## VILLAGE COMMUNITIES

### Unit Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Village Communities Under the Mughals
- 6.3. Village Communities During the Period of Maratha
- 6.4 Check Your Progress
- 6.5 Summary
- 6.6 Questions
- 6.7 Additional Readings

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### 6.0. OBJECTIVES

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After the completion of this unit the student will be able to

1. Understand the village communities under the Maratha with their antecedents.
2. Know the officials of the Village communities.
3. Comprehend Patil, the head of the Village communities, with his duties, functions, rights, powers, privileges and dues.
4. Know Kulkarni, the accountant of the village communities with his duties, rights, privileges and dues or income.
5. Understand Deshmukh, his duties, power, privileges and dues.

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### 6. 1. INTRODUCTION

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The Village community has been one of the important features of Indian life since the ages. India is a country of villages and agriculture is its main source of livelihood. Indian village communities were termed as a small republic. Many rulers came and gone, but there took place no change in the structure, arrangement, life style and administration in the village. They consumed what they produced & they produced whatever they needed to be consumed in their daily life.

The Village, during the period of Marathas was called by various names as Grama, Dehe, Mouja and Khede. The people who used to live in villages came to be known as village communities. There are several perceptions about the village communities as some historians say that the members of a family acquired some lands from their ancestors or forefathers collectively or individually and began to live in village and came to be known as village communities later. Some other scholars say that the members of the communities held the village land, had

proprietary rights over the whole land and apportioned it among all the members for cultivation.

Although, the meaning of village communities, differed scholar to scholar and historian to historian, the village communities produced goods required for markets in urban area and for consumption of the fellow villagers and village artisans. They also produced the goods for weekly markets in neighboring villages. This weekly market only served the linkage between the rural and urban India and enhanced the idea that the Indian village was a small republic, a self-sufficient unit of the country.

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## **6.2. VILLAGE COMMUNITIES UNDER THE MUGHALS**

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Before turning towards the study of the village communities during the period of Marathas, it is very essential to have some glimpses of the village communities under the Mughal Empire in India. During the Mughals, there were around six groups of people in the society as hand lords, who were

- 1) Zamindars who followed the profession of money lending to the people in general.
- 2) Rich cultivators
- 3) Peasants who had their own land.
- 4) Ordinary peasants, who had not enough and were forced to turn towards money lenders for loans.
- 5) There were some free individuals, who had no land of their own, they worked on the lands of rich cultivators. But they were not attached to the land of anyone.
- 6) There were some groups of people as scavengers, cobblers, agricultural workers and luggage carriers like Coolies. These people had to suffer very much because they had no fixed source of income. Generally, they belonged to the last rung of the society.

The Village communities and the various groups in the medieval society mostly based on the caste system and helped to create rigidity of profession.

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## **6.3 . VILLAGE COMMUNITIES DURING THE PERIOD OF MARATHAS**

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The village communities under the Marathas had some outstanding features which can be enumerated as under:-

During the Maratha period the village communities referred to 1) Wandars 2) Mirasis 3) Uparis Watan the word is an Arabic found in the Muslim record of Deccan, it means once own homeland. Generally, watan was a grant sanctioned by the ruler to its officer, who held the office and the grant lasted till the officer remained loyal to the ruler and discharged

his services efficiently and own the mercy of its ruler. Watandar was paid by the villagers for his services to them, which became rights of the watandar and dealt in detail in the watan deeds of the particular watandar. The watandar was being a permanent official, his position did not change even if there was change in the government. There were several watandars during the period of Chhatrapati Shivaji, who had served the earlier Muslim rulers.

Apart from watandars the other two elements as Mirasdar and Uparis also were part and parcels of the village communities of the Maratha period. The Mirasdar was a Landholder, he had absolute proprietary rights in the land inherited from his forefather. The mirasdar was also called as Thalkari or original inhabitant of the village. The uparis as the title suggests that he was an outsider, migrated to the village from some other areas. Initially, he was to leasehold the land for some time and used to become a mirasdar when he acquired proprietary rights of land holding or the land he held temporarily earlier. They were in every village. Each village was as independent as a State. The Vishnu Samhita, Mahabharat and Manu Smiriti suggest that the king to appoint head or the chief or lord of each Village. In the administrative set up village, Tarfs, Prant and Parganas were successive divisions. The head of each division had to discharge some duties. V. K. Rajwade says that the Paripatyagar, the head of some Tarfs was to act as police Magistrate. There are several references regarding the village management in Kautilya's Arthashastra and other ancient scriptures— like the villages communities of Marathas.

### **Officials of the Village communities: -**

There were several officials of the village communities required to administer the same. Some of them were as under

#### **1. The Patil :-**

He was the chief revenue officer, Chief Police Magistrate, Chief Judicial Officer, and the chief of the village. Patil worked as the linkage between the village and the Government of Marathas. He functioned as exponent of the authority of Peshwas in the village and appeared before the Kamavisdar or any other officer of the Peshwas as the authorized representative of the village. Patil being the responsible revenue collection officer of the village. Kamavisdar often consulted him at the time of assessment of revenue of the village. It was the duty of Patil to protest if the revenue assessment was too high or exorbitant and excessive. Despite the protest of Patil. The Kamavisdar did not listen, Patil should move to different village leaving the whole process to the Kamavisdar. But, it is said that Patil took such step seldom or in extreme cases only. Because, the Kamavisdar was not able to collect revenue of any village in absence of Patil. Hence the Kamavisdar, usually agreed with the suggestions of Patil.

Patil as a Judicial officer was to convince and induce the parties to their dispute amicably and if that was failed Patil was to appoint a Panchayat for the settlement of the dispute. As a Police officer Patil with the help of



his watchman was to enquire into the cases of theft and robbery in his village.

The post of Patil was neither elected by the people of the village nor it was appointed by the Government. But it was hereditary or descended from the forefathers. The office of Patil was easily sold and purchased by anyone but generally, people were not ready to sell the post of Patil but in the rarest cases only. The sale was due to the economic constraints and even it was seen that there were two Patils in a village. The hereditary Patil used to sell some of his rights to another person, who would become Patil. Although the rights of Patil were enjoyed by all the members of the family, the preference was given to the elder branch of the family or the rule of seniority was observed very strictly in the family of Patil. Mostly, post of Patil was held by the dominant caste of Marathas but at several place it was also held by either Brahmin or a Muslim. Rajvyavaharakosh says that during the period of Marathas usually Patil was a Maratha and his symbol was plough, which could bear with his name on all official papers which signified the duties of Patil.

## **2. Duties of Patil:-**

Patil as the head of the Village had several duties to be performed in the village. Some of the important duties can be mentioned as under :-

1. As agriculture was the main source of income, the Maratha Government wanted to increase the production of agriculture. The Patil was assigned the important duty, that he was to help bring under cultivation whatever fallow land or barren land was there under the jurisdiction of the village and enhance the revenue of the village and the King.

2. The second important duty of Patil was that he was to prepare an estimate of the standing crop in the village every year and send it to the higher officers in the State administration for rough idea of the income of the ruler.

It was the duty of Patil that he should prepare some remission in the Land revenue in case of failure or partial failure of land production due to the flood, draught or of any reason, and submit it to the officer for further action.

- 4) Patil was to supply in detail the information regarding the total land, the crop grown its Kinds in acres, the revenue collected last year and the tentative collection of revenue during the current year to the Government.

- 5) Patil was to shoulder the responsibility of collecting land revenue. He was to pay the stipulated amount equal to the land revenue of the village into the Government treasury. He was also to bear on his own if there was any short fall in the collection of the land revenue of his village.

6) It was one of his duties that Patil was to assure and stand surety to the Government for the assessed Land revenue collection of the village on behalf the village. Patil was compensated for this noble work by the villagers with stipulated amount and customary honors.

7) As stated above, Patil was being the Judicial magistrate of the village, he was to call meeting of the village 'Gothsabha,' consult it smoothly and pass the decree, which needed his assent and no judicial decree was legal without his signature.

8) Patil was the chief Police Magistrate of the village. He was to maintain law and order in the village. Patil was responsible for peace and smooth functioning of the village. It was said that it was not possible for anyone to be in any village without the mercy of Patil. Thus, Patil was the whole and soul of the village community under the Marathas.

### **3. Rights and Powers of Patil :-**

Patil being the head and the watandar of the village had several rights and powers over the villagers, which were known as privileges (Haks) and dues (Lajimas). Haks means rights or services which Patil got done from the people of the village. While Lajimas had no legal sanction from the Government but they were optional, even then Patil enjoyed them as rights. These Haks or Privileges and Lajimas or dues deferred place to place and time to time. As a matter of fact, Patil entitled to some payments from the villagers in cash and kind. Generally, the share or the payment which Patil received from the village was fixed and confirmed by the Government. Following were the Haks and Lajimas of Patil under the Marathas:-  
**1. Manpan :-** These were the rights of seniority and precedence of Patil over the people in his village. Patil presided over each and every function and festive occasion in the village as celebrations of Holy, Ganpati, Sankrant, Dasara, Diwali, Padva, Nagpanchmi and Pola which were carried publicly by the people.

### **4. Cash Payment or Khunda :-**

Patil was entitled to receive certain share of the total Land collection in cash and kind which was fixed by the Government.

### **5. Payment in Kind :-**

Patil used to receive some production in kind from each and every producer or farmer in the village. They were known as Ghugri, Phaski and Hurda. Ghugri means recovery in kind of each and every production the cultivator produced. Phasaki means handful of corn or a partial share of production of every Land holding whereas Hurda means unripe corn or Jowar, which was baked and eaten being very tasty, was received by Patil as his rights. Besides, these rights, Patil used to get many articles which were consumed daily from the producers land shopkeepers without any payment as oil, coconuts, ghee, fowl and mutton. Patil used to get some articles of daily use from almost all artisans such as a pair of

shoes, Pasodi or Chudder, Cholkhan or a piece of cloth which was used to tailor as blouse or bodice for his wife.

## **6. Levies :-**

Apart from the above payments in kinds, the Patil used to get his share in various levies, which were imposed on people and collected by the Government. Among such levies, marriage tax, divorce tax and tax imposed on the transition of cattle were important and generally fetched much income to the Government as well as to Patil.

## **7. Services :-**

Patil had right to get free services from several sections in the village for example, he was chief of the village, he was bound to get the services of village watchman as and when he required him. In the same way he used to get services of all other artisans at the village, starts from washerman to cobbler.

## **8. Kulkarni: -**

After Patil the next important village official of the village communities under the Marathas was Kulkarni. He was referred variously in various records as Gavkularni and Gramlekhi or village accountant. The records of the Marathas referred to the watan

grant of Kulkarni as Lekhanvrtti. This Kulkarni usually maintained the record of individual land holding and the revenue each individual was to pay to the Government. He was to work under the supervision of Patil and record the revenue paid in his record and he was to keep record of the revenue if any was in arrears. This was his cardinal duty; he was punished if he failed in this duty of recording the revenue or any misappropriation. Kulkarni also was to help Patil in the task of inducing cultivators to bring more and more barren land under cultivation.

As a matter of fact, there was no separate Kulkarni for each village the reason was that there was no sufficient education imparted to each Kulkarni and qualified him for the job of Keeping records. This scarcity of educated Kulkarni led the Maratha Government to a lot more than one village to one Kulkarni. The available records say that there were several Kulkarnis who were keeping the records of eleven villages each. If the Kulkarni happened to be Brahmin he used to work as astrologer and guided the village people in Palmistry. In case of one Kulkarni over several villages, the Kulkarni-in-charge appointed deputies to help him in making entries of revenue collected and maintaining records. This arrangement led to mal-practices as collection of more revenue than the fixed amount by the Government or not making entries of the revenue collected. But Chhatrapati Shivaji had his own machinery to trace such practice and punished the guilty Kulkarni or his deputy severely. There is writer evidence that Chhatrapati Shivaji reprimanded sternly to the

Kulkarni of Chaul for not discharging his duties properly and involving in mal practices.

Kulkarni was also to keep record of payment the Patil made to the representatives of the Government. Kulkarni's services were indispensable for both the villagers and the Government. Due to his absence the work of maintaining records was distorted at many occasions. Although, the Patil was the head of the village and senior in the village communities, he could not get the revenue collection record done due to unavailability of Kulkarni. Even the Patil had complained on several times that he became only a titular head of the village and the real power of the village rested in the hands of Kulkarni. Not this much in many cases Kulkarni was responsible for removal of the Patil. As all offices in the village community were hereditary the office of Kulkarni was the main reason behind it. There was no much literacy percentage during the Maratha period. The educated family of the Kulkarni was obliged to work as Kulkarni and keep the tradition alive forever. As a matter of fact, the office of Kulkarni was being lucrative, the people tried to deserve themselves for that office. There are some evidences that the office of Kulkarni was auctioned and purchased for 150 hons. It is said that the sale of the office of Kulkarni took when the family of Kulkarni was extinguished and the money received from the sale was used to remit the dues of the village or credited to the village account. In some cases in some villages when the position of Kulkarni was vacant the villagers appointed a Mutalik till the permanent Kulkarni was searched to carry on the work of maintaining records. Once the new or permanent Kulkarni resumed the office, the villagers promised him all security and rights due to the official of Kulkarni.

Whenever, the Kulkarni was removed by the Government on the pretext of corruption or other reasons, the Government took into account the claims of other members of the family of the Kulkarni. The Kulkarni was to deal with the representatives of the Government and other rulers, it was natural to the villagers to take approval of the Government at the time appointing a new Kulkarni. Kulkarni's office was not hereditary in Konkan for some time. During this period, Government appointed some clerks known as Huzurdars, who were paid in cash. But when the whole Konkan region was brought under the Marathas. The Patil of each village was assigned the duty of collecting the dues of Kulkarni and remitting it to the Kulkarni in kind.

#### **a. Right and Powers of Kulkarni:-**

Whatever the mode of appointment of Kulkarni was there, whether he was appointed by the Village Community or inherited or appointed by the Government. Kulkarni, generally enjoyed the following Haks and Lajimas or privileges and dues:-

##### **1. Cash Payments:-**

It is mentioned in some of the papers that Kulkarni was to receive some payment from the villagers for purchasing stationery for his office use,

which was called Nakhta. This payment was additional to his regular salary.

## **2. Revenue from Each Holding :-**

Kulkarni was to receive some amount from each land holder. This revenue was based on a piece of land as per carver or on certain production per Khandi. This payment or revenue was called Mahasul.

## **3. Paiposhi :-**

The Kulkarni used to have right to get some production from shoe- make of his village and that was a pair of shoes.

## **4. Padewari :-**

There were several servants working in the village communities Watchman was one of them. As he worked at Chavadi or village community office he also worked at the house of the Kulkarni and he was at the disposal of the Kulkarni for any work. The services of the watchman to Kulkarni came to be known as paiposhi. Under this, the watchman was instrumental to remove cattle as well as supply with fuel wood to the house of Kulkarni.

## **5. Sel-Bail :**

Kulkarni used to get certain amount on the transport of cattle from his village to another village.

## **6. Kadba :-**

Kulkarni used to have some animals like milk-cow or buffalos for them he needed fodder of Lower or grass, which was known the then as Kadba. Kulkarni had right to get several sheaves of fodder from each cultivator based on their land holding.

## **7. Kharchapatti and Sadilwar Patil :-**

Among others, these were some of the charges the village officers and servants levied on the villagers as a matter of their rights or Haks or dues on the villagers. Kharchapatti means the recognized dues of the village officers and servants to be paid by the villagers while the sadilwar Patti was the extra assessment then the public revenue levied by the local officers for meeting the contingency expenditure during the year. It is said that Kulkarni used to get some share from these taxes to meet his expenditure.

## **8. Ghee :-**

The Kulkarni used to get certain quantity of ghee from the butter dealer of the village as a matter his privileges.

### **9. Veth Begari :-**

This was a system of forced Labour, which was brought into practice by money Lenders. They advanced some loan to poor people and got done free services from the indebted poor. But during the Maratha period, the people in power availed services of poor people without paying anything for the same.

### **10. Ghugri :-**

Usually, during the Maratha period, almost all artisans were present at the harvest time of crops, the owner or the cultivator used to share his corn with each one present there, as per their share fixed. The Kulkarni also used to be present over there at the time of harvest and measuring the grains. The cultivator or farmer used to keep a small quantity of grain aside as the share of Kulkarni. The same quantity of grain was known as Ghugri. The Kulkarni had the right of Ghugri, Hurda as well as lobia.

### **11. Wanawala :**

During the Maratha, period, the Government officials used to get some samples of corn and fruits, which were ripen for the first time, as Mangos, Fibs or groundnuts.

It is mentioned in the Diary of the British Resident at Pune and Poona Residency Correspondence that the privileges of the Kulkarni varied from place to place and time to time and they were fixed according to the traditions and customs of the place.

### **Deshmukh:-**

He was also one of the important officials of the village communities under the Marathas. Deshmukh held some of the lands of the village community. He supervised the work of Patils within his jurisdiction. Deshmukh was put in charge of the fallow or barren land of his Pargana or region. He allotted the same land to bring under cultivations and increase the production of food grain in his Pargana as there was a fair chance to the Government to use progressive rates of assessment and get enough taxes or revenue from that land. Deshmukh toured every village in his Pargana at least once in a year to get correct information about the villager and the land they possessed and the land which was barren and unallotted to anybody. He was to settle the revenue of the land brought under cultivation newly in the village as well as to check the entries whether made properly in the records of Kulkarni in case of change in ownership due to certain reasons. Deshmukh was to see to it whether Patil of the village made land revenue payment correctly. If any deficiency was traced the Deshmukh reprimanded the Patil. There are several incidences that the Government took severe actions against the Patil and the Deshmukh for non-payment of revenue of villages.



During the period of natural calamities or failure of crops due to several reasons, it was the duty of the villagers to bring it to the notice of the Deshmukh and convince him about their inability to pay the land revenue. In case, the Deshmukh came to know the reasons of crop failure and was convinced about the inability, the Deshmukh should represent the case of that village to the Government for remission in land revenue with the village officials. Naturally, it was required that the Deshmukh and the village officials like Patil, Kulkarni, Shete Mahajans and others in the Pargana should remain in good terms with each other.

The Deshmukh established the linkage between Government and the villagers. He was expected to work very speedily and quickly in case of external attack. Deshmukh was responsible for the safety and security of his Pargana. He was to lead the people of his Pargana to safety. Available record of Rohidkhore mentions that Chhatrapati Shivaji had instructed the Deshmukh of Rohidkhore that he should take the people over there to a safer place below the Ghat because there was a possibility of attack from the enemy. The Deshmukh worked and abided by the command of Chhatrapati of shifting people to safety. As the Deshmukh helped the people to protect themselves in the emergency he was also to help the Government officers in forts in his area for various works like construction, repair or any other work in the forts. He was to procure the labour force of villagers. This was the additional responsibility of the Deshmukh and the people in his Pargana. In addition to this duty, the Deshmukh was to take over the charge of Patil in case the post of Patil was vacant due to several reasons.

As mentioned earlier, the Deshmukh was higher and superior in rank to Patil - It was natural for him to enjoy privileges, perquisites and dues more than Patil in his Pargana. He used to collect his taxes in kinds and cash from the cultivators and secured the services and goods of daily consumption from the servants merchants and artisan of the villages in his Pargana. In the goods of daily consumption all fruits and vegetables were included like mangos, coconuts, dates, grains, fodder and fuel wood, ghee, shoes, oil, earthenware, prasad, and chicken were included. The Deshmukh was treated as guest of each village in his Pargana, He was legally permitted to collect some provision from them. In addition to this, he had right to change payment in cash as one hon to each village under him. Even the Deshmukh received articles from the shopkeepers, hawkers, Vendors, and Morning after attending weekly market of the village. The articles he received were silk threads, betelnuts and leaves from Pan-dealer, fire- crackers from the fire work manufacturers during the Diwali festivals, sweets from the vender, meat, perfume, grocery, liquor and cloths from the respective merchants. The Deshmukh had right to collect yearly dues from village artisans like washerman, barber, blacksmith, carpenter, weaver, tailor and 2 percent surcharge on the octroi collected by the Government. He collected 2 Rukas on the sale and purchase of cattle per head, a quarter - mound of sault per Khandi, two and half seer jaggery per Khandi and ten seers of Jinger and turmeric per Khand from the share of the Government of that Village. The Deshmukh was entitled to receive taxes on marriage, divorce, Khavastaka

means tax on body guard of a rich persons, Gavataka means levy imposed on the village free coating or plating of utensils, oil seeds crushing whole village free coating or plating of utensils, oil seeds crushing from oil-seed presser and free services of village watchman for two months a year. In the basis of Haks and Lajimas, it is said that the Deshmukh was as important as Patil to a villager. But it was also correct that the Deshmukh could not receive these rights and privileges as Patil in every village under, his Jurisdiction. Deshmukh was empowered by the Government to collect one hon from each village on the occasion of village festivals and some fees from disputing parties in the village. Harki was collected from victorious parties while Gunhegari was collected only from defeated party in the dispute. The rights and powers of Patil and Deshmukh, differed from place to place and region to region. For example, the claims of a Deshmukh were different in Konkan then the region of Ghatmatha or Desh area. But in short, the Deshmukh secured much more privileges than any other official of the village community during the period of Marathas.

### **Deshpande:-**

As Deshmukh was one of the officials of the village communities, Deshpande was one more official, who was working above Kulkarni, i.e. he supervised the work of village Kulkarni. He was called variously as Desh-Kulkarni or Deshlekhak. As referred earlier, due to lack of literacy, there was a shortage of learned and trained Kulkarni, Therefore, the responsibility of more than one village was entrusted to Kulkarni. In order to get the work of Kulkarni done properly the appointment of Deshpande was made. As Kulkarni was subordinate to Patil, Deshpande was subordinate to Deshmukh in the official rank of the Maratha administration.

### **Privileges and Dues of Deshpade :-**

Although, Deshpande did not belong to a village community but held some land as Deshmukh at the villages in his Pargana. His interests were accrued therein and he was treated one of the village officials. Naturally, he enjoyed several privieges and dues which can be mentioned as under :-

1. Deshpande rendered his services as Kulkarni, whenever he was not available or not appointed. Hence, Deshpande was gifted with some land of the village in lieu of his services. Thus, the Deshpande became watandar of the village Many a times, Deshpande also appointed some agents to look after the accounts of the village and his watan.
2. Deshpande used to receive his payment in kinds and cash. The mode of his payment was not different than the payment of Deshmukh. Generally, Deshpande received half of the payment to that of Deshmukh.

3. In the kinds, Deshpande got some jack-fruits per jack-fruits tree, ten percent managoes per mango groves, Jaggery five seer per sugarcane caver in addition to this a bundle of sugarcane and a jarful of sugarcane juice, vegetable from the vegetable farmer, a garment from each weaver and a Hon from the village for purchasing til on the occasion of Sankranti.

4. Deshpande was entitled to get a pair of shoes from each cobbler, prasad from gurav, betel-leaves from tamboli, oil from oilman of each village under his Parghana.

5. Deshpande had some other privileges as he received shela-pagote means sugar, betal nuts and Pan on the occasion of marriage from each party, and some amount from the disputing parties in the village.

6. As Deshmukh sought same free services from the village servants. Deshpande also secured free services from village watchman for fifteen days a year, free services from barber. Carpenter and gurav as and when he required.

It is clear that Deshpande and Deshmukh wanted prosperity and well being of villages for their own prosperity.

4.1.5 Chaugule : He was also a part and Parcel of the village communities during the period of Marathas. Chaugule stood below the Patil and above the watchman in the rank of village officials. He helped almost all officials in general and Patil in particulars in the village administration. It is said that Chaugule which was related to the Patil or to his ancestors. Chaugule helped Patil in village administration, in collection of village land revenue, in bring back the villagers, who had left the village due to several reasons and looked after the village storage of food grain and village office of Patil. He worked as a messenger for Patil and village administration Chaugule had the responsibility of carrying the village revenue collection to the Parghana head quarter and handed it over to the Deshchaugule. He also helped Patil in the measurement of village land as and when Government ordered.

There is no unanimity about the symbol of Chaugule. In some state papers of Maratha, a plough is referred as his symbol while in other papers a pole is shown as his symbol. Although, difference in symbols is mentioned. The meaning of both is one and the same and that signified the duty of Chaugule was very much related to village land and its fertility and increasing production in it. Although, the position of Chaugule was next to the Patil in Gotsabha, he was preceded by Desh Chaugule, his counterpart in Parghana. The post of Chaugule was hereditary in the administration of village communities under the Marathas.

**Village Watchman :-** Although, the village watchman was from the lowest rung of the society, he proved, himself very useful official of the village communities. He looked after the village office of the Patil, which came to be known as Chawadi and helped Patil now and then in every step of village administration. The work of village watchman was specially

remembered in the collection of land revenue. He used to call every cultivator to the office of Patil for the payment of land revenue and convinced them for the said payment. The village watchman was to take care of the village sanitation and remove whatever pollutants he came across. It is said that he was to sweep clean the whole village for paltry and rudimentary gains. As per the 1776-77 papers of Pargana Parner, the village watchman claimed following as his rights and privileges: -

- 1) The village watchman claimed that he had right of Naibedya or offering on the occasion of Dasera and Bail Pola festivals.
- 2) The offerings to God and Goddesses on the occasion of other festivals should belong to them only.
- 3) On the eve of marriage, the bridegroom of the community of village watchman should ride on the horse back without any interference from any other community in the village.
- 4) The village watchman had right to share balute as other officials and artisans of the village.

**The Potdar :-**He was one of the important village officials during the period of Marathas. The Potdar or shroff was usually sonar or goldsmith. He was to assess the coins in circulation. He was to test the genuineness of the coin and check the metal used to mint the coin, weight and size of the coin. It was not the duty of the Government to see whether the coin was defaced, debased or counterfeited or sustained any deformity but it was the duty of the potdar. The Potdar only exchanged the coins in circulation on the order of the ruler. He issued new coins of the denomination and weight of the old coin. But he kept some difference in the value of the new coin. He only fixed the value of the coin on the basis of metallic content in it. It is observed that there was at least one Potdar at each village. This was not a fixed rule, it depended upon the demand and supply principle. A document dated 1740-41 states that three brothers namely, Balaji Rudra, Keso Rudra and Moro Rudra Shenvi were looking after the Tarf Rajapur as Potadars, in which around four to five villages were together. The document of 1742-43 states that Ganeshet Sonar was appointed Potdar of two parganas on the remuneration of one Damadi a rupee of the revenue collected. The third document dated 1765-66 says that Laxman Sonar was appointed Potdar of Parghana Newese on the allowance of RS 4 per month by the Government. In addition to this, he was paid Rs. 2 per village as remuneration. It is clear from the above evidence that the Government needed services of Potdar more than the villagers.

**Shete and Mahajan :-** It is rightly said that the village in ancient & medieval India was a small republic in which everything was produced which the villagers needed and everything was taken care of by the Government. During the Maratha period as attention was paid towards increasing the agricultural product, and its proper distribution, the Government appointed Shete and Mahajan were such officials, who paid

attention towards the marketing of agricultural products in each village. They possessed the land specially provisioned for market in each village. It was their duty to establish a peth or market at each village and receive some rights and lajimas or dues in cash and kinds from the villagers - as other village officials and watandands. They also became hereditary officials of the village communities. Mahajan worked as the accountant to Shete and helped him in all deliberations of the village communities and present various long term and short term market development devices or plans.

**Balutedars** :These Balutedars formed an important part and parcel of the village communities under the Marathas. As mentioned above, there were several officials of the village communities. Who held some village land or watan and served as the linkage between the village communities or administration and the Government. There were also several other people who held the village land as watan, some time it was rent free land and rendered their essential services for economic growth, prosperity and stability of village life. Due to the contribution of these people to the village life, it created a separate identity as well as self-sufficiency of the village life. These people were taken together and conveniently called as Balutedars, who were around twelve in number. These Balutedars Performed specific duties individually in the village communities and received specific share of grain produced by the villagers, which was called balute, mean some share of each grain from each villager. The Balutedars were the village artisans, who helped in agricultural process to the farmers. The farmers paid these balutedars or village artisans annually as and when the grain was ripped in the harvest, which included their fees, perquisites and rights for their services throughout the year. They were twelve in number, mostly barber, potter, washerman, Gurav, Joshi, Watchman, carpenter and Shete- Mahajan which were traced in every document of the Marathas.

### **Divisions in Balutedar :-**

For the convenience of study, these balutedars or the village artisans can be categorized as under :-

#### **1. Village Artisans and Professionals:**

These artisans or professionals were in great need in every village life. They supplemented the work of farmer throughout the year and received fixed share of grains produced by the farmers every year. In this category the artisans like shoe-maker, Washerman, barber, blacksmith, potter, and carpenter were included.

#### **2. General Servants:-**

Generally, less privileged classes were included in this category. As a matter of fact, they performed all essential work of the village communities during the Maratha period. The general servants worked as the village eyes, village-watchmen and village- messenger, it means the work of security of the village, the work of espionage and communication

had been performed by them. These general servants received 'Balutas' or certain share of grain produced by the farmers.

### 3. Religious Servants:-

These servants of the village communities used to meet the religious needs of the various sections in the village community. In this category people like Brahmin, Gurav, Thakur, Koli, Jangam and Maulana were included. Brahmin, who was called Joshi, worked as priest, astrologer and read almanac or calendar (Panchang) for the people. Gurav and Koli were the priests of village temples while Thakur worked as a family priest of the same tribe. The Jangam functioned as priest of the Lingayat people whereas maulana was the priest of Muslims and looked after the Mosque and the burial ground. Maulana also worked as butcher for the Muslim Community in the village. In short, these religious servants catered the religious and social needs of the village communities. These religious servants being very essential units or *sine qua non*, the village community paid them without any stint. These balutedars attended the meetings of village council and expressed their approval or disapproval. They signed or put their thumb impression as well as put their symbol against their name. They had their own symbols which were based on their professions or arts.

In addition to these balutedars, there were several other professionals like Tamboli, Dhargar, Metal Worker, Painter, Coppersmith, Oil man and weaver who were called as alutedars. It is said that the services of these professionals were not essentials as the balutedars. They, therefore, were not included in the category of Balutedar. But they were present in the village communities under the Marathas.

### Cultivators :

They formed the major important part of the village communities. The Cultivators were the only original land owners in the village. They were divided into two categories as (1) Mirasdars and (2) Uparis.

The Mirasis or Mirasdars were also called Thalkaris or Kunbis, who possessed the permanent proprietary right in their land. Naturally, Enjoyed all rights and privileges arising out of their land in the village community. Uparis as the title suggests, they were new and stranger to the village. It so happened that whenever, there were mirasdars, who cultivated their land, the village headman invited some cultivators from other villages for cultivating the fallow land and thus they came to be known as uparis. Naturally, they did not take part in the business of the village communities. From this fact it is observed that, there was a class of cultivators in the village communities, who had no hereditary claims to the land. Whenever the uparis settled down permanently in the village as cultivators, they acquired hereditary rights in the lands they cultivated. Thus, there existed the various categories of uparis, Kunbis, Mirasdars, Balutedars and hereditary officials in the village communities.



There was no much difference in the village communities existed during and before the period of Shivaji. Chhatrapati Shivaji was much concerned about the foreign powers present in Maharashtra. He was busy in extirpating these foreign powers from this land, i.e. he sought the help of village communities and did a political Revolution. Sabbasad Bakhar and Ramchandra Pant Amatya mention that Chhatrapati Shivaji tried to abolish the watandars and their watan system. But this is said that although he confiscated some of the watans due to their irregularities, he never wanted to abolish them totally, he tried them to reform and also created some new watan - systems to bring stability in his rule. Chhatrapati often brought new areas and territories under him. The ryot or cultivators in the newly acquired and annexed territory was under the influence of watandar, Shivaji, therefore did not dissociate this ryot class from the watandar and allowed them to enjoy their traditional way of life undisturbedly. It means Chatrapati helped his ryot a lot and tried to reform their conditions whenever it was possible.

### **The Industrial Organization :**

Charles Metcalfe, a revenue officer of the East India Company described the village under the Marathas as a little republic. It produced everything they wanted in the village and it was almost independent politically, economically and in other aspects of the life in the village.

The Village had Patil as head and he was assisted by Kulkarni, Chaugule, Watchman, and Potdar symbolized autonomy of the village in politics. In the same way the village was autonomous in its industrial organization, in which it brought into existence the twelve balutedas or village artisans. These artisans were legal watandars of the village, who held particular trade and enjoyed monopoly in it. Naturally these artisans stressed upon this point that their successors should also enjoy monopoly and claim them in the trade they followed. The trades, these artisans followed in succession, were granted to them and they were called legal descendants of the same. This is clear from the cases they filed and won in the process. It is also observed that the civil suits about the ownership of watan holding under the Marthas were neither lost easily nor the suitor lost his heredity on his own intentionally. Neither the suitor's long absence nor his descendant's resumption to their hereditary trade after a considerable gap of years deprived them from the same. there are several evidences regarding this issue, which proved the spirit of industry 1) 1779-80 in Kasba Pune, Abaji Khadake was a barber he migrated to some other villages due to scarcity of the job in the Kasba. After a gap of several years his sons Raghoji and Satbaji came back to Kasba and claimed for the watan. The Watan of a barber was divided evenly between the Khadke family and the family who had engaged in the watan in the absence of the Khadke family.

2) In the same way, jakoji and Yamaji the sons of Santa barber of watan Chikade in Sirale Tarf of Pargana Newase recovered their watan at Chikote after the gap of two generations. These two sons claimed that

their forefathers had left the village watan due to the dearth and inability of their subsistence within the income of the watan at Chikote.

3) In 1763-64, four sons of a Blacksmith recovered their watan at Khodad, Tarf Narayangaon, Prant Junner. It came to light that their forefathers had willingly left the watans. Although, the people from the watan village had repeatedly requested them, the Blacksmith Santu, the forefather did not want the watan. But when his descendants returned back to the watan village, they were given the watan back. This rule was applicable to every artisan and watandar including Patil to watchman, Balutadar and Alutedars also. But in case of Joshi or Jyotishi or astrologer never succeeded to the watan if he failed in proving the legality. Even the illegal children or descendants had no locus standi to succeed the watan of their father. Thus, industrial organization also was one of the important features of the village communities.

### **The financial Arrangements:-**

Although, the village officers, were not appointed by the Government, they were to obey the orders of the Government. These officers were under the moral obligation of the public opinion because they were directly paid by the village communities. The village communities had to pay for several needs. These were divided into two as (1) Recurring (2) Non-recurring.

The recurring charges were again divided into two heads as (1) constant recurring charges and (2) non-constant recurring charges, but these were not less constant charges. The constant recurring charges were raised by a permanently fixed charges known as salabad (yearly) charges. While the non-constant charges were raised by extra assessment which were called sadiwar Patti.

#### **1. Constant Recurring Charges or Salabad Charges :-**

Under this head, the charges were several, they were paid for the needs of the village itself. Therefore, the village had to raise them from among the villagers. According to Elphinstone, they were as (1) The maintenance of the village temple. (2) Annual pension of the temple keeper (3) The annual charities which the village made. (4) The expenditure of the village ceremonies (5) Religious festivals (6) Alms to beggars in the village (7) The expenditure on the entertainment to guests mostly Government officers (8) The change of the Peons stationed in the village. There was no government sanction to pay these taxes from the share of Govt. land revenue. Therefore, it was paid by the Mirasdars or Villagers.

#### **2. Non-constant Recurring charge or Sardar waril Patti :-**

These charges were uncertain but they were recurring and they were paid by the villages conjointly. Mostly, the bulk was borne by the Mirasdars of the village because, they only had much capability of payment. Although the non-constant recurring charges or sardar waril Patti were more in number but some of them important were as under :-

1) the expenditure on the repair of the Village wall or compound. As a matter of fact, the period of Marathas was one of the insecure times, the repair of the village wall was very necessary requirement of the village. The Government also sanctioned some amount for the construction of village wall but it was very rare occasion.

(2) The villages were to purchase the peace from invader.

(3) Many a times, the villagers were to pay the insurgent, who prepared often to disturb the villagers. Because these insurgents or enemies carried often with them the arms and ammunitions. Naturally, it had no option then payment to them. Many a times, the Government tried to defray the same but it was again very rare. If such amount was very heavy, the village mortgaged or granted land to a sahuakar, which came to be known as Gaon Nisbat Inam. The creditor enjoyed such inams with all rights and without any rent to the village communities.

Thus, the Maratha Government gave a freehand to the village communities in the financial matters. This was the reason that the village communities enjoyed real self- Government and self- sufficiency under the paternal supervision of the Marathas.

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#### **6.4. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. What do you understand by the village communities under the Marathas?
2. Who were known as officials of the village communities during the period of Marathas?

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#### **6.5. SUMMARY**

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The Village communities has been one of the important features of life in India. Since the time immemorial India is a country of villages and agriculture is the main source of their livelihood. The Indian community was termed as a small republic. Many rulers came and gone but there took place no change in the structure and arrangement of village administration. They consumed what they produced and they produced what they needed to be consumed in their daily life under the village communities.

Before turning towards the study of the village communities under the Marathas, it is essential to have some glimpses of village communities under the Mughals. During this Period, there were six groups of people in the village life, as Landlords and Zamindars, rich cultivators, Peasants, Ordinary peasants landless worked and the last rung in the society was of coolies.

During the period of Marathas watandars, Mirasis and uparis were referred as the focal points. Watan means one's own homeland. It was also a grant given by the Government to the officials for discharging their duties properly. There was no change in the watandars even if the

government changed. There were several watandars under Chhatrapati Shivaji, who had already served the earlier Muslim rulers. Mirasis had proprietary rights in the land and were called Thalkari or original inhabitants of the village. Uparis were also there. One who migrated to the village from another area, secured leasehold of a land for temporary purpose was called uparis. He could become mirasis after securing proprietary rights in the land he held. There are several references regarding the village arrangement in the ancient scriptures as the Vishnu Samhita, Mahabharata and Manusmriti alike village communities under the Marathas.

There were several officials in the village communities as Patil, Kulkarni, Deshpande, Deshmukh, Chaugule Potdar, Shete Mahajan and watchman. They had certain functions to be discharged and they secured certain privileges dues and remuneration for their survival. In addition to the above officials, there were village artisans, who were twelve in number and called balutedars. These balutedars helped the farmers in the agricultural process and received certain share of grains which was called balute. Among the balutedars Barber, Potter, Washerman, Gurav, Joshi, Watchman, carpenter and Shete-Mahajan were important. These balutedars were divided into three categories as village artisans and professionals, general servants and religious servants.

One more category of professionals was also traced in the village communities as of Tamboli, Dhangar, Metal Worker, Painter, Coppersmith and weavers. They were called aluteders. They also helped the village communities in various functions and were one of the essential elements of the village communities under the Marathas.

Cultivators were the most important element of the village communities. The cultivable land in the village was divided into mirasis and uparis on the nature of their possessing the land proprietary rights. Chhatrapati Shivaji tried his best to improve the conditions of cultivators as and when it was possible. Cultivators also were called ryots; they were attached with the watandars to some extent. Although, Shivaji Punished the watandars for their irregularities but he never tried to disturb the cultivators.

As cultivators industrial Organization also formed an important part of the village communities. The village artisans followed their trades or professions hereditarily. They claimed monopoly and wanted their descendants to claim the same. Thus, the chain of industries continued and it was built firmly into the organizations, there also was financial arrangement. The villagers paid directly many taxes to the Government as well as to the village officials and servants. In addition to these, they were forced to pay other charges, which were divided into recurring and non-recurring charges. The recurring charge were again divided into two other heads as constant recurring changes and non-constant recurring charges. The constant recurring charge were raised by a permanently fixed charges known as salabad charges. While the non-constant charges were raised by extra assessment, which to be known as sadar waril Patti.

This financial arrangement continued generation to generation under the paternal supervision of the Maratha Government. This is the Government, which gave free hand to the village communities in economic development and helped it to be self-sufficient and self-reliant village communities.

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## 6.6 QUESTIONS

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1. Give a brief account of the village communities during the period of Marathas.
2. Briefly discuss the important components of the village communities under the Marathas.
3. How far was the village communities self-sufficient and self-reliant during Maratha Period? Discuss it with suitable examples.
4. Examine the position of Industrial organization and financial arrangement in the village communities during the period of Marathas.

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## 6.7 ADDITIONAL REEDINGS

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- 1) A. R. Kulkarni - Maharashtra in the Age of Shivaji
- 2) A. R. Kulkarni & G. H. Khare Marathyancha Ititas.
- 3) S. N. Sen - Administrative system of the Marathas.
- 4) Elphinstone -A report on Territories Conquered from the Peshwa.
- 4) Altekhar - Village communities in western India.



## **SOCIAL STRUETURE: CASTE AND CLASS**

### **Unit Structure**

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Origin of The Caste System
- 7.3 Communal Taboos
- 7.4 Organization of Caste
- 7.5 Summary
- 7.6 Questions
- 7.7 Additional Readings

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### **7.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After the study of this unit the student will be able to -

1. Understand the origin of caste
2. Know the different aspects of caste during the period of Marathas.
3. Explain the organization of caste.
4. Understand some important disadvantages of caste
5. Know the positions of caste in the society of Marathas.
6. Explain the caste in other areas
7. Understand the future of caste.

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### **7.1. INTRODUCTION**

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Caste is a largely static organization; it is exclusively social class and its membership is determined by the birth. Caste involved with particular customary restrictions and based on certain privileges. The word caste is derived from the Portuguese word 'casta', meaning breed, race, or Kind. It was used first to denote the Hindu social classification on the Indian subcontinent. Although, this is the basic connotation of the word caste, it is used to describe in whole or in part social systems that emerged at various times in other parts of the world.

Generally, caste was organized with a chief and council acting in concerted authority. It was often united for the celebrations of certain



religious festivals and cultural functions. The member of a caste further bounded by occupation and common customs relating particularly to marriage, food and the question of pollution. Thus, food and drinks were limited within a caste, means only members of the same caste used to eat together. Further, the caste means the collection of families or groups who bore a common home and claimed a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine. The caste was almost invariably endogamous in the sense that a member of the large circle was denoted by the common name was not able to marry outside of that circle. Even in the same circle there were several smaller circles, each of them was also endogamous group.

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## 7.2 ORIGIN OF THE CASTE SYSTEM

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There are several theories regarding the origin of the caste in India Which are summarized as under :-

### 1) The Traditional Sanskrit Theory :-

This Theory says that the caste system came into existence due to four varnas, the origin of these varnas is ascribed to a mythical deity as the Brahmin sprang from his mouth, the Kshatriya born from his arms, the Vaishya got birth from his thighs and the Shudras originated from his feet.

### 2) The Racial Approach:

According to this theory, the caste came into being due to contact between the Aryans and the Dravidians.

### 3) The Family and Gentile Theory:-

This theory puts forth the view that similarities and parallelisms in the ancient Iranian, Roman, and Indian social systems were responsible for the origin of caste in India.

### (4) The occupational theory:-

This theory says that caste came up in society due to cultural and occupational difference among the people.

### 5) Theory of stratification of society:-

This theory is based on the division of Labour means man's caste is his natural and correct place in society. It further says that caste and class differences in both the East and the west were based on merit and only Later tended to become hereditary and economic.

The caste system in India is an unique social organization in the history of world. Although, this organization came into existence from the time immemorial, its origin is believed to be divine.

According to the traditional theory of origin of caste system caste is as old as time and takes its earliest form in the varna organization of the Vedic Age. It was a simple four-varna system during the Vedic period but it grew into a complex and elaborate system in the course of time.

It is handed down undisturbedly from father to his son. Therefore, it is neither changed nor eradicated. It became hereditary, stagnated stationary and lost its original elasticity with the passage of time.

#### **4. Various Aspects of Castes during the period of the Marathas**

The main object of studying the caste system during the period of Marathas is to try to estimate the influence of the system on the then society. During this period, the caste became comparatively stable and had succeeded the period of flux in which it broke into subcastes. It came to be organized into close social units with fixed social comital status, which governed the nature and extent of inter-caste relationships

##### **1) The caste of the person was determined by his birth.**

It was neither possible for him to change his caste nor escape from the ignominy of his caste, even if the person changed his religion, he was notable to escape the rules and regulations of his castes. These regulations were more binding than any other ethical codes of social institutions and considered them as the duties of the concerned person toward his community. These codes or regulations had no geographical barriers and the community of the person was demanded from him his observance of the codes.

##### **2) The caste of the person was attached to his occupation :**

According to Ghurye, occupation was the most important factor for the emergence of caste system in the country. Each caste was fixed with certain occupation. If the person wanted to change his occupation attached to his caste it was not permitted by his community.

It is said that the community did not allow its members to follow any occupation, which was considered degrading or impure. This was moral restraint exercised from one's own community on the choice of the person abandoning his own occupation for another for lucrative reason. Apart from the economic factor, the members of other castes very vehemently reacted when there was encroachment on their occupation by the people of other castes.

##### **3) The Caste system established a system of hierarchy:-**

In this system, the social status of a person depended upon the adherence to certain standard of ceremonial purity. It means, the social hierarchy considered the ritual factor more important than the economic factor while ascertaining the position of a person in the society, which was totally illogical. The top most caste claimed the highest ritual purity whereas some other caste said to be believed in possessed negative ritual purity.

Therefore, the first one was at the highest rung and the second one was at the lowest rung in the social structure during the Period of the Marathas.

#### **4) The birth determined the initial Ritual status of the Person :**

During the Maratha period, as stated above, the birth was the only criteria to determine the initial ritual status of the person. For example, the person who born in a particular caste was entitled to the status of that caste only. But the inherent ritual status was never elevated in any case. There are several instances that the inherent ritual status was lowered or degraded. For example, the ritual status of illegitimate children was lower than the legitimate children. Therefore, one was required to sustain the inherent ritual status only by strict adherence and observance of the code of conduct prepared by one's own caste.

#### **5) Some mystical Beliefs of Purity and Pollution :-**

During the process of caste system, concepts like purity and pollution came into existence. It is said that impurities accrued to a person due to several ways as under :-

- 1) by contact of a person to another person with lower ritual status through touch, food and sexual relations.
- 2) by committing certain sacrilegious deeds as killing a cow.
- 3) by such occurrences like, birth, death and menses.
- 4) by contact with a person whose ritual status lowered, that caused pollution and consequently, the ritual status was degraded.

The impurities caused due to contact with the women during her menses, death and birth are treated as technical impurities and lowering the status for temporary period, that was attained back after undergoing the prescribed act of atonement.

It is said that the pollution had always overcome purity. A high caste person used to get polluted due to his contact with the low-caste person but this did not happen that the low-caste person was never purified by his contact with the high caste person. Therefore, one was to abide by the code of conduct prescribed by his own caste. This implied several commensal or marriage taboos or restrictions, which became outstanding characteristics of the caste system during the period of Marathas.

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### **7.3 COMMENSAL TABOOS**

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There were several commensal taboos, but the most important were as under :-

- 1) Prohibition of acceptance of food - If there was acceptance of cooked food from the person belonging to a lower caste.

2) Prohibition of acceptance of water from the hands or a lower caste.

3) Prohibition to dine with a person of low ritual status. It is said that the degree of pollution involved in these cases was not the same. Except the prohibition of acceptance of food from the lower castes, all other had laxity in certain degrees. Even it was observed that dining with the lower ritual status was permitted but it was said that it should not be insisted upon in case the person of higher ritual status was reluctant for doing the same.

### **1) Taboos on Marriage connections:-**

During this period, marriage was closely associated with the ritual status of the people. Naturally, marriages were solemnized within their endogamous groups. There were some other considerations which were taken into account for marriage connections as sapinda and sapravra groups. Although, these groups were endogamous, they were called exogamous sections within, therefore, marriage connections were avoided with them. This was not for maintaining ritual purity but for some other considerations.

### **2) In fraction to connubial Taboos was undesired :-**

The person who did infraction of connubial taboos sustained undesirable change as lowering of his ritual status. If a person tied marriage knot with the prohibited caste, his ritual status was restored by undergoing the atonement after the dissolution of such marriage. Therefore, the person was required to avoid the bodily touch and encouraged caste to caste relationships

### **3) Untouchability had its own Peculiarities :-**

During this period, it was believed that pollution was carried through the bodily contact. Hence the bodily contact was avoided during the period of impurity. This impurity was caused due to the death or birth of a person in blood relation or consanguine. In case of woman when she is in her menses. But the untouchability imposed in these cases was temporary and the untouchability imposed on the person having lower ritual status was permanent. It means, the untouchability practiced during this period was relative. Some of the castes considered untouchable by some but not by other caste. It means, ritual purity was not Co-terminus with untouchability. The castes which were termed ritually impure with whom, no commensality was practiced. But they were not called untouchable castes. There was some degree of difference in pollution. Although, some of the castes were called untouchables, they were permitted to chores, on other hand, some of the castes were treated extremely untouchables based on the convenience of the upper castes, behind which, there was no logical reason. But these castes which were treated as total untouchable, sustained the most unkind and the extremely humiliating treatment. There were several neglected castes included in this category. They were called Atisudras or Antyajas which means the most

despicable castes, who were not allowed to live with in the village but outside the village.

Social Structure :Caste and Class

#### **4) The Lower castes were denied several Civil Rights :-**

It is said that the atishudras were not allowed to enjoy several civil rights because their touch was considered defiling or polluting by some castes. They were denied the services of the village priest, barber and the access to the drinking water well used by the other people in the village. They had no economic source for survival but were to be scavengers and porters for their subsistence. The upper castes claimed the highest ritual purity in the society. Naturally, they were at the top in the caste hierarchy and superior in the structure of the society. They declared certain civil and religious functions as their absolute rights and privileges as well as imposed certain disabilities on other castes mostly shudras to sustain their superiority.

#### **5) The Upper Castes claimed the study of Vedas their exclusive Rights :-**

The upper castes during the period under study, enjoyed the socio-religious rites performed according to the Vedic mantras. They claimed it was their exclusive right or privileges. They did not allow it to be performed by any castes. The lower castes were forced to perform their socio-religious rites according to the puranic mantras. Whosoever violated this regulation was punished by the upper caste. There is a case of goldsmith, who was punished with cutting of his tongue for transgressing the above regulation. In the same way, a Jangam, the priest of Lingayat caste was also punished for performing Rudrabhisheka, a Vedic rite, which was the exclusive right of the upper caste.

#### **6) The Lower caste members were not allowed to enter Temples :**

The members of the lower castes were not permitted to enter the temples of the upper castes. It is said that Nanaseheb Peshwa had framed the detailed rules and regulations regarding the maintenance of Tryambakeswar temple at Nasik. The Peshwa had ordered that no member of the lower caste should enter the temple but they should pray the god from outside the temple.

#### **7) The upper Caste imposed several social & Religious Disabilities :**

During the period of Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao several civil and religious disabilities were imposed on lower castes, which were as under :-

- a) Even if they knew the Vedic Mantras, they should not use them. Should use only Puranic Mantras.
- b) They should not use rice balls as offerings to their ancestors as was used by the upper castes.

- c) They should not invite home and offer cooked food to upper castes or give them dinner.
- d) As a rule the lower castes were not permitted to employ a Brahmin man or women as a cook, water-carrier or as a servant.
- e) Lower castes were not permitted to worship the Brahmanical gods or permitted to visit Brahmanical temples.
- (f) The upper castes forced the lower castes for complete prostration as greeting, which was called 'Dandavata'.
- (h) The upper castes informed the lower castes not to object re-marriages of their widows. These practices in society elevated upper castes to gain upper level and the lower caste relegated to gain lower social status.

### **8) General Tendency of superior and Inferior social status :-**

During this period the matter of privileges and disability became the major source of inter-caste tensions and rivalries in the then society some important were as under :-

#### **1) Rivalry between Tambats and Vanis :-**

These two castes claimed themselves that they had privilege to take marriage procession through the market place with an ornamental pot of water generally used in religious rites. This was a long standing rivalry and was not solved amicably even after the period of Marathas.

#### **2) Rivalry between potters versus carpenter, Tambat and Ironsmith :-**

These castes had struggle on their privilege of taking newly marrying couple on a horse in marriage procession. This was also a longstanding rivalry, which was not solved during this period.

#### **3) Rivalry between the Brahmins and the Prabhus :-**

It is said that while considering the social status, ritual status of the caste was considered or both were interdependent on each other. During the period of Peshwas, the Maratha rule was expanded. The Maratha Kingdom was converted into the Maratha Empire. This change opened new avenues for attaining personal merits, valour, and distinctive position in society irrespective of their castes. Several people from various castes achieved prosperity and they competed with the higher castes for higher ritual status. As the lower castes people tried their level best for the higher ritual status, there was another group of higher ritual status rivalrous to oppose to them to their claims. Thus, this rivalry continued for a long time. Although, the Peshwas invited the highest authority from Banaras to settle the Problem. But it was not solved even after the period of Peshwas. Because, there was no satisfactory solution. The judgements given were not firm. They were sometime in

favour of the Brahmins and other times went in favour of the Prabhus. Thus, the rivalry continued for a longer time.

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## 7.4 ORGANISATION OF CASTE

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As mentioned above, due to rivalries among various castes tensions used to grow every now and then in the society. There rivalries were there in various groups of the same caste. Although, the caste was a closed group in comparison with class in the society, There was the status in the caste hierarchy which was determined by birth and not by individual's achievements. The ritual status of either caste or one of the groups in the caste depended upon the maintenance of code of behaviour, which was framed by the caste. If that code was not observed, the ritual status was degraded. This process gave birth to several groups in the caste, the specific administration of caste in the society.

The caste as a corporate group maintained its ritual status and safeguarded the interest of its members. It regulated the behaviour of its members and wielded wide judicial powers involving violation of caste rules regarding inter dining, matrimonial alliances and re- admission to the caste. The caste was also authorized to deal with cases of adultery, divorce and several other disputes within the caste. In order to service these purposes, the caste evolved its own separate organization. The head of the caste was called by various names and held the post by inheritance. It is also said some of the caste head had granted watan by the government. The head of the caste had enjoyed some rights and perquisites from his caste members. These perquisites were as

- 1) Shela means upper garment.
- 2) Some money on the occasion of marriage and re-marriage of its caste member
- 3) He was exempted from house tax and cattle tax
- 4) He used to get same consideration like mark of sandal paste, betel-leaves and mark on his forehead.

Apart from these rights, the power of administering Justice was considered important - but it was not exclusive, it was reviewed in the meeting of its own castemen. For example, the decision of the head of Agari-Kunbis of Bombay, was investigated by the other members of the same caste. Because the head of the Agari-Kunbi caste had admitted to their caste some degraded members without their consultation by which the social status of the same caste in the opinion of the other members, was lowered. Thus, the powers were not free from internal investigation. It is also observed that the caste disputes were generally decided by the council of the caste members under the chairmanship of the head of the same caste. The caste council was popularly known as Jati-Sabha. Although, there is no clearcut information available about the composition of the caste council and the procedure of Judicial trial followed by the



same caste council, there are certain versions gathered from the various papers available, which are as under :-

1) The caste council met at the residence of the head man whenever the occasion took place and discussed the incidence. It is not clear whether the heads of other caste or any government representative was invited, but the issue was settled and the verdict was abided by all the members of the same caste.

2) By another document, it is made clear that the Pathare Prabhus of Cheul and Revdanda used to settle the caste issues among themselves. They never referred their caste disputes to any Government officer or institution and final verdict was left with the elder in their caste as a mark of respect.

3) The next issue of one Sidanak of Kasba Nate says that, the complainant Sidanak came to Peshwa and complained that while he was away to Nagpur on military services, his wife being lonely, was staying with her mother. Some one sonak went to the house of Sidanak's mother-in-law, coaxed Sidanak's wife and took her to fort Pratapgad, far away from Nate. Sidanak approached the Gotasaba or caste Panchayat, which directed Sonak to hand over Sidanak with his wife but sonak refused to do so. Peshwa, then ordered the Hawaldar of fort Pratapgad to conduct a fresh meeting of the Gotasaba or caste Panchayat of Sidanak and get the matter settled judiciously. Here the decision is not important but the way the Gotasabha functioned and settled the matter is important. The Hawaladar of fort Pratapgad reported back to the Pashwa that the issue was settled by the caste Panchayat.

4) One more document highlights the functioning of the caste panchayat during the period of Marathas. According to V.T. Gune, the Judicial matters during the initial period of Marathas were settled by the Majlis i.e. the caste assembly. But during the latter period of the Marathas, they were dispensed of by the caste Panchayat, which was organized in small and regional units. Generally, the small units of Gotasabha or caste Panchayat investigated the issues of minor importance while the issues of greater importance like purification, admission of outcaste or out casting somebody required to be referred to the various district caste - Panchayat or the caste - Panchayats of the region and sought their approval. This is very well illustrated by the dispute between the tailors of Poona and Saswad. There was so happened that the tailors of Poona admitted back to the caste a person who had married with a lower caste person. The tailors of Saswad - objected to this admission on the ground that the tailors of Poona did not consult the tailors of Saswad.

In the Judicial power of the caste Panchayat the authority of punishing offender also was there. There were two kinds of punishments as (1) Imposing Fine (2) Excommunication. These Punishments were inflicted on the member of the caste on the ground of his infringement of the code of conduct prescribed by its own caste such as

(1) Inter-dining and Inter-marrying with a person of lower caste status (2) non-Observance of the days of impurity after the death of its own kinsman. (3) Causing death of human beings or cow (4) Practicing witchcraft and sorcery.

Excommunication means avoiding all social contacts with the person who was excommunicated by its own caste as (1) No-commensality and connubium (2) stoppage of services of barber and washerman (3) No performance of religious ceremonies by the priest at the house of such person. (4) The excommunicated person was not permitted to apply Kumkum mark and perform sandhya rites. This excommunication was supported by the Government and many a times the property of such person was attached and Government officers were deputed to execute the punishment. Such serious powers were there to the caste panchayat.

### **1. Disadvantages of caste :-**

It helped the upper castes to enjoy several favourable positions and privileges in the society, but in general it generated enumerable disadvantages for the lower castes as (1) It imposed several restrictions on individual about food and marriage connections (2) Caste was absolutely, intolerable social burden because of its religious sanctions. If any infringement was there the government machinery took action against such member and forced him to abide by the rules prescribed by the caste. In many cases government ordered to attach the watan of the person behaved contrary to the caste. (3) Caste exercised a very strong hold on the society and created social and economic stability in case of some upper castes. It worked as boon for them but for lower caste it was a bane because it had no source of income and therefore, there was no stability in the society for there. (4) Caste fostered a spirit of division and disunion which resulted into fission, that damaged the society under the Marathas to a large extent. (5) Castes were independent social units whose economic and social interest were separated from the rest of the society, which had no scope for social intercourse. (6) The basis of the caste was the ritual status in the society, this created caste as the closed group of some people, which left no source for development of the individual. (7) Caste proved the barricade in the upward social mobility under the Marathas. (8) Each caste created several groups in itself, which tried to prove their own ritual purity to elevate their social status and upgrade themselves in the hierarchy. This generated bitter social and political rivalries in the society. 9) In comparison with class, caste could not adjust and prove adaptable of Marathas was under domination of caste, it, therefore, was unprogressive, rigid and static.

### **2. The caste at present :-**

The caste or varna complex still exists and functions in less or more modified forms within its own frame work. Members may be expelled for violating the moral and ethical codes of the caste and readmitted to its caste after undergoing the expiation directed by the respective caste

council Naturally, the social status of an individual is determined by its own caste.

However, the rights and duties assigned to the different castes or varnas have been undergoing radical changes. The third varna has evolved a different economic pattern for itself while the fourth varna has changed considerably since the independence of India in 1947. Migration of population from rural to urban areas has been bringing radical changes in the set up caste. In the same way some exogamous groups, that had grown quite large are breaking into smaller groups, which are diluting the status of caste in the society. Migration is changing occupation and changed occupation is abandoning some religious or social customs as well as changing caste attitude. Even then, there is no evidence that the caste system as a whole has lost its grip on the Indian society. The current trend in each caste is to organize itself for social, economic and political purposes as it is seen that each election is contested on the basis caste organizations.

### **1. Caste in other Areas :-**

It is said that caste is immobile class and class is mobile caste. This is experienced in every society, in the world. In ancient Rome Patricians and Plebeians were almost engaged in such tangle. Whenever Rome grew economically and militarily, the society permitted free play consequently the classes struggled among themselves to move upward. Whenever such struggle obstructed the maintenance of law and order in the society, the demand for stable social system was made in the name of Justice. The classes often struggled for achieving equality in Roman society while caste at later stage tried to avoid internal bickering by protecting status quo in the society. This caste-class continuum is experienced in all societies whether ancient or modern in the world. When society is dynamic and marching towards change it definitely leads to the expansion of class system on other hand when the society wants to conserve the class, it is transformed into the caste or it is done under the superintendence of caste. The older social groups in Europe have never been lost their all elements of caste system. Even during the time of social mobility and democratic behaviour no inter marriages were easy or occurred as natural. Some of the social scientists have also traced some caste - oriented Philosophies in twentieth century European Bolshevik and Nazi movements based on their theoretical aim of egalitarian society. In the United States, although there is no caste but it is very difficult to deny the existence of some sort of class system and very wide and vast distinction between the Whites and the Negro.

Generally, the caste is extending due to religious- mythical and economic - pedantical reasons and revolved around the struggle for power. The European caste system is considered of economic - political type while Indian caste is of religious - mythical type but some postmodern social scientists traced that it is acquiring the recent traits of economic political type. In Europe, there is a trend of dissolution of caste into class and class is solidifying the caste. But in India this trend has never been completely

surfaced because the caste in India has always been functioned as a political power myth, which is widely accepted by majority mostly rural India.

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What are the different theories of origin of caste?

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## 7.5 SUMMARY

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Caste is a largely static organization, it is exclusively social class and its membership is determined by the birth. It is involved with particular customary restrictions and based on certain privileges. Caste is derived from the Portuguese word casts meaning breed, race or kind and used first to denote the Hindu social classification on the Indian subcontinent.

There are several theories regarding the origin of caste in India as the traditional Sanskritic theory, the Racial Approach theory, the Family and Gentile theory, the Occupational theory and the theory of Stratification of society. These theories are not unanimous and give different accounts of the origin of caste but they agree that it became hereditary, stagnated and stationary and it also lost its original elasticity with the passage of time.

The main object of studying the caste system during the period of Marathas is to try to estimate the influence of the system on that society. During this period caste became comparatively stable, succeeded the period of flux in which it broke into subcastes and organized into close social units with fixed social cum-ritual status which governed the nature and extent of inter- caste relationship. There were several features and aspects of the caste of this period. As caste of the person was determined by his birth, it was neither possible for him to change his caste nor escape the ignominy of his caste. Even the person changed his religion, he was unable to escape the rules and regulations of his caste. The caste of the person was attached to his occupation. According to Ghurye, each caste was attached with certain occupation. The community never permitted to follow any other occupation other than its own occupation. The caste established a system of hierarchy in the society on the basis of ceremonial purity and the negative ritual purity. Naturally, this created taboos on commensality, marriage connections and on several issues of social intercourse. It denied several civil rights to lower castes, imposed various social and religious disabilities and generated rivalries among lower caste on the ritual status in the society. Caste as an organization, had a caste council and its head. This head had several rights and privileges for administering the caste organization. Although, some people pointed out some advantages for their own interest there were several disadvantages of caste during the period of Marathas.

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## 7.6 QUESTIONS

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1. Give an account of caste during the period of Marathas.
2. Examine the important characteristics of castes under the period of your study.
3. Assess the organizational structure of caste during the period of Marathas.
4. Comment on (a) Caste rivalries (b) Disadvantages of caste.

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## 7.7 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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1. Ghurye G. S., Caste, Class and occupation in India, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, New York, 1961.
2. Hutton J. H., Castes in India : its Nature.
3. Prasad N., The Myth of the caste system, Patna, 1957.
4. Ghurye G. S., Caste and Race in India, popular prakashan, Bombay, 1969



## UNTOUCHABILITY

### Unit Structure

8.0 Objective

8.1 Introduction Next Page

8.2. Untouchability During the Period of Marathas

8.3. Nature Of Untouchability During the Period of Marathas:

8.4. Untouchability and Fifty-Two Rights

8.5 Summary

8.6 Questions

8.7 Addition Readings

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### 8.0 OBJECTIVE

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After the completion of this unit, the student will be able to-

1. Understand the origin of untouchability.
2. Explain the nature of untouchability during the period of Marathas.
3. Know the position of untouchability in the society under the Marathas.
4. Understand the fifty-two rights mentioned in a letter written by Saswad people to the Peshwa in connection with the untouchability.

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### 8.1 INTRODUCTION NEXT PAGE

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According to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Untouchability is the notion of defilement, pollution, contamination and the ways and means of getting rid of that defilement.

The problem of untouchability was in existence since the Primitive society. Dr. Ambedkar says that the Primitive society not only believed in the notion of defilement but their belief had given rise to a live system of well-defined body of rites and rituals. The primitive society believed that defilement was caused by (1) contact with certain things (2) Contact with certain persons (3) and the occurrences of certain events like birth, initiation, puberty, marriage, cohabitation and death. The primitive society also believed in the transmission of evil from one person to another on the occurrences mentioned above.

There are several theories about the origin of untouchability the one which is generally accepted is as under :

It is said that there are more than 3000 castes in India, which are greatly varying in size and number. Originally, Indian society was classified into four divisions on the basis of varnas (meaning colour in sanskrit). The first reference to the varnas is found in the Rigveda, one of the oldest Indian classics. According to the Rigveda, Indian society is composed of five hierarchical divisions. The first four varnas are the Brahmins i.e., priests and scholars, the Kshatriyas i.e. warriors and rulers, the Vaishyas i.e. merchants artisans and husbandmen, and the Shudras i.e. servants and slaves, the fifth division is composed of the out varnas i.e. untouchables. The members of first three varnas had access to the sacred literature because they underwent an initiation ceremony after birth. The shudras were divided into clean and unclean categories. The food and drink touched by the unclean Shudras were not acceptable to the first three varnas and the clean shudras. Thus, the problems of untouchability came into existence in society. It lost the elasticity of initial period and converted into rigid social system during the Maratha period.

It is very difficult to ascribe any particular cause to the origin and growth of untouchability in Hinduism in the country. The menials in Hindu community were looked down upon as chandals means deserved to be condemned or Dasyas i.e. defeated since the Vedic period. They were segregated totally and considered worse than beasts by the majority community in the country. They were deprived of the right to enter the Hindu temple, join any Hindu congregation and seek education for their development. Although, the population of untouchables constituted a large chunk of the society, that did not matter for the majority of community in India and they were kept totally cut up from the main stream in the society so such so that their shadow was treated impure. Consequently, they were reduced to abject poverty, complete beggary illiteracy and ignorance.

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## **8.2. UNTOUCHABILITY DURING THE PERIOD OF MARATHAS**

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According to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar untouchability is an integral part of Hindu philosophy. Even if untouchability was banned it could not be ousted from the minds of Hindus. Hindus often say that there is deplorable condition of untouchables, let us do something to untouchables. If the untouchables can be cured, the untouchability will automatically be vanished. There is nothing required to be done to change the touchable. This assumption is not correct. The touchable should change themselves and then the problem of untouchability would vanish. But this did not take place and the problem was not solved for several ages.

During the period of the Marathas, the Peshwas began to exercise maximum authority as prime minister. Therefore, orthodoxy and caste restrictions got primacy in the society. Jadunath Sarkar said that



national glory and prosperity resulted due to the victories of Shivaji Chhatrapati and Bajirao I created a reaction in favour of Hindu orthodoxy and increased caste distinctions and ceremonial purity of daily rites. Thus, the caste and tradition bound Maratha society began to practice untouchability widely.

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### **8.3. NATURE OF UNTOUCHABILITY DURING THE PERIOD OF MARATHAS :**

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During the period of Marathas untouchability was relative because certain castes were regarded as untouchable by some people and not by all other people. There were certain castes which were regarded as ritually impure in relation with some other castes. Naturally, they did not practice commensality with those castes which were considered ritually impure. Even then, they were not regarded as untouchables. There was the idea of pollution, which was considered caused by the bodily touch of certain lower castes to the upper castes. These lower castes were called untouchables, but they were permitted to do some works at the houses of upper castes like cutting vegetables, cleaning utensils and others. There were several other lower castes, which were regarded extremely untouchable even their shadow was also regarded polluting. In case of these lower castes, untouchability was not considered relative but it was absolute. Naturally, these castes were the lowest rung of the caste hierarchy. They were extremely humiliated and subjected to incredibly harsh treatment at the hands of the upper caste in the Maratha society. They were not permitted to live within the village but forced to live outside the village walls during the Marathas period. They were not allowed to enter the city of Poona between 3 p.m. and 9 a.m. to avoid the defilement of upper caste people due to their long shed shadow during this time of the day. Not this much, whenever they used to enter the village, they were to tie an earthen pot around their neck to spit in and carry in hand a thorny branch to remove their foot prints. Because both their sputum and foot prints were regarded defiling by the upper castes.

There was no question of their availing any civil rights. They were denied everything on the ground that everything they touched was defiling. They were not provided with any essential services. Neither Priest nor barber used to serve them. They were to get their work done on their own. They were neither allowed to draw water from the common well nor allowed to do any job and earn living as others were doing in society. Peshwa Nanasaheb had framed rules and regulations regarding the management of the Tryambakeswar temple, Nasik, which denied entry to the untouchables, they were to offer their prayers from the outside of the temple.

During the period of Marathas, the topmost caste claimed the ritual purity and imposed their social superiority in the society. This caste also claimed the performance of certain civil and religious rights was their exclusive privilege and established their monopoly in performance of those rites and rituals by using every available means mostly political

power. Among such privileges, the study of Vedas and the right to perform socio-religious rites as per the Vedic hymns were prime. Naturally, the topmost castes forced the untouchables to get done their socio - religious rites and rituals as per the Puranic hymns, which were considered lower to the Vedic hymns in ritual status. Those who opposed to this arrangement, they were fined and punished severely. In several cases infringed persons sustained cut off of their limbs or tongues, which was done to established superior status of the topmost caste in the society.

While talking about the nature of untouchability Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said that untouchability was analogous to the problem of Jews who also suffered a lot at the hands of Gentiles (Christians) in various European countries for centuries together. What Gentile (Christian) was to the Jews, the touchable was to the untouchables. But there was one aspect in which the Jewish problem stands in contrast to the Gentile problem. The Jews and the gentiles are separated by an antagonism of creeds. The Jewish creed opposed to that of the Gentile creed. The touchable and the untouchables were not separated by any such antagonism, they had a common creed and observed the same cults. Despite this, the Gentiles made several attempts in the past to assimilate the Jews. The first attempt was in 1795. When the Batavian Republic was established. While the second attempt was in 1806 during the period of Napoleon Bonaparte. The Jews preferred to be separate to conserve their Judaism and observed obedience to their faith. But the touchable never realized their responsibility of assimilating the untouchables. There was no gulf between the touchable and the untouchables of religious antagonism. There was every possibility of bringing them together. But it was not done, the untouchables are segregated compulsorily. Therefore, untouchability was inflicted upon the lower castes; it was not a choice of them.

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#### **8.4. UNCHOUCHABILITY AND FIFTY-TWO RIGHTS**

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During the period of Marathas, all economic functions were carried out exclusively on the basis of castes. Untouchables were forced to take up certain menial functions for their living. There was no way out for them to get rid of such menial unproductive functions. Naturally, they were compelled to lead an extremely abject and wretched life. The wide prevalence of untouchability during the Maratha period was a serious defect in the social organization. There was no one to listen the severity of this problem but nourished it by various means and regulations at various levels. In such situation a document known as a letter written by the people of Saswad to the Peshwa Bajirao I came to light, in which fifty two rights were referred, which were to be observed by the untouchables. It is said that those rights were given originally to the untouchable by the Bahamani king of Bidar in the preceding century to the Marathas. Some of the important rights were as under :-

1. The untouchables were to take up all the functions regarding the measurement of land belonging to the landlords in the village.
2. They were to undertake the work of actual collection of land revenue of the village.
3. The untouchables were supposed to guard the standing crops in the village.
4. The untouchables were an important linkage between the villagers and the superior officials in the police department.
5. They were the important witnesses in the disputes regarding the watan land.
6. They were to act as informants to the Government regarding the happening in the village.
7. They were to act as escorts to the postman who carried letters from one village to another village.
8. They were to help dispose or undertake menial work in the village.
9. The untouchables were to clean public places, road and places of residence of important village officials.
10. Since the untouchables were supposed to guard the village, their depositions in the criminal cases were considered very important.
11. In certain cases like theft and dacoity, if the real culprit was not apprehended, the untouchables were constrained to make up the loss of the victim of such theft and dacoity.
12. The untouchables were to render services like cutting fire wood, during the religious festivals and functions in the village. They were also to paint the houses of the village Patil, put on ornamental strings of flowers on the eve of religious festivals.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Discuss in brief the origin of untouchability.
2. Explain the nature of untouchability during the period of Marathas.

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## 8.5 SUMMARY

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It is difficult to ascribe any reason to the rise and growth of untouchability in India. Mostly, the menials in Hindu community were looked down upon as chandals which means deserved to be condemned or Dasas i.e. defeated, since the Vedic period. They were treated as untouchables and segregated by the majority community in the country. They were deprived of all the rights such as to enter the Hindu temple, join any Hindu congregation and seek constituted a considerably large chunk of

population, the majority education for their development. Although, the untouchables constituted a considerable large chunk of population, the majority community kept them cut up totally from the main stream in the society-so much so that their shadow was treated impure. Consequently they were reduced to abject poverty, complete beggary, illiteracy and ignorance.

According to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, untouchability is an integral part of the Hindu philosophy. Even if untouchability was banned it could not be ousted from minds of Hindus. During the period of Marathas, the Peshwas began to exercise optimum authority as prime-minister. Which led to the orthodoxy and caste restrictions in the society. Untouchability became relative because certain castes were treated untouchable by some people. In the same way, there were certain castes which were regarded as ritually impure in relation with some other castes. The caste, which were considered themselves ritually pure did not practice commensality with the castes which were ritually impure. Even then, they were not considered as untouchables. There existed the idea of pollution. Which was considered caused by the bodily touch of certain lower castes to the upper castes. These lower castes were called as untouchables, but they were permitted to do some certain works at the houses of upper castes like cutting vegetables and cleaning utensils. There were several other lower castes which were cleaning utensils. There were several other lower castes which were regarded extremely untouchable, even their shadow was also regarded polluted.

During this period, all economic functions were carried out on the basis of castes. The untouchables were forced to take up menial unproductive work. Hence, they led extremely abject and wretched life. In such period a letter written by Saswad people to peshwa Bajirao I came to light in which the reference of fifty-two rights of untouchables mentioned there. Originally, that charter was given by Bahamani king of Bindar to untouchables, in which all menial and non-productive works were included.

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## 8.6 QUESTIONS

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- 1) Give an account of untouchability during the period of Marathas.
- 2) Examine the nature of untouchability during the period of your study.
- 3) Discuss the social structure under the Marathas.
- 4) Explain briefly the problem of untouchability during the period of Marathas.

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## 8.7 ADDITION READINGS

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Untouchability

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- 2) Ghurye G.S., Caste, Class and occupation in India, 4th edition, New York, 1961.
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## SLAVERY AND VETHBEGARI

### Unit Structure

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Sources of Slavery Under the Marathas
- 9.3 Nature Of Slavery Under the Marathas
- 9.4 Male Slavery
- 9.5 Slave Trade
- 9.6 Female Slavery
- 9.7 Position of Sales in The Society
- 9.8 Manumission
- 9.9 Bonded Labour
- 9.10 Summary
- 9.11 Question
- 9.12 Additional Readings

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### 9.0 OBJECTIVES

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After completing the study of this unit, the student will be able to

1. Understand the meaning and origin of slavery.
2. Know the various sources of slavery.
3. Comprehend the nature of slavery which was existed under the Marathas.
4. Understand the male and female slavery.
5. Know the scope of slave trade during this period.
6. Comprehend the position of slaves in the Maratha society.
7. Understand whether manumission was considered under the Marathas.
8. Know the system of Bonded labour and the jobs for which bonded labourers were yoked.



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## 9.1. INTRODUCTION

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Slavery was involuntary servitude imposed by some members of the human race on other human. This was the condition which existed in society since the beginning of history.

Slavery was generally the effect of war, of debt or of violation of laws. Slavery is termed variously in various parts of the world as serfdom, patronage, white slavery or prisoners of war. It is true that slaves were treated as a form of property, the meaning of which varied widely from culture to culture. Slaves yoked to compulsory services, having slaves with one viewed as a social status. But slavery had not always been applied to the lowest class in the past, they had also worked as magistrates became kings and emperors. This is very well clarified that India ruled by a slave dynasty in the medieval period. Slavery was one of the characteristic features of primitive societies in Africa, Malay archipelago, India, Indochina, Central and North coast Americans, Haida, India and in certain island of Pacific. Ancient Egypt, Rome, Greek and other European societies had slavery even the story of odyssey tells of men killed and of women sold into slavery. In the medieval age slavery was imposed not only as a consequence of war or parentage but also as a penalty for certain crimes. Thus, slavery existed in each and every society of the world. Naturally, it was existing in Indian society under the Marathas.

As caste system and untouchability, the institution of slavery was also existed during the period of Marathas. Slavery was one of the important characteristic features of many ancient civilizations as Greece and Roman civilizations. Although Greece was the centre of learning and democratic institutions had accepted slavery as a natural and necessary social factor. In the same way, slavery became more systematised in the ancient Roman civilization. This trend continued till the medieval period in many contemporary societies of the Marathas. The institution of slavery was inhuman ever then there was public consciousness against the iniquity of the practice of slavery till the eighteenth Century in the history of world civilization. Although, the origin of slavery is involved a considerable obscurity, there is a reference to the class of Dasas i.e. slaves in the Vedic literature. The Pali literature mentions that the system of slavery was very well established during the period of Buddha. The slave Dynasty which ruled India in the thirteenth century is the most important evidence that the system of slavery practiced in India for centuries together. Naturally, Slavery was practiced in full swing in the society under the Marathas.

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## 9.2 SOURCES OF SLAVERY UNDER THE MARATHAS

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There were several sources of slavery in the ancient civilization and contemporary societies. Following were some of the important reasons responsible for the rise of slavery under the Marathas :-

1. War and subsequent Looting

2. Birth to a slave woman.

3 Trade

4 Ransom

5 Economic Distress

6 Orphans

7 Adultery

There causes are discussed in little detail as under :-

**1. War and Looting :-** The data regarding the problems of slavery in India is available today, that is collected by the British officers after their conquest of the territories of Marathas. As per the information collected by the British officials the most important cause of the slavery under the Marathas was the war and the subsequent looting. During or after the war women and girls of the defeated rulers were captured freely or without any interruption by the victorious ruler, he took them to his country and sold them freely as slaves. In the same way, the armed forces of the victorious ruler with or without notice to the ruler used to loot whatever it they came across including women and girls and sold them in the market for various reasons and prices as slaves. Thus, this was one of the important reasons of the slavery.

**2. Birth :-** It is said that the prevalent social system under the Marathas considered that a slave womb produced slave. All children born to female slave whether by her master or somebody else were considered slaves. Thus, this also was one of the important causes of slavery under the Marathas.

**3. Trade :** This was the cause of slavery at the national and international level. During this period also this was one of the main causes. It is said that, there were several groups who used to keep watch on isolated people and tribes, who were caught and sold in market as slaves.

**4. Ransom :** As mentioned above, after wars fought, the victorious soldiers used to capture girls, women and men for selling as slaves. But there was a tradition that men were not sold instantly as slaves, they were held for ransom. If the ransom was not paid within the stipulated period then the men held were sold as slaves in distant market. Thus, this was one of the reasons of slavery under the Marathas.

**5. Economic Distress :-** There were several economic problems during the period of Marathas as failure of crops, flood, draught, and famines. In addition to these problems political disturbances also created severe scarcity of food. That led to several poor parents to sell their children, brothers and sisters as slaves.

**6. Orphans :** The Maratha period had several economic distresses during which people died on large-scale. Those who survived mostly infants had no one to care means they used to fall orphans. Naturally, such helpless were sold as slave or reduced to slavery.

**7. Adultery :-** The practice of enslaving women for the crime of adultery was in existence. But it is said that the women who were

proved guilty for adultery were fined for the crime. If the women who were not able to pay fine and were not from respectable families were reduced to slavery as punishment for the crime of adultery.

Mostly, there was no any other reason of slavery. Even any Government officer tried to enslave some body for his own benefit, that was not agreed by the government and the officer in question was heavily reprimanded for the same by the Government. For example, a Havaladar tried to enslave a poor woman, who was doing some low menial work for her living, when the activity of the Havaladar came to sight, the Havaladar was heavily rebuked and the poor woman was released and set free from the bondages of Slavery.

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### **9.3. NATURE OF SLAVERY UNDER THE MARATHAS**

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Slavery during the Maratha period was limited to the middle rung in the society. Neither the Brahmin nor the untouchable was enslaved on any account and at any cost. It is said that some of the slave traders had enticed away some of the women from the respectable families and sold them in the far-off market as slaves. When it came to notice, the Peshwa ordered for investigation and punished the guilty traders and warned all others about the consequences of such heinous activity. Even there was no debt - bondage seen in the society and the person was enslaved for the failure of repayment of his debt to the creditor. There was a practice in the society that the debtor on his own used to offer his services to his creditor in the matter of repayment of his debt. But there was no such condition existed in the dealing and that never led to enslave anyone. In case it happened and brought to the notice, the creditor was heavily punished for the crime. It has also come to the notice that a debtor had agreed to render his services to the creditor for this debt. But the debtor died before the expiry of his schedule term. Neither the children of the debtor were held under obligation to complete the remaining term of service to the creditor nor they were enslaved for the debt of their father.

Slavery under the Peshwa was subject to caste discriminations. As per the orders of the Government neither Brahmins nor the untouchable were enslaved. The former being respected and the latter being not of any use to the society, they were spared from enslaving and becoming victims of the age-old system. There are reference of Muslims and Abyssinians who were either enslaved or bought as slaves from other countries. But generally, people form the middle rung of the society like Prabhu, Sonar, Dhangar, Marathas and Kunbis were enslaved on various pretexts mentioned above. Slaves from upper castes were generally admitted into

houses of rich and upper caste people and they were able to get any work done from them. During this period the slaves, generally held the caste of their mother not of their father. But the shudras raised the children of their female slaves into their caste only. There was no objection raised by any section in the society.

Slavery under the Marathas was basically domestic. These slaves were used on the field also but, this slavery never assumed the comprehensive nature of industrial slavery, which was practiced in several western countries. Even the treatment meted out to them was not lesser, than the treatment given in the western countries. The slave was certainly lashed as a punishment for their refractory. There are ample references regarding the master or owner beat their slaves to death. Even for pardonable mistakes. Therefore, slaves used to run away from the clutches of their master. Although the slaves were treated well, their life was not without troubles. The master or the owner of the slave was not under the obligation to maintain his slaves in their old days or age. The master used to release his aged slaves without any provision for their living. The slaves who were too old to work and too old to sell as well as those who were economically liability were released by their masters without providing any maintenance or arranging for earning source. Thus, the slavery during this period was unbearable and inhuman system.

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## 9.4 MALE SLAVERY

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Slavery under the Marathas had some unique characteristics, which were not found in the slavery of western countries. One of such characteristics was that men were mostly enslaved. Many a times invaders held the war prisoners but they were held for ransoms only. They were released as and when the ransom was paid. As per the Government order males above the age of ten were not sold at any cost, if it was traced the Government punished the seller for the crime of infraction of the Government order. According to the prevalent practice, children born to a female slave used to become slaves of the master. But out of them, males were held into bandages of slavery for one generation only. It means the children of male slave were treated as free men. While talking about the slavery in the central India, Sir John Malcolm says that it was confined to female slavery only. No males were enslaved and were not seen in that territory. There were several people of rank and property, who had maintained a lot of servants to keep their property but they all were servants and not slaves.

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## 9.5. SLAVE TRADE

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Trade was one of the sources of the slavery during this period. Women and children were freely sold and purchased in market. But this slave trade was not so wide and extensive as the slave trade which was carried out in the contemporary western societies. As per the available documentary evidences, there were several wandering communities like Vanjaris, Banjaras, Gwarriahls, Hede and Charanas carrying out the slave

trade during this period. It seems, there was no connection of these communities with the international slave traders. Their catchment area was very limited. Their slave trade was confined to women and children only, whom they entangled them and sold them either to prostitutes or any rich persons as slaves to work as domestic or farm labourers. the slave trade used to be in boom during the period of scarcity of food grains and famous. Not this much, the slave traders also used to steal women and children for the purpose of trade only. Such women and children were taken to far- off markets and sold them there. According to Malcolm, there were several Marathas and Brahmins who were involved in this trade. They purchased women slaves and sent to Poona where these slaves fetched high prices. Because Poona was the capital of the Peshwas and almost all nobles and high-ranking people who needed to be resided in that city. It is said that some of the slave traders of Poona had amassed a great wealth in this trade. While talking about the slave trade under the Marathas. It was local as well as moderate in comparison with the slave trade carried out in the western counties. The prices of slaves during this period differed from slave to slave. They were paid from Rs. 35 to Rs. 400 depending on their look, youth and caste. Generally, good looking girls and beautiful women were purchased in order to reduce them to concubinage and prostitution. Naturally, such slaves were paid higher prices. The slaves purchased for domestic labour were healthy and strong. The Government also purchased slaves for various functions. The Slaves who were black, Tall slender and quick at heels were preferred because such slaves only kept pace with the soldiers on state expeditions and processions under taken by the Government on various occasions.

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## 9.6 FEMALE SLAVERY

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According to the information collected by the British officers regarding the system of slavery, the male slave was called Gulam and the female slave was called either Batkin or Kunbin. Female slaves were deployed and employed for house hold work as sweeping the floor, plastering it with cow dung or popularly known as mopping the floor, cleaning utensils, washing clothes, cleaning and cutting vegetables, grinding and pounding corn and making beds of their masters and mistresses. As per the survey conducted by Broughton, it seems that the female slaves of rich people in general and female slaves employed by Sindia enjoyed a very easy day today life.

The female slaves of Sindia said that their daily routine was to attend on the wives of Sindia and rub the feet of old and elderly people when they retired for rest. They were left free to follow any course of action as they deemed fit during the night. Generally, rich people and nobles used to retain female slaves for sexual pleasure. Army officers, Prince and chiefs had so many female slaves in their courts, they trained in dancing singing and recreational tactics and finally included them in their concubinage.

There were several female slaves, who were employed by the Government in their various departments as stables, department of elephants and

camels, ammunition factories, department of espionage and provisions. Each department had general and specific duties which the female slaves were required to do them with some odd jobs whenever required by the government. Apart from this, there other female slaves who were hapless and fell into the hands of prostitutes, were to live as public prostitutes in the brothels run by the head prostitute or Naikini. According to Jenkin's report, female slaves under the Marathas were treated very much liberally and humanely. The purchasers of the female slaves used to bring up and nourish the slaves in their own family with their family members and children. Although, they were purchased for domestic work as servants but almost were treated equally in regards to food and clothing that the people who had no children, adopted their slaves as their children and bore huge expenditure on the marriages of female slaves. Coat one of the foreign travellers says one of the eight families of female slaves settled down at Loni village near Pune was freed from the bondages of slavery due to the good conduct rendered by the family to its master. According to Broughton, female slaves employed in the services of Sindia were provided with good food daily and two sets of clothes per year. In addition to this, the female slaves were allowed to earn as much as they were able to do by any ways and means they deemed fit. Broughton further says that some of the female slaves of Sindia were required to be in waiting during the night and remaining all others left free to go anywhere they liked for that night only. In general, the female slaves ultimately remained attached to the family of their master for the whole life.

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## 9.7 POSITION OF SALES IN THE SOCIETY

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Slave under the Marathas were treated variously. The slaves of rich and men of position enjoyed much facilities and liberty while the slaves of ordinary people could not have them and suffered some hardships. Therefore, the question of position of slaves in the society under the Marathas is raised. It is said that during this period the slaves were regarded as chattel of the master. Naturally, he could dispose them as he liked as he could sell them as other commodities in his possession, could mortgage them for debt and could gift them to anybody as a gift. There are several references available that the people gifted their female slaves to Brahmin, for performing funeral ceremonies or any other religious ceremonies. They were also offered rich and wealthy people on special occasions as well as to daughters as wedding gifts from their parents.

There are lot of references of runaway slaves to get rid of harassment from their masters. But the Government helped their master to apprehend such slaves. As a rule, even if one of such slaves discovered after a long time, he was handed over to the master. In short, it is needless to say that slaves were treated as property of his master. In some other cases of female slaves, the master was to give up his claim of ownership over the female in case the female slave after desertion or run away married and staying with her husband. It is said that after marriage female slave



was treated and considered a respectable woman. The Government forced the master to forsake its ownership and asked not to put such married female slave into slavery. Although the final authority regarding the female slave whether to marry, It was entirely with the master and anyone challenged to this authority was punished by the Government. But the master magnanimous and forsook his ownership over the married female slave and transferred her to her husband.

Although the master had absolute authority over his slaves, he had no right to kill them with impunity. The Government was there to reprimand the master upon such incidences noticed or complained to them by the relatives of the slain slaves. It is also said that slave under the Marathas had rights to purchase another slave from his savings. The slave can hire away such purchased slave for profit. It means the purchaser slave had only full right and ownership over the earning of the purchased slave. Thus, the weightage to slave during this period was not more than a commodity, it was not treated as human but an article only.

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## 9.8 MANUMISSION

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It means liberation of slaves from the bondages of servitude. Manumission under the Marathas was practiced in some or other parts. In general, the system was not practiced as harsh as it was in other countries of the world. There are several references, that master used to purchase on their own clothes, footwear, some cheap ornaments for their slaves on the eve of festivals and important occasions. They were given presents and even master married their slaves at their own expenditure and liberated them from the bondages of slavery out of their generosity. In one instance not only, the slave was freed from his bondages of servitude but also he was given a piece of land called inam by the master for maintenance of the Slave. During this period, there was one more facility offered to the slave that he or she was liberated on the supply of substitute in place of slave. For example, in the state ammunition factory, Pune, there were two female slaves. Out of them one had grown very old was the mother and other was her daughter, who was also a slave. Although, the later was young. She had met with an accident and was crippled. Both the female slaves were unfit to work. They, therefore, were liberated on the supply of healthy substitute to the Government to work in the ammunition factory.

Manumission was not at all in desuetude under the Marathas. There were several grounds on which the society under study considered liberation or manumission of slaves. Some of them are summarized as under :-

1. The Masters of slaves liberated their slaves from bondages of slavery because, they were tired about the impertinence of and shirking from the work by the slaves.

2. In some cases, the masters liquidated the bondages of slavery of their slaves when the relatives and castes men of their slaves offered money and purchased them.
3. In other cases, the masters yielded to the moral pressure of requests made by the relatives and castemen of slaves and granted them liberty. For example, such requests were made when female slaves were minor and the male slave was between 10 and 15 years. The male enslavement was not recognized, the field slavery was unknown and the only domestic slavery was prevalent.
4. The practice of slavery under the Marathas did not acquire major economic advantages, therefore, the masters released their slaves from the bandages of slavery.
5. The practice of slavery neither supplied a force of cheap Labourers to the land lords nor it proved a source of lucrative avocation for traders.
6. Although, the maintenance of slaves during this period was a projection of once wealth and status, it was liquidated on the pretext of old age and good service by the slaves and in some cases religious motive seemed dominant.

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## 9.9 BONDED LABOUR

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The Marathas period generally is divided into one as the Royal period and the second as the Peshwa period for the convenience of study. These two period had some outstanding features based on social stratification and social systems. The Royal period was entirely supported by feudalistic set up of society where as the Peshwa period experienced the emergence of a totally new class in society which was the class of the Maratha Sardars. This was the direct consequence of the existence of the system of Watandari in the society. This class had its own natural requirements. Hence, the social set up under the Peshwas stimulated several systems like Khoti system and Bonded labour. Bonded labour was known as Vethbigar or compulsory labour. In the society where slavery as an institution flourished in every corner, it was quite possible that the system of bonded labour was practiced everywhere on a very wider scale.

Although there were several reasons responsible for the emergence of this system, the inability of paying back debt of the creditor led the debtor to accept this compulsory labour. It was but natural that the people coming from the less privileged sections and lower caste were compelled to take up this bonded labourship. Brahmins and other higher caste people were exempted from the compulsory work. Bonded labours were generally used for the following purposes:-

1. Bonded labourers were assigned the work of construction of forts, police stations, public, private and Government buildings, dams, and lakes. These structures were very useful and were the basic needs of any Government. Enemies often attacked and disrupted these structures first.

The Government, therefore, needed bonded labourers for the work of repair of them. Thus, it was the major work, which was assigned to them.

2. For construction of the above structures, there was a great need of feasible wooden logs. Hence, Bonded labourers were used to fell trees, cut them into suitable planks and poles and carry them where ever they were needed.

3. During the period of Marathas, there was not a much advancement of science and insecticides. There was not a much advancement of science and insecticides. There were several enemies to the standing crops. Naturally, bonded labourers were assigned one of the duties to protect the standing crop in general and to protect the crops in the field of eminent people in particular.

4. During the period under study various animals were used in wars and fights like horses, elephants, bullocks and buffalos to rear them and to feed them, a class of cheap labourers was needed. Bonded labourers were deployed to cut grass grown in Government owned land and to tie it into bundles of appropriate size and weight.

5. Bonded labourers were assigned the work in Government office and public places.

6. Bonded labourers were placed for doing domestic chores in the private establishments of the king as well as official residences and palaces of the king and later in the court of the Peshwas.

7. Under the Marathas, there was no regular police force, the Government, therefore, used bonded labourers to man the various chaukies at different places in cities commercial centres holy places, bazzars and the places of recreation, sports and gymnasiums for care and protection.

8. During the period of Marathas, there were Watandars and Maratha Sardars, who needed bonded labourers at their Watan for various works. Thus, they were deployed for work whatever the Watandars required.

In the era of existence of several systems like slavery khoti system, and untouchability, the presence of compulsory labourer was not untenable. The work in society was divided and got done from them. Their services were requested on a number of occasions like public functions, religious festivals and periodical fairs. Generally, bonded labourers were not on and often called to work free. Such occasions were very limited. Local and petty officials were not authorized to ask anyone to work free more than the period stipulated. Even then, there were several complaints that some individuals were forced by the local officers to work free of charges as well as more than the time which was stipulated consequently, bonded labourers on number of occasions fled

away to avoid the compulsory work and sought refuge at some safer places.

Normally, requisitioning of free services of private individuals and institutions by the Government on certain occasions was not out of order. Even in modern era, Governments are obliged to requisition services of private individuals in the time of need, scarcity, distress, war and natural calamities. The people in every corner response tremendously till the problem is settled. It is, therefore, not surprising that the bonded labour was practiced during the period of Marathas on a wider scale.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

- 1) What were the different constraints which worked as sources of slavery under the Marathas?

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### **9.10 SUMMARY**

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Slavery was involuntary servitude imposed by some members of the human race on other human. This situation existed in society since the beginning of history. Slavery was generally the effect of war or the violation of some serious laws or non-payment of debts.

This system existed in every ancient and Medieval societies. It was one of the characteristic features of Egypt, Rome, Greek, America, Africa and European societies. It was also prevalent in India and one of Slave dynasties also ruled India in the Medieval period.

There were several sources of slavery under the Marathas as war and subsequent looting, birth to a slave woman, trade, ransom, orphanness, and adultery. Slavery during this period was limited to the middle rung of the society. If anyone tried to enslave to anybody from the upper caste, the Government heavily reprimanded the guilty persons. Available sources say that the children of a debtor were not under any obligation to render any service to the creditor after the death of their farther, who died before the repayment of his debt. Slavery under the Marathas was basically domestic and not industrial as was in the western countries.

Slavery, under the period of your study was limited to female only. Male was neither enslaved nor sold as slave. Even if he was born to a female slave, he was set free after the age of ten. It means male never held in bondage for more than a generation. Sir John Malcolm observed that in Malva only female slavery was in existence and male was very rarely enslaved. In slave trade wandering tribes like Banjaras, Bhats, and Charans were involved the most. They were engaged in the traffic of women and children who were ultimately sold as domestic servants or prostitutes. Malcolm has referred to some Brahmin slave traders. Who purchased some female slaves and sent them to Pune where they fetched very high prices. Health, caste, youth were some of the factors considered at the time of purchasing slaves. But generally, black, tall, slender and stronger women were often purchased for various works.

Female slaves during the Peshwa period were called Batkinis or Kunbinis. Since slaves were treated as property, the Government levied tax on the number of slaves one who passed them. The Master of slaves could easily sell, mortgage or dispose them as he pleased. Although, the master had full authority on his slaves, he could never kill his slaves with impunity. There are some evidences that the master used to purchase foot wear, cloths and some cheap ornaments for their slaves. It means slaves during this period were treated rather liberally. Even some of the slaves mostly old and enable to work, were permitted to purchase other slaves for hiring out or using them as substitute slaves for themselves. They were also allowed to possess property of their own. Some of the slaves remained attached to the family of their master till the end of their life.

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### 9.11 QUESTION

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1. Give an account of Slavery and Bonded Labour during the period of Marathas.
2. Discuss briefly the nature of slavery during the period of your study.
3. Examine the position of slavery during the period of Marathas.
4. Assess the factors which were responsible for the rise of slavery and Bonded labour under the Marathas.
5. Write notes on 1) Slave Trade 2) Male slavery 3) Female slavery 4) Manumission.

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### 9.12 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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## CONDITION OF PEASANTRY

### Unit Structure:

- 10.0 Objectives.
- 10.1. Introduction.
- 10.2. Division of land.
- 10.3. Nature of land.
- 10.4. Cultivators or Peasants During the Period of Marathas.
- 10.5. Restoration of Peasantry.
- 10.6. Encouragement to Agriculture.
- 10.7. Agricultural Production.
- 10.8. Irrigation
- 10.9. Gardens and Forests.
- 10.10 Colonization.
- 10.11. Summary.
- 10.12. Questions.
- 10.13. Additional Readings.

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### 10.0. OBJECTIVES

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After the completion of this unit the student will be able to

1. understand the various divisions of land.
2. know the nature of agriculture made under the Marathas
3. perceive the plight of peasantry and its problems
4. comprehend the policy of Maratha rulers towards the encouragement to agriculture
5. understand the agricultural production and products
6. know the efforts made by the Maratha rulers for irrigation of agriculture

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## 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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Land was the main profession of the people during the period of Marathas. It was the basic support of the economic position of the Marathas. Although, there were some activities of trade and commerce, agriculture was indispensable, because almost all commodities produced in agriculture were used for trade and commerce in addition to food for survival of the people. Consequently, farmers or cultivators used to call land as mother earth. It is to be noted that the principle of private property in connection with land was agreed. It is evident from the transactions like sale and purchase of land, mortgage and gift of land, and direct settlement of revenue between the king and the cultivators, that the cultivators had property rights in land during the period of Marathas. Although, the private property was agreed upon, all people shared the agricultural production proportionately, as per their contribution to the cultivation of land.

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## 10.2 DIVISION OF LAND

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Land under the Marathas was divided into various categories on the basis of its use done by the people as 1. The land let out to permanent landholder for the purpose of cultivation. 2. crown or domestic land. 3. Forest land and 4. Waste land. The Cultivable land or arable land was divided into (1) Jirayat (2) Bagayat land. Jirayat land is further categorized into 1. superior 2. inferior 3. ordinary 4. rocky land 5. marshy land 6. salty land and so on. While the Bagayat or irrigated land was divided into 1. Patasthal and 2. Motasthal. The classification of land was done in ancient period also. Aryachanakya or Vishnugupta or Kautilya, a great diplomat and political philosopher wrote 'Arthashastra' and divided land in various classes as flower gardens, fruit gardens, vegetable gardens, wet field, field where crops were grown by sowing roots for seeds, which was popularly known as Malvapati and forest as game forest, timber forest, and elephant forest.

Kautilya made a clear distinction between the sita or produce from grown land and bhaga or portion of agricultural production payable to the king as a revenue. The Marathas accepted some of the important features of the Muslim rule regarding the land system. They also adopted several outstanding features of the land system prevailed in older Hindu system in India. This so happened that the officials like Deshmukh and Deshpande who worked in the pre-Muslim administration continued in their positions hereditarily with their title and the inam or watan granted to them. Naturally, the land system under the Marathas was a sum total of all better systems prevailed in the country. The most of the land in the village apart from the waste land, forest land or the land controlled by the Government was called as Thals or Estates. The people who were cultivating it came to be known as Thalwahiks. But in later period Thalwahiks came to be popularly known as Mirasdars means the people



holding the land with hereditary proprietary rights. The Thals or Estates were divided into sub divisions. These sub- divisions were headed by various individuals or kin groups of mirasdars which came to be known as Jathas of mirasdars. The jathas was jointly responsible for the payment of revenue, taxes or any dues in connection with the land which they held with proprietary rights. The each member of the Jatha of mirasdar could cultivate its share of the land as he wished or he could lease out that portion of land to somebody else for more production but the each member of the Jatha was responsible for the payment of the revenue jointly. This arrangement of joint payment was made to ensure the whole payment of the revenue. Even if one of the Jathas could not pay the revenue ,there were other members of the Jatha to pay the revenue in toto.

Despite the division of land into various Jathas, there was one more division of land and that was called inam land or Watan land. These inams or watans were granted to several people and institutions on several grounds by the king or the Government. Such land holders were religious institutions like temples, mosques, Samadhis, Varshasanas, artisans and village officials, which later on became hereditary Watandars. Thus, these were some of the divisions of land under the Marathas.

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### 10.3. NATURE OF LAND

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The nature of land in two divisions of the kingdom of Marathas differed from each other, these divisions were 1.Desh and 2.Konkan

3.1 In Desh- the land differed from place to place and it was of following nature

3.1. Deep Dark Soil. Almost this land was formed of the weathering of the rock traps and constituted the major portion of land in this division.

3.2 . Reddish Blend Land.

3.3. Light Black

3.4 Light Brown

3.5 Black and Light Brown, found in the platue of Deccan.

3.6. Red Land, found in hilly areas.

3.7. Rich Alluvial land. or Malai Land, found along the different banks of rivers and popularly came to be known as malai land.

**1 Konkan Division :** - In comparison with Desh , the land in this region was not fertile . The land available in this region was of the following kinds as : -

**2 Reddish Brown :** - This was the land found along the slopes of hills and in some plains . This land was formed of the disintegration of laterite traps.

**3 Black soil ,** was rare but found in Thane district.

**3 Alluvial soil ,** found in Kolaba district.

**4 .Rich Alluvial soil ,** found along the banks of rivers.

**5 Barren land ,** found everywhere , came to be known as varkas land . This land was divided into two types as malvarkas and dongri varkas. Malvarkas land was found in the plains of konkan where plough was used to cultivate it. It was also known as Autland and saplings were used for replantation. While dongri varkas land was found along the hill slopes which was cultivated only with the help of manual labour .

**6. Kharpat or Salty land:-** This land contained salinity of varying degree, found along the creeks near the sea coast and very much fertile and favourable for garden crops. Cattle manure was mostly used to increase and improve the fertility of any kind of soil during the period of Marathas. In order to improve the fertility of soil, it was kept fallow or uncultivated for some years or a number of sheep were kept haltingly for some days over the piece of such land, whose excreta or dropping enhanced the fertility of soil, when it was mixed in the soil completely, Among the other methods of increasing fertility of soil, the system of crop rotation is the scientific method, used everywhere in the world.

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#### **10.4. CULTIVATORS OR PEASANTS DURING THE PERIOD OF MARATHAS:-**

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As per the records available of Maratha period, the cultivator of that period was called variously as Kunbi, Mujeri, Raya or Kulawadi. The word Kunbi is derived from Kulambi or Kutumbika i.e.a husbandman or an individual of the agricultural order in other words a farmer or peasant who undertook the work of forming. Generally, the cultivator belonged to the Maratha class, which was in majority at every village during this period. The general condition of the cultivator was extremely bad and depressing.

**Causes for Backwardness of cultivators or peasants under the Marathas :-** There were causes and circumstances which led the farmer or cultivator or peasant to depressing and bad conditions. Following were some of the important factors among them:-1

Uncertain and unpredictable rainfall. 2. Constant Warfares 3. Poor quality of soil 4. lack of credit facilities 5 Lack of fertilisers and insecticides 6. Heavy taxation 7 Backward and old tools and techniques of agriculture 8 General backwardness of cultivator and peasant 9 Availability of meagre land for cultivation . These factors are explained in detail as under : -

**1. Availability of Meagre land for cultivation :-** As per the requirement of population, cultivable land was not available in any village, that led to low production and low per capita income. For example, in Menoli village, Taluka Vai, the total cultivable land was around 120 bighas, out of which first quality land was only 32 bighas means it was only sixteen percent land of the total land occupied by the village. Due to lack of other sources, all members in the family used to be involved in various operations of cultivation of land from ploughing, sowing to harvesting of the crops. As the total land available for cultivation was very meagre, the only hard and sustained labour could fetch the cultivator or the peasant's family a bare subsistence from the land. Thus, lack of adequate land for adequate manpower was the situation during the Maratha power. Due to this only there were standing orders of Chhatrapati Shivaji to his officers and watandars to bring more and more barren land under cultivation.

**2. Old means and Techniques of cultivation: -** During this period, agriculture was cultivated with the help of old and outdated tools and implements. The method to till the land was very old and ancient. Naturally the exercise of agriculture did not take place adequately. In absence of good exercise, the fertility of land did not increase and there was no enough agricultural production. As a matter of fact, agriculture or the peasantry under the Marathas had improved tools and appliances like tractors, sowing, thrashing and cutting machines, then the production of agriculture could have increased and the peasantry would have been rich enough. But, this did not happen, the peasant or cultivator continue to till the land with the help of a pair of bullocks and depended upon old ploughs and techniques.

Moreover, the peasant used to face another problem of cattle lifters. Bullocks were treated as wealth or livestock of the peasant and therefore, the cattle lifters targeted them especially, in the villages of border area or the frontiers of the Maratha kingdom. Chhatrapati Shivaji had taken precautions and issued orders to his officials that they should guard the frontiers of the kingdom and deter the cattle lifters from doing so and if found punished them severely. Chhatrapati Shivaji in order to save the rural economy, began to advance some money to purchase a pair of good healthy bullocks on easy terms. Such amount was later recovered from the cultivator in several fixed installments. It is said that the wealth of a cultivator or peasant was reckoned on the number of ploughs he possessed with him means how many pairs of bullocks he had on that the people used to guess that how many acres of land the peasant might have possessed. This led to project the prosperity of the peasant. Thus, this was the position of cultivator under the Marathas.

**3. Lack of Credit Facilities : -** Economic life under the Marathas was organized because, barter system was in practice and it functioned well. Whatever the cultivator needed in the process of agricultural activities, for example, agricultural implements like plough, tipan (sowing implement) kolapa (implement used for exercising infant crops), khurpe (implement used to weed out unwanted grass while the crops is

infant ) and so on , were made , remade and repaired by local artisans. A good quality of seeds which the cultivator needed was chosen carefully, from the quality produce of the last year and was preserved for the whole year for the purpose of sowing. But many a times due to crop failure or other exigencies, the farmer was forced to buy them from the open market. Chhatrapati Shivaji being king of great vision ordered his officials to advance loan to such needy cultivators for seeds they required. Almost all people were not lucky to get loan on all occasions on the basis of one or another pretext. Such unlucky peasants were to approach private money lenders, who exploited the peasants the most. The private money lenders charged the peasants almost double the amount of their loan for the period of one year only. The local money lenders were known as Shete and Mahajan recovered almost equal amount to the loan advanced to the cultivator as interest. Thus, such situation affected the economic resources and economic position of the farmer or the cultivator under the Marathas.

**4. Uncertainty of Rainfall :** - Another problem the cultivator faced was the uncertain and uneven distribution of rainfall. The rainfall was so erratic that the peasants were to be always at the mercy of monsoon. That means many a times there was no rain or excessive rain or scanty rainfall, these situations almost led to the condition like draught in the country.

The importance of rains during the time of sowing season is clearly mentioned by saint Tukarama. He says that even if a death occurred at the time of sowing activities, the cultivator covered the dead body with the leaves of trees and undertook sowing activities for the day, after the sowing was over, the Cultivator performed the last rights of the dead body. Therefore, it is said the cultivator was never sure about the production of agriculture, which was based on rainfall. Hence, Chhatrapati Shivaji had made provisions for the construction of water weirs, dams and tanks everywhere.

It is said that the territory of Marathas come under the range of south-west Monsoon, it being erratic, recurred often the widespread droughts and famines. Due to lack of other sources of income, the people were forced to migrate to better places for survival. The Government tried its best to encourage the cultivators to undertake irrigational activities to get rid of scarcity of water and reclaim land in order to increase production and store it to be used in time of famine. These and some other more were the efforts of the king to protect the people in his kingdom. These efforts created organic relationship between the king and the cultivators and stimulated sustained development of the kingdom.

**5. Protection of Standing Crops:-** This had been also a problem faced by the cultivators since the ages. There were several dangers to the standing and ripped crop because it was almost ready to thrash and bring home for consumption. In such situation the crops was to be protected from 1.theft 2.birds 3.animals 4.insecticides like rats and rodents. To protect from the theft and animals, the cultivator needed to fence the land ,for this he

needed funds. To protect from the birds, he was to employ some people to ward them off by hurling stones or pebbles at the birds through gophan. In the same way he was to create scare in the animals as well as birds, the cultivator found it necessary to put up a scare-crow in the middle of the standing crops. The scare-crow was like a statue of man, it was created with the help of a pole, earthen pot and some old clothes. Rodents were another type of pests who damaged the standing crops totally and deprived the cultivator from reaping fruits of his effort done throughout the year. This was a very serious problem the cultivator or peasant faced during the period of Marathas.

**6. Constant warfare :** - During this period, cultivators or farmers faced one more problem the constant warfare. The period was insecure, war was the order of the day, everyone wanted to solve the problem on the battle ground, which troubled the peasant much more than anybody else. The army when marched from one village to another for war, requisitioned various things for them as food grains, fodder, clothes from the villagers. When the armed skirmishes used to take place, the cultivators were forced to leave their daily business half-way and run away to safer places for several days. This development affected their lives very much. In addition to this when the army moved from one place to another that time they looted everything, they came across. Their horses used to eat the standing crops or trampled the crops and destroyed the crops in toto. Naturally that added to the unbearable difficulties of cultivators or peasants. Chhatrapati Shivaji realised the unnecessary and irrecoverable loss to the peasantry and poor cultivators. Shivaji, therefore ordered his army officers that no officer should requisition extra provisions and trouble the farmers. But in the period of Peshwa, this was not checked properly, it bore different value as Mulukhgiri and the requisition during the time of recurring warfare continued and became a regular feature. This troubled the cultivators a lot and contributed to worsen the economic position of the people.

However, Chhatrapati Shivaji tried to avoid warfare in the territory of Swaraj and carry them in the territory of his enemy. But it was not always possible and many a times, Shivaji was to fight his formidable enemies from within his territories. Therefore, places like South Konkan, Panhala, Kudal, Sawantwadi, Poona, Saswad, Chakan, Vai, Javli, Kalyan and Bhiwandi became the theatres of recurring wars. During the war of independence, the whole Swaraj was in danger, the Mughal army committed several atrocities on the civilians and peasantry and made the life extremely miserable. The enemy soldiers burnt everything, terrorized people in such a way that all cultivators and civilians tried to find out safer place for subsistence. Thus, the constant and recurring warfare made the lives of farmers the most miserable.

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## 10.5 RESTORATION OF PEASANTRY

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The Maratha Government did everything possible to restore and reinstate the cultivators after the incursion or recurrence of adverse incidences. The Government or the king knew very well the plight of the cultivator. After the hard work of the whole year the farmer or the cultivator could earn something for his living. Moreover, everything depended on the cultivator hence, Government tried its level best to avoid the cultivator from fleeing his own village. During the period of Chhatrapati Shivaji all village officers were instructed specially to render every possible help to the cultivator, try to bring more and more land under the cultivation and increase the production in such away that the cultivator should not face any problem in any adverse condition. The hereditary village officers like Patil and Kulkarni were held responsible for sufferings and troubles of the cultivators in the villages under their jurisdiction. These officials were also instructed that they should create favourable conditions to cultivators and provide them protection during the time of exigencies like sowing and harvesting seasons. Because, during these periods mostly thefts used to take place and the fear of total destruction of grain could happen, which affected the life of cultivators. It is said that even if the cultivator killed a thief at such period no Government official held the cultivator guilty for the offence. On the contrary the body of such thief was exposed to the public view in order to create scare in the heart of the people to deter them from committing theft and disturbing the cultivator. Thus, the Government on its part did everything possible to help the peasantry in its welfare and extend protection in every aspect to the cultivator.

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## 10.6. ENCOURAGEMENT TO AGRICULTURE

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Under the Marathas, every ruler tried to improve the conditions of cultivator and extended its help to protect the agriculture from any damages.

The Maratha rulers undertook the following measures to encourage the agriculture as

1. To establish new village and market towns.
2. Find out traders from various other parts and induce them to come and stay in their territory to enable cultivators to exchange commodities and articles with them and create live atmosphere in their territory.
3. They asked officials to trace artisans in the neighbouring kingdom and invite them on various good terms and conditions to inhabit in the kingdom and undertake new articles and artifacts to be sold in markets established recently.
4. There was always dearth of cultivators in the kingdom of Marathas, therefore, officers were always in quest of new cultivators, for which they used to visit other villages to induce the cultivators to come



and settle in their village and contribute to the wealth and prosperity of their village and finally the revenue of their king. Chhatrapati Shivaji had formed a policy that the new cultivators were to be provided with daily requirements and appliances needed for cultivating agriculture. For example, a good pair of bullocks, food grain and some money to buy seeds. The money advanced to the new cultivator or peasant was recovered by the king in easy installments within the period of three to four years without any burden to such cultivator. The Peshwas also confirmed the policy of Shivaji more vigorously. In addition to this a document dated 1774 addressed to Mahadev Nana Shet reveals that Mahadev Nana Shet was the Mamledar of Amod, he was instructed by the Peshwa to bring maximum waste land under cultivation for which he was allowed to advance tagai or loan to the cultivators as incentive to speed up the work. Thus, this helped a lot to Maratha Government to increase their revenue.

5. The most important encouragement to the agriculture was that the Government allowed all farmers whether new or old, whether mirasdars or uparis to reclaim the barren land. One who undertook this task, he was given several concessions as under :-

5.1. One who brings under cultivation the entire rocky ground and puts on it a layer of fertile soil, prepares borders and embankment to the newly prepared land, the cultivator was to be given the half of that new land as inam and the remaining half land was to be given rent free to the same cultivator for twenty years, the same half land should be charged at the reduced rent to the same cultivator for another five years. Then the same cultivator should be charged fully after the total period of twenty five years.

5.2. Any cultivator or peasant, who reclaimed the coastal land was entitled for one fourth land from the recently reclaimed land as inam and the remaining land was to be kept with the same cultivator as rent free land till the recovery of the amount which the cultivator spent on the process of reclaiming the land. Then the certain period was to be fixed for rent free cultivation of the land as incentive for the same cultivator. After full realization of all amount, the reclaimed land was to be brought under full rent.

5.3. The Government on her own constructed the irrigational facilities for the benefit of cultivators and peasants.

5.4 In case it was not possible to undertake such task, The Government motivated private enterprises to undertake such work and advanced substantial grants for the construction of irrigational facilities.

5. The Maratha Government never charged any fees to the cultivator on his purchase of any bullocks or buffaloes for agricultural purposes during the period of famine, scarcity or any exigency. This policy helped the cultivators very much. Therefore, Scoff-Waring says that the cultivators of Shivaji enjoyed plenty if not peace. The policy, which the Maratha rulers adopted to encourage the farmers and



cultivators to reclaim the barren land finds support in various ancient philosophies as Shukraniti, Vidurniti and Kautilyaniti. They all recommended the rulers to grant concessions liberally to cultivators who undertook the task of bringing barren land under cultivation. They further advised the rulers that even the farmers contributed towards the construction of dam, lake or any water storage for the agricultural purpose should also be given the same sorts of concessions which were given for reclaiming the land.

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## 10.7. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

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During the Maratha period, the village community was very powerful and functional, means it was a self-supporting unit. This village community regulated the life in villages. The people in villages consumed what they produced or what the villages produced that only they consumed. The production of villages depended mostly on two factors as 1. the quality of land of the village and 2. the availability of water in the village. There were two seasons on the basis of availability of water to the agriculture as 1. Kharip and 2. Rabi. The kharip harvest generally started on the monsoon rains, mostly in the month of June and July, because during this time only the south-west monsoon becomes active and covered the whole region of Maharashtra. The crops, generally thrashed during the Maratha period were Jawar, Bajra, Nagli, Rice, Udid, Mug, Tur and some other pulses. Although the behaviour of this south-west monsoon was erratic, the almost agricultural functions were carried under season only. Therefore, there was no guarantee of sufficient production of agriculture. The Rabi season started in the months of September, October in which crops like wheat, jowar, gram and several other grains of winter season were thrashed. Apart from the kharip and the rabi harvests, continuous production of crops was undertaken whenever and wherever perennial water supply was possible. Naturally, the cultivator having either open well, dam, lake or storage of water could trash the long term and commercial crops like sugarcane, fruits vegetable, turmeric, onions, garlic, tobacco, all vegetables and all cash crops. But such crops needed all irrigated land and the related facilities, which were absent in some parts of the Maratha kingdom. As a matter of fact the requirements of the people of the area determined the agricultural production. The land products and the requirements of the cultivators determined the industrial organization and accordingly professionals were set at a village. Thus, all professionals, industries and the Government activities were directed towards the jointly fulfilment of the needs and requirements of the people and agriculture.

### 10.7.1 Agricultural Products

The agricultural products under the Marathas categorised into five groups as 1. Cereals, 2. Pulses, 3. Oil seeds, 4. Cash crops and 5. Miscellaneous crops. In the Konkan region of Maratha territory, rice and nagli were produced as the staple crops. In addition to these crops the other crops like vari, harik, pulses like gram, blackgram, tur, mug, horsegram, oilseeds like nigar-seeds, sasamum, san-hemp were produced

in large quantity. There were certain products popular in certain area as san-hemp, which was produced mostly in Ratnagiri. This san-hemp was used for making fisherman's rope and nets.

In the Desh region of the Marathas the crops like Jowar, bajra and cotton were produced in large quantity. In addition to these crops nagli, sava and paddy were also produced. Paddy was produced in the monsoon while wheat was taken in second season.

In other crops horse-gram, gram, tur , mug, peas, beans, oil-seeds, linseed, nigar -seed, ground-nuts and safflower were common products in this region. Chillies, sugarcane, tobacco and cotton were the cash crops. The striking feature of these products the chillies, which were produced in the Desh region only. There were two harvests or crops were thrashed wherever irrigation facilities were available, otherwise only crop was grown during the whole year.

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## 10.8 IRRIGATION

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Chhatrapati Shivaji had followed the policy of encouraging farmers to undertake irrigation of their lands, wherever possible either by reclamation of land or digging open well or storing water. Irrigation of land was the only solution to improve production and increase the revenue of king. As the maximum land under the Marathas depended on the monsoon rains, which being erratic and uncertain- needed extensive efforts to irrigate the land on large scale. The land cultivated on monsoon water was called Jirayat whereas the irrigated land was called Bagayat . The Bagayati land used the water of eighter dam or lake by way of canal which was called Patasthal land. This type of irrigation was possible, because construction of dam or lake near a river was feasible and almost all villages participated in such construction of dam for common use. On other hand digging open well was very expensive, it was not possible for every cultivator to undertake it. Moreover, there was no guarantee that the open well would strike water. Even then one who succeeded in striking water and irrigated his land with the open well water that land was called Motasthal land. But such irrigation was limited. Therefore, Government often tried to construct a dam or lake for the use of all people and recovered the expenditure by way of taxes in long term. Some the king also paid for repair of such dams and lakes. Thus, the irrigation was the only way for the Marathas to make people prosperous and increase the revenue of the Government in multiplicity.

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## 10.9. GARDENS AND FORESTS

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Cultivators under the Marathas not only cultivated Jirayat land but also undertook gardening wherever possible. The land along the sea coast in Konkan region was highly favourable for gardens. In the same way land on the banks of river in the Desh was fertile and yielded much production. In the gardens of Konkan region fruits like mangoes, coconuts , betelnuts pineapples, jackfruits, sweet potatoes and vegetables of different varieties were grown . In gardens of Desh the fruits like

grapes , betel leaves sweet-potatoes , figs and vegetables were grown there. As a matter of fact , gardening needed constant attention and continuous work, then only it gave maximum production. Therefore, people undertook gardening as a lucrative source of income, it was the source of cash crops.

The land under the Marathas also covered several dense forests. The western ghats along the Sahyadri ranges contained large tracts of forests. On the other hand area around Kalyan , Bhiwandi , Shahapur also was surrounded by forests. These tracts of forests contained several important trees, which were used for making different types of ships in the shipyards of Kalyan, Bhiwandi ,and Konkan. Among the trees in the forest used for wood were Amba, nana , hedu, kalamb, asan savi, jambul, sisam , kirja, pata, alva, hirda, mahna. The people in the area also used the woods for agricultural purposes. Amba was deemed the best for agricultural implements while the woods of ain used for construction of building, mansions and forts. Sisam was very popular for making quality furniture. Apart from wood and fuel the forest gave other important products as wax , honey , sealing wax. Even the leaves of some trees were used for bidis , baskets , leaf plates , leaf cups and other useful items.

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## 10.10 COLONIZATION

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The Jagir of Shahaji contained Poona, Supa, Nagar and Haveli. This was a barren land and was infested by wild wolves, beasts as well as robbers. Naturally, no body preferred to use it as their habitation. Dadoji Kondev, the manager of this Jagir had the responsibility of colonizing the whole area. He took help of local people, who were known as Mavalas . Dadoji Kondev offered them generous rewards for liberating the area from robbers, beasts and wolves. These people were asked to colonize, cut the trees and bring the land under cultivation. Dadoji Kondev rewarded liberally the people who cleared the land and helped to increase the revenue of the jagir. In addition to these efforts, Dadoji established peths and new markets in the area and prevailed upon the traders, artisans to come and stay in the jagir. Thus, Dadoji developed the jagir as one of the prosperous areas of the Marathas.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : -

1. Explain the various types of land in Konkan area.
2. Discuss the various types of land in Desh region of the Marathas.
3. State the factors of backwardness of peasants or cultivators.
4. What did Marathas do to encourage the agriculture ?
5. Discuss the agricultural production under the Marathas.
6. What were the agricultural products under the Marathas?

7. What is meant by irrigation ? How was the land irrigated under the Marathas ?

8. Assess the Garden and Forests under the Marathas .

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### 10.11 SUMMARY

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Land under the Marathas was the main profession of the people, it , therefore, was called mother earth. The agricultural produce was shared by many people like the village officials, artisans and tillers of the soil. This land was divided as Jirayat and Bagayat land. Kautilya categorised distinctly as sita or produce from the crown land and bhaga i.e. portion of produce payable to the Government. The people who held the land with proprietary rights were known as mirasdars, The land was subdivided and was held by individuals or kins of the mirasdars were called Jathas. These Jathas were jointly responsible for the payment of revenue to the Government.

Land under the Marathas was of different types. In the Desh area it was as dark deep, reddish black, light black, and light brown. The red land was found in the hilly area whereas light brown was in the plains. The rich alluvial soil was found along the banks of different rivers, which was known as malai land. In the Konkan region, the land was as reddish brown and black soil. The alluvial land was available in the district of Kolaba. In Konkan barren land was called Varkas land. This varkas land was divided into mal varkas and dongri varkas . The barren land in the plain was called mal varkas while the barren land along the hill slopes was called dongri varkas . Due to erratic nature and behaviour of monsoon, conditions of cultivators or peasants were not good. In addition to these, the other factors which affected the conditions of peasants were constant warfares, poor quality of soil , lack of credit facilities, lack of fertilizers and insecticides , heavy taxation, old and backward tools and techniques of cultivating agriculture , general backwardness of peasantry and very meagre or small pieces of good quality agriculture available for cultivation.

Government took every step to help and reinstate the farmers after the happening of any adverse incidence. The cultivator could earn hardly something after the efforts of the whole year. Therefore, cultivators and peasants were helped to recover from any incursion or recurrence of adverse situation. Shivaji used to order often the village officers to assist the cultivators in the time of difficulties. Every ruler under the Marathas tried to improve the situation of cultivators. The rulers undertook several measures to encourage them as, they established new village, markets and towns, invited artisans to exchange commodities with them, traced traders in various other parts of the neighboring kingdoms and brought them to their kingdoms. Officials were ordered to help them in any eventuality, not this much the Maratha rulers also brought new cultivators to help the existing cultivators in the work of cultivations. The most important encouragement was that the cultivators were allowed to reclaim the barren land and add to their income and production. These farmers were given

concessions variously, as no taxes till twenty-five years. less rent for next five years and no taxes till the whole expenditure was recovered and the farmers reaped good profit in such reclamation. agricultural In production during the Marathas Jawar, Bajra and pulses in the Desh area, while Nagli , rice , Harik and vegetable were produced in the Konkan area . In Rabi season, wheat, gram and sunflower were reaped. Fruits and vegetables were produced in both the regions regularly. The Maratha rulers paid attention on irrigation of agriculture to increase the production and add to the revenue of the king. In order to add to the prosperity , the rulers paid attention on gardening in the kingdom as well as increases in the forest area and its commodities. Dadoji Kondev made special efforts to colonise the area which was given to Shahaji as Jahagir.

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### 10.12 QUESTIONS

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1. Discuss the nature of land system under the Marathas.
2. Give an account of the conditions of Peasantry under the Marathas.
3. Examine the policy of Maratha rulers of encouragement to agriculture .
4. What were the agricultural products under the Marathas ?
5. What measures did they undertake to increase them ?

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### 10.13 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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1. Atre T . N. , Gavgada .
2. Kulkarni A.R. , Maharashtra in the Age of Shivaji .
3. Mooreland, From Akbar to Aurangzeb .
4. Sen S. N., Administrative system of the Marathas.



## POSITION OF WOMEN

### Unit Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Social Philosophy
- 11.3 The Social Institutions
- 11.4 Hindu Law
- 11.5 Religion
- 11.6 Property Rights of Stridhana
- 11.7 Role of Women
- 11.8 An Appraisal of the Position of Women under the Maratha Rule
- 11.9 Summary
- 11.10 Question
- 11.11 Additional Readings

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### 11.0 OBJECTIVES

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After the study of this unit the student will be able to:

1. understand the social philosophy during the period of Marathas.
2. know the social institutions existed during the period of Marathas.
3. perceive the role of family in determining the position of women
4. comprehend the outstanding features of marriage system under the Marathas.

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### 11.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the Maratha society the theocratic principles predominated the idea of God was so all prevailing that everything else subordinated to it. The Marathas were the religious minded people and perhaps they were ready to do everything for their dharma what they did not do for their own selves. The king was divine, the cow was divine, the preceptor was divine, their sacred books were divine, the mother was divine - thus, the idea of divinity was ingrained in their blood and in the society of Marathas.

The structure of the Maratha social organization was based on various systems whose origin again was believed to be divine, It was therefore, not changed since a long time and handed down undisturbedly from father to son for generations, together. When these systems became hereditary, a new principle of stagnation was introduced in the society. It is very interesting to study the position of women in such social organization.

Position of women in any society mainly depends upon two major factors as 1 Social Philosophy in that society 2. The Social Institutions developed by that society. These two factors are discussed as under:

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## 11.2 SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

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This factor can be divided into two sub-points as a) The level of culture evolved in that society and b) The General outlook of the society crystallized with the passage of time. These two factors are part and parcel of education imparted in the society as they are whole and sole influenced by the educational instruction of the time. During the period of Marathas education was based on the system of education existed in ancient times. Naturally woman was not considered equal to man and was relegated to secondary position. In short, general outlook of society towards woman was derogatory. Although, she was the main pillar of the society but was neglected and considered insignificant. Social outlook was not as liberal towards woman as was towards male.

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## 11.3 THE SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

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This was divided into several divisions for the convenience of study as under : 1. Family 2. Marriage 3. Hindu Law 4. Religion.

**3.1. Family:-** It has been the most useful and fundamental social institution the society has evolved ever. It is the family who determines the structure of society it forms and moulds the character of its members. Family as a basic unit of the society performs four very indispensable functions as sexual, reproductive, economic and educational of these, the first and second satisfy basic biological and social needs of man and due to this reason family is considered as a fundamental social unit. These two basic functions are so interrelated each reinforce and enrich the satisfaction of other, therefore, they are generally considered together. The man and woman are equally sharing the responsibility while discharging the above four functions, even then the women for no reason was treated inferior to man.

Family during the period of Peshwa served as an excellent school for training the child in social etiquettes like social stratas, politeness, hierarchical calibration of action, inculcating virtues of self-discipline, self-sacrifice, obedience and service of elders and abidance by the precepts of religion,

Although, these virtues were needed to anyone to possess them but they were much more and harsh in case of girl child. Parvatibai's



instructions to Daryabai, the wife of Raghoji Bhosla III are self-explanatory in this regard . Parvatibai instructed Daryabai to pay respect to Ajibai the senior most lady in the house everyday morning as soon as her religious duties were over, greet every elders on their arrival in her room and stand up as long as they remained in the room , do not chew pan and avoid using bolsters in presence of the elders. They inculcated in girl child utmost obedience to one's elders and superiors and respectful acceptance of their authority, which they regard as the highest virtues essential for potential survival. They imbibed that the girls should not disrespect the wishes or orders of their elders as well as not to remonstrate against them even if they scolded or punished. It is very clear from these evidences that all bondages and barriers were entailed on the girl child only.

**3.2. Marriage:** - This is the first institution created by the society which helped the society the most in the process of socialization.

It is fundamental part of the family rather marriage only is responsible for the formation of family. it is universally agreed that without marriage there is no family. The family during the period of Marathas formed of a consanguineous patriarchal group, recognizing patriarchal descent. It was a joint family in which all members like brothers, even stepbrothers, sons, sisters, others relatives like widowed aunts, their children and orphans lived together with father the eldest member at the head. In such family all decisions and circumstances went against the woman and she was proved insignificant. Marriages in joint family were contractual and arranged at an early age by the elders without any consideration of the marrying parties. Consequently, several unwanted and unwarranted events came up as 1. incompatibility of marrying partners took place the most.2 the possibility of strengthening the ties of conjugal love between the newly married couple correspondingly lessened.3, the members of the joint family being together for generations, the ties of filial love or attachment about each other developed very strong 4 husbands used to be under the influence of their mothers, sisters and other members of the family rather than their wives.6. newly married or young daughters-in-law were left to the mercy of their in-laws or other senior ladies in the family. 7. the in-laws or senior ladies often behaved as tyrants while dealing with the newly married girls. 8. husbands due to this or that pretext used to be with their mothers or relatives instead of helping their young and helpless wives.9. Naturally, without any alternatives, these young daughters-in-law became victims of the torture of their in-laws and committed suicides. Thus, the marriage, an important social institution under the Marathas led the woman towards her end and proved the level of position of women during that period.

The marriage system during the Marathas had some predominant and outstanding features which influenced and affected the position of women if they operated concomitantly, the effects were utterly disastrous. These features were as :

1 Dowry

2 Child Marriage

## 4 Restrictions on widow remarriage

## 5 Divorce

**3.2.1 Dowry:** Marriages under the Marathas were fixed by the families and elderly persons, the parties concerned were given no say about the choice of marriage partners. The factors that mattered in the selection were the compatibility of horoscopes, family background, caste, suitability of gotras and dowry. There are several references regarding dowry transactions during the Peshwa period. Sardar Tulshibagwale's diary mentions that 1. Someone Deshpande of Pune took Rs.800/- as dowry from his bride. 2. Sawkar Vaidya accepted Rs. 1500/- as dowry from his bride. Macdonald in his Memoirs of the life of Nana Fadnavis says that Nana Fadnavis accepted dowry as high as Rs. 25000/- in the marriage of his adopted son. When the marriage malady like dowry was practiced and the brides or their parents were forced to pay such amount in the marriage, it highlighted the position of woman, which was not equal but lower to man in that society.

**3.2.2 Child Marriage :** This was another important feature of the marriage system under the Marathas. It is said that Hindu law makers and Dharma Shastras strongly recommended child marriages or pre-puberty marriages and advised that parents who failed to marry away their daughters in the pre-puberty age incurred a huge sin. Peshwas were the Chitpawan Brahmins, they considered themselves as the custodians of Hindu law and religion and paid strict attention towards the observance of the marriage laws. Peshwas even released prisoners on several occasions to enable them to marry their daughters in the pre-puberty age. Peshwa Bajirao II had issued orders to all Brahmins to get their daughters married before the age of nine. Generally, girls were married before the age of ten. In certain unavoidable circumstances, when marriage of a girl was delayed, eleven, was considered the maximum limit of the marriageable age. If somebody could not marry his daughter within the age of eleven, he was ex-communicated or outcasted by the people. Although, there was an upper limit of the marriageable age of girls but there was no mention about the minimum age of marriage of male. There are a number of instances of girls married at the age of 2 and 1/2 or 3 years of age. But it is observed that five was the generally approved and practicable age of girls for marriage. When the marriageable age of girls was below ten, life of such newly married girl was quite deplorable and full of miseries.

**3.2.3. Polygamy :-** This was one more characteristic of marriage life of people under the Marathas. Although, there was a ceiling on marriageable age of girls, there was no ceiling on the marriageable age of men. They were able to marry any number of times at any advanced age in life. It means men used to practice polygamy without any hesitation and nobody raised any objection on this system for a long. It is said that men could contract as many marriages as they desired. Thomas Coat reports that polygamy was prevalent under the Marathas for the obvious reason of economic benefits. Amongst highly privileged people, who had more

wives were Nana Fadnavis, Peshwa Basirao II and Mahadaji Shindia, Thus , Polygamy was practiced at every level, which indicated the position of woman during the period of Marathas.

**3.2.4. Prohibition of widow Re-marriage:-** This was one more indicator of the position of woman during the Marathas period.. Society under the Marathas did not raise even, the slightest objection to the re-marriage of men, but the same society did not offer the same freedom to woman even in case of exigency. Some British reports say that re-marriage of widow was permitted among the economically weaker sections and humbler castes but it was totally prohibited among the upper castes. Widow re-marriage was allowed in the economically humbler class as well as whose husband was not heard for considerable period, but such woman was not permitted to re-marry before the prescribed period of waiting, which varied from five to twelve years. On the other hand , there was no such waiting period for males belonging to any caste or class . It is enough transparent to understand the position of woman of this period.

**3.2.5. Divorce:-** This was also one of the important issues helped determine the position of woman in the society. Although, divorce was sanctioned among lower castes, there were some castes who never liked to sanction divorce in their caste in order to compete with Brahmins and claim some sort of higher ritual status. Brahmins never sanctioned divorce because marriage, they considered was a very sacred tie and thought it was irrevocable in any case. But the marriage was revoked when it was proved that the marriage was concluded hastily and without proper rites and rituals.

Although , Ghatasphota is the Marathi version of divorce today , they used it in little different sense during the period of Marathas. Ghatasphota was total cut up of the relations of women or it was permanent ostracization of woman with her husband and his family rather than divorce. Ghatasphota was concluded in case of husband's conversion to Islamism or wife's committing adultery with a Muslim or a Shudra and becoming pregnant from such relationship, in no other cases it was sanctioned. As Ghatasphota, there was one more operation known as Kadimoda, which also signified divorce means breaking of a marriage tie Kadimoda was practiced among the lower castes mostly on the following grounds

1. Differences in castes status of bride and groom coming to light after their marriage.
2. Inability of the husband to provide maintenance to his wife .
3. Mutual dissension and consent of each other for breakage of marriage .
4. Re-marriage of the wife while her first husband was alive.

Except these grounds , there was no any other ground on which either Ghatasphota or Kadimoda or divorce was granted even if the husband was too brutal and it was unbearable to the wife to live with him. Thus, the absence of recourse of divorce increased the miseries of woman and left her without any remedy, which signified the position of woman under the Marathas.

**3.2.6 Sati :-** Among the most heinous systems Indians continued since the ages, Sati system was one of them. It was in full swing during the

Maratha period when child widows were everywhere. The society under the Marathas was neither sympathetic towards the widows nor towards the child widow. On the contrary it subjected them to several restrictions and increased their miseries and unhappiness which led them to burn themselves with the dead bodies of their husbands on the funeral pyre of their husband means committing sati. This signifies the outlook of the society towards the woman and their position in the society.

Sati was practiced among upper castes such as Brahmins, Marathas and warrior classes during this period. There are a number of references of not only wives but also concubines and female slaves burnt themselves with the dead bodies of their master. The main reason behind committing sati by widows was that the status or the abject conditions to which the widows were reduced after the death of their husbands. Widows were pushed to such status that they tortured and separated from the main stream of life. Naturally, they took the painful decision of committing sati. There are several evidences of the state of widows after the death of their husbands. For example, foreign traveller Tavernier says that in India after the death of a man his widow never allowed to marry again, she was deprived of all her valuables and beauty by shaving her hair off and made her to remain for the rest of her life without being of any considerations and worse than a slave. This unbearable life condition caused her to detest life and prefer to be burnt herself with the dead body of her husband. In the same way another foreign traveller Edmand Terry says that widows in India ascended the funeral pyre of their husbands to avoid the shameful life with opprobrium after the death of their husband. James Forbes reaffirms that Indian widows were reduced to the status of dependence, insignificance and infamy for the remainder of their whole life which led them to die with honour with the dead bodies of their husbands and they committed sati. Thus, these evidences clearly indicated the position of woman during the Maratha period.

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## 11.4 HINDU LAW

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A less the study of some provisions of Hindu law, the study of position of woman can not be concluded. Because this was the law existing during that period and affected the life of people. As a matter of fact the law of land should have been equally applicable to man and woman but this did not take place. There are some observations of Hindu law in connection with woman are as under :-

1. The prevalent Hindu law was in favour of man particularly, the marriage laws were partial to male.
2. The law of fidelity was binding only on women while men were free to do any things or indulge in concubinage or prostitution.
3. Hindu law had neither sanctioned divorce nor had given and redressal to woman against the ill-treatment of their husbands.
4. Although, restrictions on divorce or Ghatasphota affected both men and women in some proportion but whatever inconveniences faced by the men they compensated by the practice of polygamy. Women had no any redressal for that problem.
5. The marriage law under the Marathas was so much against the women that even girls were kidnapped and married forcibly

to some undeserving elements, did not help them in any ways and left them to suffer for the whole life. 6. Women under the Marathas were considered as personal property of their husbands. Husbands never treated wives as companions but claimed themselves as lords and masters. A gardener once kept his wife as a deposit with his creditor against some debt for some stipulated period. On his failure to return the money with the creditor within the stipulated period, the wife of that gardener was to be put to concubinage by the creditor. The Hindu law did not raise any objection. 7. Hindu law considered woman as inferior species, they were expected to show complete obedience to their husbands so much so that they should not hesitate to obey their orders either to swallow poison or jump into an open well. Not this much, the law allowed men to enslave women freely on mere charges of adultery. Thus, the unequal treatment of Hindu law made women to suffer a lot helplessly.

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## 11.5 RELIGION

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Another factor that affected the position of women during the period of Marathas was religion. Hinduism was one of the most popular faiths under the Marathas, this religion has a long history and represents various stages of evolution, definition, consolidation, classification and proliferation. These stages in this religion had almost completed before the period of Marathas. This religion was based on four purusharathas, particularly on the theory of Karma, Mokshya, charity, merits, incarnations, the doctrine of Bhakti and so on since the ages. The concept of Karma, sati and moksha dominated the religious practices of the period of Marathas. The doctrine of Karma says that every act produces certain returns leading to joy or sorrow corresponding to good or bad deeds. The existence of man is a sort of expiation for the deeds of the previous existence from which nobody has escaped on any account, Naturally, all human conducts suitably rewarded or punished in subsequent existence. Thus, the people tried to accumulate merit by various ways suggested by different religious scriptures in order to gain happiness in the subsequent existence. The religion, which paid much more attention on the happiness in the next birth and ignored the present life affected much more on the status of women. It was in favour of men and against of women as under:-

1. The religion reckoned charity very high as a mode of earning merit. All articles like- grain, cloth, cow and jewels and women were gifted to Brahmins.
- 2 The religion emphasised on several rituals like Japa, Japya, upchara and Pooja which formed part of daily rounds of one's religious duties. Women were mostly involved in these rituals to wean these from the other matters in life.
3. The religion considered woman inferior species than man.
4. The religion did not oppose to the system of plurality of wives.
5. The practice of sati prevailed during this period had religious sanction. It was said that women who self- immolated with the dead bodies

of their husbands annihilated sins of their husbands and raised them to heaven on the basis of attainment of high merit to live in eternal union with each other. But it is also said that not the religion but the status of widows that they were reduced to after the death of their husbands forced them to commit sati. The religion could have saved them by offering support or mobilizing help from various sections of society. But the religion did not do it and left the widows to their abject status, which led them to take such painful decision.

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## 11.6 PROPERTY RIGHTS OR STRIDHANA

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The position of women under the Marathas can be ascertained with the help of their property rights or stridhana they had. Had the women enjoyed that right, they would have overcome several problems they faced .

As a matter of fact , women during the period of Marathas were relegated to a secondary position. They were given no right to inherit the property of their father even in absence of any legal heir or their brothers. It means no married women entitled for any property share of their father, only unmarried daughters could claim certain amount which was called patrimony and expenses required for their marriage. Women of this period could enjoy whatever their father, brothers or any member gave them in the form of gifts on various occasions and nothing more than that.

On the other hand , the share of women in the property of their husband was limited. The women used to claim their property right was only maintenance from their husbands. Otherwise the women were granted divorce on account of their inability to provide maintenance to their wives. It is said that widows could succeed to their husband's property in case husbands separated from their joint family and died without any legal heirs. However, in such cases, not the widows only could succeed to the property but Government also claimed certain share in that property, which varied from two-fifths to one half of the property as well as it differed from property to property . In case of a joint family widows were provided with only maintenance and not they could succeed to the property of their husbands. If the joint family failed in providing maintenance , the Government was there to reprimand the family for providing the maintenance , even the maintenance was provided to deserted wives also. It was liberal in rich families and lapsed back to either sons or the joint family after the death of women or widows.

The women during the period of Marathas could hold the property independently and had absolute rights of either disposal or gift over the property, which came to be known as the Stridhan property. Vijnanesvara text which advocated equal share of property to women to that of their sons. The same text says that stridhan means the property acquired by inheritance, purchase and partition for women, who had all rights of disposal over it. Some other sources say that stridhan means the only jewellery conferred on women before or after the marriage and they had all sorts of rights of disposal, gift enjoyment or partition as they wished. There are several references that even the Government helped them in



receiving their ornaments from the custody of their mother-in-law to enable them to use as they liked. In this way, the property right of women to the property of husband and father was not considered during this period. They had absolute right on their ornaments only. But it was not possible for all women to get such ornaments in their marriage. Therefore, they were to be dependent on father, husband and sons at particular period of life respectively. Thus, the women had secondary position in the matter property rights for which the Hindu law the religion were responsible.

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## 11.7 ROLE OF WOMEN

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The study of position of women is not complete unless the survey of the actual role played by women is under taken. Education is the main key for progress and advancement. But the women were not given any education. They were not considered good enough to receive any instructions in the art of reading and writing. Education was considered a step forward and confined for few people only. Naturally, women from rich aristocrat families under the Marathas taught the art of reading and writing to enable them to read the religious and social literature. It was expected that women were to spend much more time in religious and cultural activities only.

Sir John Malcolm says that women from noble families were taught the art of horse-riding and the use of arms like sword, dagger and lances. Women like Yamunabai Shindia, Laxmibai, Ahilyabai Jija bai of Karvir and Tarabai had led their armies on the battlefield and fought several wars during their time. Captain Broughton could find several outstanding features and virtues of Maratha women as 1. Maratha women were notable. 2. They had bold look which was absent in other women of the country. 3. They were as bold as men. 4. They knew horse-riding as men and took no pain even if horse galloped through the throng. 5 They were more persevering than men.

There are several evidences that women from noble and aristocratic families played very active and important role in politics and administration either in their father, husband or son's kingdom. The women who contributed to the making of Maratha history and to the cultural life of India were as Tulsabai and Ahilyabai Holkar, Umabai Dabhade, Laxmibai and Yamunabai Shinde the wives of Mahadji Shinde, Daryabai Bhosale, Tarabai, Jijabai, Radhabai, Gopikabai, Anandibai, Anubai Ghorpade from the Peshwa family. These and many other women were the women of uncommon courage, political sagacity, administrative capacity or diplomatic skill and they had the caliber to be active in public life during their period. Although, the names of above women flashed before our eyes due to their active role in the administration, there were several other women who were capable for many roles but participated saliently and held the positions of Patil, Deshmukh, Deshpande, Deshkulkarni and discharged their duties very efficiently. These women acted as regents to their minor sons, transacted daily business, audited accounts, carried on daily correspondence and gave a good audience to various deputations from within and outside their rule.



James Forbes in his account says that Maratha women did not observe parda, they were bold enough and participated in public life as men. He further says that the wife of Hiranand Diwan of Fatesing Gaikwad of Baroda, carried out the administration very efficiently in absence of her husband. Despite, that the society being conservative and religious minded, continuance of socio- economic customs and practices, there were certain women who got opportunities to save the interest of their sons and husbands in the competition of their opponents. They observed such situation very closely and minutely, they became very conversant with such situation and tackled them very efficiently. Thus, the Maratha women from noble and aristocratic families did each and every task as perfectly as men and proved them as equal as men.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

1. What do you understand by the social philosophy existed during the period of Marathas?

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## **11.8 AN APPRAISAL OF THE POSITION OF WOMEN UNDER THE MARATHA RULE**

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After taking into account all factors like social philosophy, social institutions and the Hindu Law and religion prevailed during the Maratha period, it appears that these factors affected and influenced the position of women unevenly and unequally. It was the middle rung of the society affected and suffered the most. Woman from the upper and rich classes enjoyed almost privileges and benefits because of the position and wealth of their husband, son or father. Although there was no education imparted to women, the upper class women were taught the art of reading and writing which led them to enjoy a particular position in public life and also led them to be in power for many years. Although, the marriage laws and other traditions and customs did much injustice with them and made them subordinate to men but the financial position of their families provided them with at least the basic needs and blunted the edge of traditions and customs. It is said that women in humble classes had no problem of their position. They were almost equal to men because, men and women of working classes were equally putting hard work for their living, or in other words agrarian functions needed both woman and man to perform evenly economic role, which led women of this class to raise their status in society in relation to men. Religion and marriage laws were lenient and flexible to women of the lower classes and castes. There was no sati practised no widow was forced to tonsure, divorce was granted and widow re-marriage was permitted. In short no marriage laws were observed very strictly and stringently. Upper classes practised the system of polygamy and concubinage for economic reasons, which led to lower the position of women in relation to men. But those systems were not practiced among the working classes. Thomas Coats says that although the system of polygamy was there, it was practiced very rarely that also by rich in absence of children by first marriage. It is also observed that women of working classes were little affected by the law of property rights to women. Because, they being poor had no property to share as well as these women

hardly needed anything more than their maintenance. They themselves were independent earners in their daily life and were hard working which virtue was absent in the upper classes.

Women belonging to the middle class suffered the most because this class was not well off as the upper class and had no concessions as the lower class enjoyed. Generally, the middle class came from the high castes but their women could not enjoy the privileges of the rich while they could not get the concessions the law and customs offered to the lower castes. Naturally, women of this class sandwiched on every count. The prevailing custom of child marriage fettered their personality, the system of joint family reduced them to a subservient position while the practices of polygamy, concubinage, the denial of divorce and the prohibition of widow re-marriage brought them into precarious position. These customs, practices and systems led them to be neglected totally by their husband and abandoned them on a very trivial offence. Widows of this class who wanted to avoid the miserable widowhood, the forced celibacy, degradation, dependence on others and continuous humiliation committed sati honourably with the dead body of their husband otherwise led a very humdrum life till the last.

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## 11.9 SUMMARY

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In the Maratha society theocratic principles were predominant. The idea of God was so pervading that everything else was subordinate to it. Marathas were religious minded people, they were ready to do everything for their dharma what they did not for their own selves. The structure of their social organization was based on various systems, whose origin was believed to be divine. It, therefore, was not changed for a long time and handed down undisturbedly from father to son for generations together. When these systems became hereditary, a new principle of stagnation was introduced in the society. Thus, it is imperative to the position of women in such society.

Position of women in any society depends upon two major factors as social philosophy and social institutions that developed. The social philosophy is based on the level of culture and the general outlook of that society. In the same way the social institutions like family, marriage, Hindu law and religion also influenced and affected the position of women in that society. During the period of Marathas the system of joint family was in existence which had no liberal outlook towards women of that time. In this joint family system marriages were contractual and arranged at an early age, the chances of incompatibility of marriage partners were very high. This system lessened the conjugal love between the newly married couple and strengthened the ties of filial love. Husbands used to be under the influence of their mother and sister rather than their wives. The newly married daughters-in-law were left at the mercy of their mothers-in-law, who were often tyrants and forced them to commit suicide. The marriage system during the period of Marathas had several predominant features like the practice of child marriage, polygamy, restriction on widow re-marriage and divorce, which affected the position

of women very widely. The practice of sati was glorified, it was said that woman who committed sati attained high merit and annihilated sins of their husbands. This religious base might have driven a number of women to burn themselves alive. The system of polygamy or plurality of wives strained the conjugal love and created domination of husbands on their wives, consequently husbands became very brutal in their treatment with their wives in daily life.

Hindu law and religion also sided with men and were very partial to women. The law allowed men to indulge in concubinage and prostitution on other hand forbade women to take divorce and denied widows to re-marry. Even the law did not help the girls who were kidnapped and married forcibly to undeserving persons. It also expected the women to be complete obedient to their husbands. Women of this period had no property rights even in absence of any other legal heir but they enjoyed only the right to maintenance in their husband's property. It is said that women of this period enjoyed full-fledged rights over their jewellery, gifts and whatever was offered them on their marriage by their parents, which came to be known as stridhana.

The study of the position of women during this period cannot be completed unless the role played by them in politics and administration is seen. The women from rich and aristocratic families looked after the administration of father, husband and sons. They also led armies personally to battlefields and transacted daily business in absence of their husband. Almost all foreign travellers say that Maratha women did not observe parda and had bold look which was absent in other women of Hindustan. Finally it can be said that the woman from middle class suffered the most while the women from working class worked hard as man. Naturally, the position of working-class women was almost as equal as men.

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### 11.10 QUESTIONS

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1. Examine the position of women during the period of Marathas.
2. Explain briefly the various factors that affected the position of women under the period of Marathas.
3. Assess the various facets of women under the period of Marathas.
4. Give an account of the social institutions that affected the position of women during the period of Marathas.

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### 11.11 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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1. R. V. Nadkarni, The Rise and Fall of the Maratha Empire.
2. Bhave, Peshvekalin Maharashtra.
3. Altekar A.S., Position of Women in Hindu Civilization.
4. Thomas, Indian Women Through the Ages.
5. Sudha Desai, Social life under the Peshwas.



## CENTRAL AND PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Unit Structure:

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Difficulties Faced by Shivaji
- 12.3 The King
- 12.4 The Ashta Pradhan Mandal
- 12.5 Duties of The Pradhans or Ministers
- 12.6 Secretary
- 12.7 The Eighteen Karkhanas
- 12.8 The Twelve Mahals or Departments
- 12.9 Prants and Districts in The Kingdom
- 12.10 The Deshmukh and The Deshpande
- 12.11 The Kamvisdar and The Mamlatdar
- 12.12 The Darakhadars
- 12.13 Summary
- 12.14 Questions
- 12.15 Additional Readings

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### 12.0 OBJECTIVES

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After the completion this unit the student will be able to

1. Comprehend the difficulties which Chhatrapati Shivaji faced at the time of organizing his civil administration.
2. Grasp the general structure of the Government of Shivaji.
3. Perceive the idea of the position of the king in the administration.
4. Understand the Ashta Pradhan Mandal of Shivaji.
5. Know the duties of the Ashta Pradhan Mandal of Chhatrapati Shivaji.

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### 12.1 INTRODUCTION

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According to Ramchandrapant Amatya, forts are the soul of the Maratha kingdom. Lokhitwadi says that Chhatrapati Shivaji was the most popular king for his forts who constructed and brought under his control around two hundred and forty forts whereas Ranade says, "He had two hundred

eighty forts". He sanctioned large amounts for repair and maintenance of his forts. These forts gave their large returns in his war against the Mughals and proved him as the unparalleled military leader of the time. S.N.Sen says that Shivaji's greatness as a military leader has never been contested but his greatness as a civil administrator is still more undoubted. Ranade says that Chhatrapati Shivaji was like Napoleon Bonaparte, a great organizer in his time and builder of civil institutions. His civil administration alone enabled the country to pass without scathe through the dangers which the Maratha country confronted after his death. He further says that Chhatrapati Shivaji did not aspire to found a universal empire under his direct rule but he tried to secure the liberty for his own people, unite them into one nation, make them powerful for self-defense and self-assertion. He had friendly relations with all the chiefs of Golconda, Bednore and Bijapur and never interfered with their spheres of influence. He allowed his brother Vyankoji to retain his father's jagir to himself in the Southern part of the country. He levied Chouth and Sardeshmukhi on the Mughal possessions only. He made a clear distinction between the Swarajya i.e, the territories directly governed by him and the Moglai, the territories governed by any foreign kings were treated out side his Swarajya. His civil institutions were introduced mainly in Swarajya only and they were also introduced partially to the territories on the line of military forts maintained by him which were to the extreme South of the Peninsula .

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## 12.2. DIFFICULTIES FACED BY SHIVAJI

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There were several difficulties which Chhatrapati Shivaji was to face while forming his central government. Some of them were long term and some were periodic difficulties, which can be enumerated as under:

**Disorder and Anarchy:-** Before the building of central administration of Shivaji , whole Deccan was in disorder and anarchy . The Mughal had overthrown the Nizamshahi kingdom while the Bijapur Government was not strong enough to establish peace in the region. There were wars fought after a while when the neighbouring area of Poona was depopulated due to several reasons. This area was infested by wolves. Dadoji Kondev was to offer several rewards to the people to kill the wolves and increase the habitation as well as to undertake the work of cultivation after cutting trees and clearing jungle.

The people in the area were not educated. They used to be rivals of each other on petty reasons and bloody feuds reigned the day. The strong used to plunder the weak, which formed the normal course of daily routine. These feuds were generated normally on the matter of property, which had more than two claimants. The party that could not possess the property certainly used to kill the rival party even would never spare widows and orphan children. The killing of the rival party never brought to an end to the feuds, that continued forever. The loyalty of an old adherent would often save a pregnant lady or an infant heir in some village or mountains far away from their native place. Such child would never be allowed to forget the damages done to his family. When the

child was grown, it was sure that he would definitely take revenge for the dead relatives, the houses plundered and the damages caused to his property. The anarchy of the time had left its marks on the families of old Deshmukhs. For such feuds, anarchy and disorder the Jagdales of Masur and the Jedhes of Rohidkhore were popular. Thus, Shivaji was to overcome this difficulty and bring these people together in his administration, which he did it most efficiently.

**Importance to Military Exploits:-** Chhatrapati Shivaji faced a problem about his assistants and subordinates, who were totally indifferent and incomprehensive about the reorganization and reforms of the civil administration. The art of war as a source of honour and emolument appealed them more than the art of peace. If they had been allowed to follow their inclination, they would have happily renounced the work of consolidation of administration and gone to the war front to fight and defeat the enemy and shown his individual prowess. Not this much, once Nilo Pant Mazumdar had earnestly requested the Chhatrapati to relieve him from his civil duties and allow to render his military services like other warriors and capture forts and territories of the enemy. It is said that Shivaji himself had to convince Nilo Pant Mazumdar that his services in civil capacity were as important as those of a military commander and that would be appreciated as the military exploits of the Peshwa. Thus, Shivaji was to overcome this problem also and build his civil administration.

**The Problem of Conservation or Reform of Feudalism: -** Chhatrapati Shivaji was a very practical king and statesman. He knew that he had several problems and difficulties. He was not able to afford any warfare while consolidating his civil organization. He needed strict discipline, peace and order absolutely for his existence. He was to bring together all chiefs under his banner and consolidated his civil organization. He faced a problem, which was of feudalism, whether it was to be continued or reform should be carried out if decided to continue then to what extent it should be continued or reformed. If the system of feudalism was continued then the problems of internal wars, bloody feuds, anarchy and oppression of people would be prevailed as usual. Shivaji had already seen the panorama in Bijapur and Golkonda Kingdoms where this system was in existence. On the other hand if it was reformed the chiefs who had come under his banner would be dissatisfied and would be reluctant to remain together. Because he was very well aware about the characteristics of watandars and chiefs, whom he had brought under his control. Thus, Shivaji was to solve this problem of watandars who used to consider the interest of their own watan first, the interest of the country afterwards.

**General structure of Government:-** The king has faced problems regarding the structure of the Government which can be enumerated as under:-

The village communities had been in existence since a long time. It was flourished because the system of Central Government was not developed



fully and on the other hand the village communities served the needs of the people admirably. Shivaji, therefore, decided to carry on with the village communities as a part and parcel of the internal organization

There were several self-contained officers, who were known as the Deshmukhs and the Deshpandes. These officers were originally appointed for revenue collection, they, gradually made their offices hereditary, assumed and exercised their authority as they were sovereign powers. This situation led to develop the system of feudalism, But Shivaji never wanted to prevail this situation because he knew that the existence of feudalism means the negation of a strong monarchy.

Shivaji appointed his own revenue officers to negate the importance of the old Deshmukhs and Deshpandes. Although, the old officers enjoyed their old rights and perquisites, they were not in any case able to exercise their tyranny on cultivators.

Sabasad says that no rayat was subjected to the jurisdiction and the regulations of the Zamindar, Deshmukh or Deshpandes. Shivaji had weakened them considerably, these feudals were not able to plunder and oppress the rayat. He had conquered some of the territories of the Mughals, the Adilshahi and Nizamshahi in the Desh. Because, in the Desh, these feudals used to recover much more revenue, submitted its very marginal part to the government treasury and kept maximum with them. Thus, the mirasdars and feudals used to be strong enough to challenge the authority of the king. These mirasdars or feudals would construct forts and recruit armed forces for their security. Thus, they became unruly. When Shivaji conquered the territories in the Desh, he demolished all bastions, castles and the strongholds of the feudal lords. Wherever he found important forts, he posted his own garrison.

Shivaji never allowed the feudals to control inams as they used to do earlier, he fixed their dues in cash and grains as per yield of the village. The zamindars, the Deshmukhs, the Deshpandes, the Deshkulkarnies, the Patils and Kulkarni were never allowed to build bastions but houses. Thus, these were the difficulties that Shivaji overcame while organising his civil administration.

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## 12.3 THE KING

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The king was the pivotal point of the administration of the Marathas. He was the only superman who used to run the very difficult administrative machinery. Everyone in the administration like all heads of eighteen Karkhanas, the twelve mahals, officers of secretariat as Fadnis, Sabnis, clerks, military commanders and eight Pradhans used to receive and execute orders of the king. The king was the final authority, without his sanction no one, no department could actualize any design or plan.

It is said that even Panditrao, a Brahmin, who was the officer in charge of the ecclesiastical department never tried to take any decision without the sanction of the king. In the same way even Kalush, the all-powerful minister of Sambhaji had had consulted the king to readmit to a repentant



renegade into his former caste after he had undergone necessary penance. Naturally, everything depended on the personal ability and qualities of the sovereign king. There was no force to check him except his own good sense and the external factors like wars of formidable Muhammadan invaders. Hence, this elaborate administrative system required a very strong and farsighted ruler like the founder of this administration. All the Maratha kings from the founder, Chhatrapati Shivaji to Shahu were the most efficient and powerful kings and were able to carry out the functions of the administration properly and without any hindrances. But after the death of Chhatrapati Shahu due to changed circumstances the central administration gradually came under the influence of the Peshwas. Farnis originally, one of the officers rose to power considerably next to Peshwa and consequently, the central administration was transferred from Satara to Poona. Although, there were gradual changes in the Central administration but there were no changes in the village communities even under. The Peshwas continued them and the provincial administration as earlier.

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## 12.4. THE ASHTA PRADHAN MANDAL

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The head of Maratha kingdom was the king, he was also the head of the administration. The king was assisted by his Council of Eight Ministers, which came to be known as the Ashta Pradhan Mandal. The Eight Ministers of Chhatrapati Shivaji were as under :-

1. The Peshwa or the Mukhya Pradhan .
2. The Mazumdar or the Amatya .
3. The Wakins or the Mantri.
4. The Dabir or the Sumanta.
5. The Surnis or the Sachiv.
6. The Pandit Rao , or the Royal Priest.
7. The Senapati or the Commander –in –Chief .
8. The Nyayadhish or the Chief Justice .

Malhar Ramrao Chitnis says that the council of eight ministers came into existence at the time of the coronation and almost all ministers had been present at the ceremony. They stood on either side of the throne to pour holy water on the head of the king from gold and silver jars and basins. Sabhasad says that the following ministers of the council of Shivaji had taken part in the coronation ceremony as Moropant, son of Trimbak Pant as Mukhya Pradhan; Naro Nilkantha and Ramchandra Nilkantha as joint Amatya; the son of Raghuvathrao as Panditrao; Harbirrao Mohite as Senapati; Dattaji Trimbak as Mantri; Ramchandrapant, son of Trimbakji Sondev Dabir as Sumanta; Annaji Pant Datto as Sachiv; and Niraji Rauji as Nyayadhish. It is said that the Persian designations of some of the officers like Dabir, Surnis, Wakins and Mazumdar clearly suggest that such analogous offices existed in the Muhammadan government of the south. In the same way, there is a reference in the

Shukraniti in ancient Hindu polity the Chief Priest and the Chief Justice were the members of the Cabinet. Thus, this is one of the special features of the council of ministers of Shivaji. Justice Ranade says that the council of ministers of Chhatrapati Shivaji was very similar with the British Viceroy's Executive Council.

The Peshwa was Prime Minister, next to the king in the civil and the military administration and used to be in the seat first on the right hand below the throne. The Senapati was in-charge of the military administration and used to be in the seat first on the left hand below the throne. The Amatya and the Sachiv used to be in the seat next to the Peshwa while the Mantri used to be in the seat next below to the Sachiv, who was in-charge of the king's private affairs. The Sumant was the Foreign Secretary and used to occupy the seat below to the Senapati on the left. The Panditrao came next in succession, who was in-charge of the ecclesiastical department and the Chief Justice was the last to be in seat on the left side. Ranade further says that even in the Modern Government, the same system of organisation is followed.

Sen says that although, the Ashta Pradhan Council of Chhatrapati Shivaji had resemblance with that of the Executive Council of the Viceroy, the principles underlying the two were not identical. The viceroy's council was a bureaucratic set-up and had therein the clear cut division of duties, whereas Shivaji's Ashta Pradhan Council was an autocratic organisation, for the benefit of his people i.e., his subjects. Shivaji was a practical statesman and acted as a benevolent Despot. His ministers were his trusted servants. They were proud to carry out his instructions and orders for the advantage of the people. There was no any clear-cut division of duties in the council of ministers of Shivaji, six out of his eight members or ministers were to perform the military duties whenever necessary as well as almost all eight ministers were to attend a Hazir Majalasi to hear appeals in both the civil and the criminal cases.

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## 12.5 DUTIES OF THE PRADHANS OR MINISTERS

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Regarding the duties of the Ashta Pradhan Mandal, the document known as kanujabta i.e. memorandum gives detail account of the same. The memorandum was prepared in the coronation year of the Chhatrapati Shivaji, which gives the account of the duties as under:-

**The Peshwa or the Mukhya Pradhan:-** He was to perform all administrative work and put his seal on all such letters as a matter of his consideration. He was to prepare for expeditions and wage wars whenever necessary. He was to make necessary arrangements for preservation and retention of the districts which came under the possession of the Marathas and act and execute the orders of the king very strictly. He was to accommodate all military officers within his campaign and lead them successfully as per the orders of the king.

**The Senapati or the Commander-in- Chief: -** He was to maintain the army and prepare for the war and expeditions. He was to preserve the

newly acquired territories, keep an account of spoils and act as per the order of the king . He was to bring to the notice of the king that which soldiers were useful to what expeditions as well as lead them all to the battle field.

**The Amatya or the Mazumdar:-** He was to keep the account of income and expenditure of the whole kingdom. In order to get all accounts assessed by him, the Daftardar and the Fadnis were kept under his superintendence and they were answerable to him for all accounts. It was his duty to inspect every account submitted to him and put his sign and seal on the letters and accounts submitted to him by Fadnis and Chitnis. He was to render military service as and when it was required and look after the administrations of districts as per the orders of the King.

**The Sachiv:-** He was also called Surnis. He was to look after the royal correspondence and make necessary corrections as per the order of the king. The Sachiv was to execute his military duties, help the administration in adjusting newly annexed districts and territories as per the orders of the king. He was to sign and stamp all the official letters as a mark of his approval and acceptance for execution.

**The Panditrao or the Royal Priest:** - He had jurisdiction all over the matters of religion in the kingdom. He had authority to judge the religious offences and punish them as per the orders of the king. He was to put his signature on all papers related to customs, conduct and penance. He was to perform all the religious functions necessary to appease gods on various occasions.

**The Nyayadhish or the chief Justice:** - He had jurisdiction on all the suits in the kingdom, he was to try them righteously, find them what is right and wrong and punish them as per the order of the king. He was to put his signature on the paper of judgement he delivered.

**The Mantri:-** He was also known as wakins. He was to conduct all diplomatic and political affairs of the kingdom very carefully. The departments like invitation and intelligence were under his direct superintendence. He was to help the administration in maintaining the newly acquired districts and perform his military duties as and when required. He was to put his sign and seal on all the official documents as his approval.

**The Sumant:-** He was also called as Dabir and was in-charge of all foreign affairs. It was his duty to receive and entertain all political agents, representatives from various other kingdoms on various occasions. He was also to perform his military duties whenever it was required and he was to put his sign and seal on the letters, documents which came to him , as his approval.

Sabhasad says that despite these regular duties of the Pradhans or the ministers , there was a committee of three ministers to look after some of the provinces , divisions or zones of the kingdom like guardian ministers in the modern era . When these ministers were away from their courts or

offices, there were their agents looking after the administration of the ministers. Naturally, these agents were also appointed by the king. The kingdom was divided into four divisions as:-

1. The kingdom from Kalyan, Bhivandi, Kolawan upto Satheri, the territories above the Ghats, the Konkan, Lohgad, Junnar, twelve Mawals and Haralya pass were into one division. Moropant Peshwa was to look after this division.

2. The Konkan from Chaul to Kopal, Dabhol, Rajapur, Kudal, Bande and Phand were taken into the second division of the kingdom. Annaji Datto was put in-charge of this division.

3. The territories above the Ghat, from Wai to Kopal in the Tungbhadra river were brought under the third division. Dattaji Pant Waknis was to look after this division, who administered this division from his station at Panhala. Thus, the kingdom was put under three ministers, who were helped by three sarkarkuns. These sarkarkuns had to submit their accounts to the king when they used to meet once in a year. There were some Darakdars appointed to look after the administration of districts and market cities to help the eight Pradhans.

Sabhasad says that there were seven to eight subhedars, who were appointed to look after the territories of the Mughals conquered by the Marathas. These subhedars were to submit their report to the Peshwa.

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## 12.6 SECRETARY

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After the Ashta Pradhan Council, the next segment of the administration was the Secretary or Chitinis. Bal Prabhu Chitnis was the Secretary or Chitins of Chhatrapati Shivaji. Bal Prabhu Chitnis and Nil Prabhu Parasnis had been standing next below to the Pradhans at the time of Chhatrapati Shivaji's coronation. The Secretary of the king enjoyed much power and had much influence in the administration. Among the powerful and influential secretaries, Balaji Avji was the man of exceptional abilities and caliber. This secretary used to perform various duties of complicated nature very efficiently. He was one of the most trusted persons of the king, and was assigned several delicate tasks of the kingdom to be completed within specific period. Due to his efficiency of any ability he was once offered a seat in the Ashta Pradhan council by the king. About the duties of secretary, Malhar Ramrao Chitnis says that the Secretary was the Patralekhak or a letter writer, who used to write all royal and diplomatic correspondence in such a way that what was not achieved by war and great exploits that should be achieved by means of letters only. Rao Bahadur Sane has published a memorandum regarding the duties of the secretary of the Chhatrapati Shivaji. He says that the secretary used to write all diplomatic letters of the kingdom, in which the sanads, deeds of grants, orders issued to the officers of the districts were included. He was to put seal or take signature of the king if the letter was of special importance otherwise the secretary only should sign and put seal on the correspondence. Citragupta says that Fadnis alone used

to issue deeds and royal grants, whereas the Chitins used to write letters to the district officers and provincial officers. The Gadnis used to write answers to the letters received from the officers and commanders of forts. The Dabir was the officer to write letters and responses to the foreign courts whereas the Parasnis was to keep correspondence with the Emperor of Delhi and the Muslim rulers.

To discharge the departmental duties, each Pradhan of the Council was assisted by eight clerks as official staff, which were as under: -

1. Dewan 2. Mazumdar or Auditor and Accountant 3. Fadnis or Deputy Auditor 4. Sabnis or the Daftardar 5. Karkhanis or Commissary 6. Chitnis or correspondence clerk 7. Jamdar or Treasurer 8. Potnis or cash-keeper

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## **12.7 THE EIGHTEEN KARKHANAS**

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In addition to the eight clerks and other staff, there were several officers put in charge of eighteen kharkhanas working under the Ashta Pradhan Council. These Karkhanas were as under:-

1. Khajina or Cash 2. Jawahir Khana or Jewelstore 3. Ambar Khana or Granary 4. Sharbat Khana or Medicines 5. Toph Khana or Artillery 6. Daftar Khana or Record Department 7. Jamdar Khana or Public treasury containing all sorts of things. 8. Jirat Khana or Corn Depot, according to Molesworth but Armoury according to R.V. Kosh. 9. Mudpak Khana or Kitchen 10. Ashar Khana or Camels and their trappings. 11. Nagar Khana or Band 12. Talim Khana or Gymnasium 13. Pil Khana or Elephant shades 14. Faras Khana or carpets, tents and accessories 15. Abdar Khana or Drink 16. Shikar Khana or Games, aviary, chase and allied materials. 17. Daru Khana or Magazine 18. Shahat Khana or Conservancy Department.

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## **12.8 THE TWELVE MAHALS OR DEPARTMENTS**

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As several clerks and several officers of eighteen Karkhanas, there were twelve mahals under the charge of Ashta Pradhan Council as under:-

1. Pote or Treasury 2. Saudagir or Merchandise 3. Palkhi or Palanquins 4. Kothi or warehouse and granaries 5. Imarat or Building 6. Bahili or chariots 7. Paga or stables 8. Seri or Comforts 9. Daruni or Zanana 10. Thatti or Cowsheds 11. Taksal or Mints and 12. Sabina or Guards. The historians say that these departments were managed by the officers as per the orders issued by the king time to time.

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## **12.9 PRANTS AND DISTRICTS IN THE KINGDOM**

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The territories, in the Kingdom were divided into a number of Prants or districts for the convenience of administration. These Prants and districts were as under:-

1. Maval Prant:- In this prant Saswad, Junnar and Khed talukas were there. These prants were guarded by eighteen great hill forts.

2. The Prant of Wai:- In this district Wai, Satara , and Karad were taken together. These territories were protected by strong fifteen forts.
3. The Prant Panhala:- In this district Kolhapur was there and was guarded by thirteen hill- forts.
4. Prant South Konkan:- This prant came to be known as Ratnagiri and was protected by fifty eight hill- forts and sea fortresses.
5. Prant Thana:- It was called the north Konkan and it had around twelve forts.
6. Tribak and Bagalan Prants:- . There were two 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> taken prants together corresponding with the western part of Nasik and they had altogether sixty two hill forts.
8. Prant wangad:- This prant was known as the southern part of Dharwad district, which had twenty-two forts to defend the area.
9. Bednore, Kolhar and Shrirangapatan:- There were 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> districts clubbed together, which later came to be known as Mysore and had eighteen forts.
10. Karnatik Prant:- It had eighteen forts to guard this prant.
11. Prant Vellore:- It was came to be known as modern Arcot district and had twenty five forts to protect the district from the enemies.
12. Tanjore Prant:- It had only six forts and had protected the district always. The Sahyadri ranges had several forts to protect the whole area of the kingdom. It is said that there were around two hundred and eighty forts under the jurisdiction of Chhatrapati Shivaji.

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## **12.10. THE DESHMUKH AND THE DESHPANDE**

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They were working as the officers incharge of parghana or districts even before the foundation of the Maratha Raj by Chhatrapati Shivaji. These officials were also called as zamindars, who used to oppress the rayat on various counts. This led Shivaji to remove these Deshmukhs and the Deshpandes from their power as officers in charge of parghanas and districts. He also was well aware about the implications of the removal of these officials. Shivaji, therefore, withdrew their authority as the officers but permitted them to enjoy the customary dues and appointed some Government officers to replace the Deshpandes and the Deshmukhs. The Peshwas never changed this administrative setup of parganas and districts during their period and the system proved advantageous to the Government as well as the rayat . Elphinstone says that the relief of rayat or the cultivators from the clutches of the Deshmukhs and Deshpandes generated all healthy and good results. In due course, the Deshmukhs and the Deshpandes became friends of rayat and began to help the government in checking the authority of non- hereditary officers on the people.



The Deshmukhs and the Deshpandes had several rights and perquisites. Elphinstone says that the Deshmukh's office was as lucrative as the office of the village Patil. He had the share in the revenue around five per cent and five acres of land with this. He had various claims in kind as a pair of shoes from every shoemaker every year, a portion of ghee from the people who make it. Rajwade says that the Deshpandes and the Deshmukhs were remunerated similarly as the Patil and Kulkarni of the village community by the people in districts and parganas under them. Although, the female were skillful and managed the administration and the campaigns well, they were never considered fit for the posts of the Deshpandes and the Deshmukhs. These officers helped the king in the collection of revenue, law and order and military warfare.

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### **12.11. THE KAMVISDAR AND THE MAMLATDAR**

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Chhatrapati Shivaji reorganized his administrative setup of Pargana, Sarkar and Subha into Mauja, Tarf and Subha and appointed officers like Havaladar and Subhedar to look after the administration of Tarf and Subha respectively. During the period of Peshwas, this setup was further reorganized into Mahals and Divisions. The officers appointed on the smaller divisions were called Kamvisdars where as the officers appointed on the larger divisions came to be known as Mamlatdars. The mamlatdars were working under the direct contact of the Central Government except the three provinces of Khandesh, Gujrat and Karnatak.

The Kamvisdars and the Mamlatdars enjoyed their remuneration variously and had several officials at their disposal in their respective administrative divisions. As these officers were the representatives of the Peshwas in their districts, their duties and responsibilities were the most comprehensive in nature and character. These officers were to look after the welfare of the cultivator, devise means to improve agriculture, encourage new industries, enquire into the disputes of civil and criminal nature, and appointment of Panchayat for various decisions. They were responsible for peace and security, control police and adjudicate social and religious questions and problems. Thus, these officers had very wide responsibilities and powers.

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### **12.12. THE DARAKHADARS**

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Elphinstone says that in the Maratha administration of districts various checks on the conduct of the officers were exerted. As Kamvisdars and Mamlatdars were the non-hereditary officers administering the districts, the Deshmukhs and Deshpandes were the hereditary district officers, the latter used as check on the administration of the earlier officers. It is said that the accounts sent by Kamvisdars and Mamlatdars were to be corroborated by the Deshmukh's and the Deshpande's corresponding accounts, otherwise the accounts of Kamvisdars and Mamlatdars were not passed by the Government as authentic and accurate.

In the same way at the provincial level check was exerted through the hereditary officers known as Darkdars or fee men. These Darkdars



worked as check on every department including the departments of navy and army. Neither Kamvisdars nor Mamlatdars were able to dismiss such hereditary officers on any count nor they competed them to do any specific duty unless it was supported by a long tradition and customs in the administration. Even, it is also said that the Kamvisdars or the Mamlatdars were not able to dismiss any officers working under them or vice versa. But the Darkdars were certainly contacting the Government for dismissal or the reinstatement of such officer. This type of check at the smaller level also was brought into execution as Havaladar, a non-hereditary officer at Mahal was checked by two hereditary officers Mazumdar and Fadnis in the revenue matters. But needless to say that these officers never interfered without any valid reason interfered in the internal administration of the village. They worked cohesively with the officers at various levels.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS :-**

1. Discuss the problems faced by Shivaji while organizing his civil organizations.

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## **12.13 SUMMARY**

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Chhatrapati Shivaji was equally popular for his military as well as his civil administration. Justice Ranade Says that Shivaji was like Napoleon Bonaparte a great organiser in his times and builder of civil institutions. Chhatrapati Shivaji's civil administration alone enabled the country to pass without sea the through the dangers, which controlled the Maratha country after his death. Shivaji tried to secure liberty for his people, unite them into one nation and make them powerful for self- defence and self assertion. Shivaji introduced his civil institutions in the territories of Swarajya only.

Chhatrapati Shivaji had to face a number of difficulties at the time of building civil administration. Among them disorder and anarchy, importance to military exploits, existence of feudalism, eminence and dominance of local officials were important. The king was the pivotal of the administration of the Marathas. He was the only person able to run the difficult administrative machinery. Every one whether at high or low position with the sanction of the king could not act upon or execute the plan or design. Even, the Panditrao, who was the head for the religious matters, never took action on his own or without consultation or order of the king. The king was the final authority in every matter of the Maratha administration. He was the sovereign power in the kingdom.

After the king, the next in succession came the Ashta Pradhan Mandal or council, in which there were eight members as the Peshwa or the Mukhya Pradhan, the Mazumdar or the Amatya, the Wakins or the mantri, the Dabir or the Sumant, the Surnis or the Sachiv, the Panditrao or the royal priest, the Senapati or the commander-in-chief, and the Nyayadhish or the chief Justice. Except the Panditrao and the Nyayadhish all other members of the council were to perform their military duties as and when required by the circumstances in addition to their regular and civil responsibilities. Sabhasad says that despite these

regular duties , there was a committee of three members to look after the provinces in which they were put in charge . In their absence, there were agents working in their courts and looking after their portfolios, which were appointed by the king. In addition to this, there were other seven to eight subhedars, who were appointed to look after the territories of the Mughals conquered by the Marathas.

After the Ashta Pradhan Mandal or council, the Secretary was the next important segment in the Maratha administration. He was the Sachiv or the Chitins of the king. Among the most powerful and influential secretaries, Balaji Avaji was the man of exceptional abilities and caliber. Despite this arrangement, the Ashta Pradhan Council was assisted by some clerks like the Dewan, Mazumdar, Fadnis, Sabnis, Karkhanis, Chitnis, Jamdar and the Potnis. There were eighteen Karkhanas and twelve Mahals or departments in the administration.

There were several Prants and districts in the Maratha administration- There is no unanimity on the exact number of the prants and districts. The Deshmukhs and the Deshpandes were working as the officers of the prants and districts , which led them to exploit the rayats . The king, therefore , had done away the authority of the Deshmukhs and the Deshpandes and appointed new officers to look after the administration of the prant and the district . During the period of the Peshwas, the Kamvisdars and the Mamlatdars were appointed to look after the districts and parganas . But the Deshmukhs and the Deshpandes were used as checks on the authority and the accounts submitted by the Kamvisdars and the Mamlatdars to the Government. In the same way, the Darkhdars were the hereditary officers at the prant level and for use as check on the non-hereditary officers appointed by the Maratha Government.

In this way, Chhatrapati Shivaji created the wellknown administrative setup in his kingdom .

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### 12.14 QUESTIONS

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1. Give an account of the central administration of Chhatrapati Shivaji.
1. Discuss the central and provincial administration of the Marathas.
2. Examine the ideal of kingship of Shivaji with special reference to his Ashta Pradhan Mandal.
3. Assess the role of the Deshmukhas and the Deshpandes in the Maratha administration.

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### 12.15 ADDITIONAL READINGS:-

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1. Sen S.N. Administrative System of the Marathas.
2. Ranade Mahadev Govind, Rise of the Maratha Power.
3. Pagadi Setu Madhavrao, Chhatrapati Shivaji.
4. Kulkarni A.R. Maharashtra in the Age of Shivaji.



## MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

### Unit Structures

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Infantry
- 13.3 Cavalry
- 13.4 Military Regulations
- 13.5 Naval Administration
- 13.6 Forts and Strongholds
- 13.7 Reserve Fund for Forts
- 13.8 Fund for Repairing Forts: -
- 13.9 Artillery
- 13.10 Summary
- 13.11 Questions
- 13.12 Additional Readings

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### 13.0 OBJECTIVES

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After the completion of this unit the student will be able to

1. Perceive the idea of military administration
2. Understand the infantry of the Marathas .
3. Know the organization and the units of the cavalry of the Marathas .
4. Comprehend the military rules and regulations of the Marathas
5. Grasp the Naval administration of the Marathas .
6. Explain about the forts and strongholds of the Marathas .

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### 13.1 INTRODUCTION

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The Maratha Empire was primarily a military organization and its civil institutions were closely connected with its military system. The military efficiency demands discipline in the men and imagination

tempered with common sense in their leaders. A military power needs above all an ideal to defend their country, an ideal to fight for their people and security. The Marathas had carried the reputation of good soldiers as early as the first half of the seventh century A.D.; but it was not before the second half of the seventeenth century that they emerged from the comparative insignificant position to prominence and obtained a place among the great powers of India.

The Marathas have been very well known for the military powers from time immemorial. The ancestors of the old Rashtrikas were very popular for their military prowess. They fought various wars under the banner of different dynasties like the Chalukya prince Pulkeshi, they fought and defeated the great army of Harshavardhana. They also fought under Malik Ambar of Ahmednagar against the great army of the Mughal emperor Akbar, who was to retreat ignominiously. The rise of the Marathas under Shivaji opened a new era in the military history of India. He had a clear concept of the military organization of the Marathas. He had definite plans of military reforms, specific views and opinions based upon the past experience. Although, he believed in personal selection of military but had not faith in hereditary genius. He approved of unity of command but never tolerated military interference in the civil administration of the country. He wanted a strong monarchy as the solution to the prevailing disorder, dissensions and anarchy. Naturally Shivaji had, started his operations initially with cautions, circumspect and also with small forces attached to the Jagir of his father. Thus, the military administration of the Marathas can be studied with the help of following points :-

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### 13.2 INFANTRY

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Shivaji was the superhuman military genius, who had perceived the necessity of light infantry and light cavalry in the guerrilla warfare of the mountainous area of Maharashtra. His young Mavalas were the fittest soldiers for the guerrilla campaign in the Maratha territory and were the highly appreciated warriors in the military history of the country. Shivaji selected his infantry personally, not as the basis of formal training on the parade ground but on the assessment of them on the actual battle field. The king never allowed his soldiers to rust their swords and kept them always engaged in various warfare mostly the guerrilla tactics against the formidable Muslim powers in the South and the North. This practice Naturally increased the efficiency of the infantry of Shivaji.

Chhatrapati Shivaji had the organizational capability of extreme quality. He organized his infantry in various segments and groups very carefully in order to suit with the geographical requirements of the kingdom as under :-

1. The smallest unit of his infantry had altogether ten members. Out of them nine were soldiers and one was the commanding officer, who was called the Naik.

2. The second segment was headed by the officer known as Hawaldar , under whose command there were five units .
3. The next division of the infantry was kept under Jumledar , in which there were around two to three Havalgars .
4. The officer who commanded ten Jumlas was known as the one Hazari officer .
5. Above one hazari officer , there was the Sarnobat of the infantry , who controlled around seven Hazari officers. These officers were paid variously as Jumledar was one hundred hons per year while his assistant sabnis had the salary of forty hons per year . The one Hazari officer was paid five hundred hons every year where as his assistant sabnis was paid variously from one hundred hons to one hundred and twenty-five hons. Chitnis Bakher says that on the eve of special occasions like marriage or any other ceremonies, the Government used to advance financial assistance appropriately.

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### 13.3 CAVALRY

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As Chhatrapati Shivaji preferred light infantry, he also recruited light cavalry as per the need of the kingdom. Naturally, the people from Maval were predominant in the cavalry and excelled in the guerrilla tactics of the king . The cavalry was divided into two divisions as 1. The Bargirs and 2. Shiledars . The State provided the Bargirs with every weapon, horse and other equipments required for warfare whereas the Shiledars were to equip themselves each of them on their own expenditure. Each Shiledar was to have his own house, weapons, arms and ammunition required for warfare and protection of his own jagir or properties. Sabhasad says that shiledars were kept under the rank and supervision of the Bargirs. Bargirs formed the bonafide part and parcel of the cavalry or paga. In other words, there was a check exercised on each other by the Bargirs and the Shiledars. As the infantry was ranked one after another officer, the cavalry also was organized properly for its administration as:-

The first unit of Bargirs was formed of twenty five horses or Bargirs, the unit was kept under the officer known as Havalgar. There were two essential persons appointed to help this first unit as watercarrier and farrier , needed to look after every horse and keep the horse fit for any campaign .

The second unit of the cavalry was known as Jumla, in which five havalgars were included. The officer of this jumla was known as Jumledar, who received the salary of five hundred hons per year with a palanquin as a status symbol. His assistant , Mazumdar was paid salary of one hundred to one hundred and twenty five hons for every year.

The next unit of the cavalry was one Hazari in which ten jumlas were taken together. The one Hazari officer was paid the salary of one thousand hons per year where his three assistant officers, as Mazumdar, a Maratha

karbhari and Prabhu kayastha were paid the salary five hundred hons each year . They all were provided palanquins for transport and were to present together the statement of account for income and expenditure to the Government.

The cavalry had one more unit the next , which was known as Panch Hazari, the officer heading this unit was known as the Sarnobat . He was paid the salary of two thousand hons every year with all other perquisites. He had several officers to assist him as a Mazumdar, a karbhari and a jemenis. There was the same arrangement and organization of the shiledars, the brigadiers of shiledars were kept under the supervision of this Sarnobat.

Chhatrapati Shivaji often used to announce that he was the king first and the Hindu later. He was supported in this wise resolution by Gomaji Naik Pansambal, who was his trusted and well known officer. Naturally, the Muslims also liked to work under the king and joined his various campaigns against the Mughals and the Muhammadan rulers of the south. There was a body of around seven hundred strong Pathans who worked under Shivaji , that also kept a counter balance and proved useful in several campaigns , Shivaji was the master of all war techniques and all measures of successful expeditions. He knew that behind every successful attempt in the territories of enemy needed the support of intelligence, spies or espionage. He, therefore set up the spies' department under the leadership of Bahirji Naik Jadhav. This department only helped him the most in organization of all successful expeditions against the rulers of the south and the north. It is said that due to Bahirji Jadhav, the head of the intelligence, the king could save his army from the loss and much damage. Shivaji knew that it was not possible for him to maintain a huge army like the Mughals or the Muhammadan rulers in the south because, the sources of income were not so regular, and the land in his kingdom was not so fertile. But he compensated these flaws by increasing the speed of his operations against the formidable enemies and humbled them at each and every time. In order to increase the agility of his soldiers he ordered to carry befitting arms, ammunition and camp equipage. He ordered them to dress in tight fitting breeches, cotton jackets, turbans and carry the arms like swords both long and short, spears and lances, bows and arrows and match locks. Naturally, the king's army was so prepared and ready to move within a very short notice. As the army of the king was so quick in mobility, it was equally quick in demobility, due to these characteristics of this army the invading enemy army was ever unable to get any information before their actualization.

Chhatrapati Shivaji had well disciplined and well armed brands of soldiers to guard himself. His bodyguards were regimented into units of twenty, thirty, forty, sixty and one hundred soldiers. These guards had dressed in richly embroidered turbans, jackets of broad cloth, gold and silver ear-rings and wristlets. They had silver rings to their weapons like sword-sheaths, guns and spears. Thus, such brands of guards marched with the palanquin of the great king Shivaji and succeeded in every attempt, which the king planned and executed.



As a matter of fact, there were forces of some feudal Maratha watandars before and after the period of Shivaji. These watandars were often ready to help the king as the Mavali Deshmukhs used to help him. Among such feudal Maratha watandars Mal Patil and Baji Patil of Birvadi were often ready to serve the king the most. These watandars desired six ruka and half anna per soldier per day for their substitution and were ready to serve the king as long as the circumstances needed their help. But the king was not in favour of taking the help of such watandars at any time unlike the Peshwas, who came to power later.

Chhatrapati Shivaji was very punctual in the payment of his soldiers, who were paid either in cash or kind. Some time they were assigned to districts for their payment with necessary orders or *varat*. He was deadly against to the payment of soldiers by way of granting them *jagir*. Shivaji never allowed to fall the salary of his soldiers into arrears. If any cultivator worked as a soldier, his changed rent was deducted from his salary. It is said that the salaries paid to the soldiers were not high and they were all manageable as from Rs. 3 to Rs. 9 for infantry and from Rs.6 to Rs.20 for cavalry soldiers depending on their ranks, experience and positions. In addition to this, the soldiers and their officers were rewarded generously and magnanimously for their distinguished services rendered during their career. The soldiers sustained wounds while doing duty were monetarily compensated as per their injuries. The king personally paid attention towards the widows and children of the soldiers, who laid their lives for the kingdom were liberally and adequately granted pension as well as the major sons or relatives of such soldiers were opted into the service of the kingdom. If any slain soldier survived with no heir or son, his wife was granted the half pension for survival. Shivaji ordered to organize his soldiers after the destruction and total defeat of the army of Afzal Khan and rewarded them with cash and kind befittingly. He gave away the rewards in precious ornaments like bracelets, necklaces, crest, medallions, earrings, pearls, horses, elephants and houses to the soldiers for their meritorious services.

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### 13.4 MILITARY REGULATIONS

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There are several historians, who have given different pictures and accounts of military camps of the Maratha sardars on various occasions. Elphinstone says the Maratha camp means the long lines of white tents installed tidily whereas Jone's history says that the Maratha camp included all participants in the war, with their animals, families, and other people like entertainers, Banyas, fakeers and buffoons. Broughton says that the Sindias camp projected ugly picture of military discipline. Because it accompanied public women and the wine was sold publicly, which was against the military rules. But this was not the situation of Shivaji's camp. He never allowed anyone to carry any female slaves or dancing girls and using wine. He punished the offender, whosoever breached his order and the camp rules with death. Chhatrapati Shivaji was the lover of military discipline and created some several sets of military rules, abided by every soldier in the strictest manner.



Sabhasad and Sen have taken together some military rules and regulations, which Shivaji executed with much care and caution in his military. These rules can be summarized as under :-

1. Shivaji had ordered them to return to their barracks in the rainy season for four months.
2. The provisions needed for them like grains, medicines, fodder and houses for men should be kept ready. In the same way there should be stables thatched with grass for horses and elephants kept ready.
3. The military should move out of their barracks the moment the Dassera was over.
4. Every one in the military should prepare inventory while leaving their barracks and going on the expedition.
5. The military should subsist themselves on the spoils they secure in the territories of their enemy by way of levy and contribution of these rulers towards the Marathas.
6. The military should not carry with them any woman, female slaves, or dancing girls on the expedition. The soldier who would breach the order or the rule invited the capital punishment.
7. The soldiers should abide by some rules and regulations in the enemy territories as they should not capture women, children, Brahmins and cows . They should capture males , bullocks and buffaloes to be used for transportation.
8. No one should commit adultery on any account , if the rule was breached , the offender was beheaded summarily .
9. The military should be on expedition for eight months in the enemy territory.
10. While returning back home on the border itself the military should take stock of all soldiers participated in the expedition and reach their barracks in the month of vaishakh.
11. The head of the unit should check items with the soldier with the earlier inventory, if anything found additional was to be valued and the same value was to be deducted from the salary of the soldier .
12. If anything valuable found, should be directly sent to the king or the royal treasury .
13. If anything, as one of the soldiers secretly concealed and came to the light, the unit officer should enquire and punish such guilty soldier.
14. As soon as the military reached their barracks, the officers or sardars should prepare the whole account of their expedition, and meet the king with all valuables like gold , silver, jewels, clothes and commodities of value and present

them to the king . In the same meeting, the officers or sardars should submit their account and explain it wherever required.

11. If any expenditure was to be made and required additional financial assistance, that was to be brought to the notice of the king and if appealed to him , to hand over to the concerned sardar.

16. The military officers should return to their barracks after meeting the king and assess the performance of their soldiers in the campaign and reward them suitably . On the other hand, if any soldier or officer had not performed well deliberately, a quick inquiry was to be made and if found guilty he was to be dismissed from the services.

17. When the military reached back to their barracks , was to wait there for months and on the Dassera day accompany the king to the expedition of the fresh year as per the plan and order of the king.

These were the military regulations of the Marathas, which were brought into execution by the king strictly, even then there were some exceptional incidents of violation of these rules regulations, as in 1671, a Maratha soldier had attacked the sabnis of his regiment. In 1672 some of the soldiers had troubled to some pilgrims of the Chaphal Fair. In 1676, a camp of the Maratha military at Chiplun had troubled the people of neighboring villages for the want of provisions. Although, Shivaji sorted out such incidents and punished them, such incidents were not totally removed because the military had the example of Bijapur army, which was popular for indiscipline. Chhatrapati had taken strong action against such incidents in the later period to enforce strict discipline in the forces . Despite these defects, the Maratha soldiers were good people, they were short in stature and of light built, not stout and tall as the soldiers of the Moghals . But their courage, hard work, wonderful energy, presence of mind and agility were more than the soldiers of the Mughals and the Muhammadan rulers of the Deccan. The Maratha soldiers due to these characteristics could surpass the Mughal and the Muhammadan soldiers in the open warfare on equal terms. Dr. Fryer says that the soldiers of Chhatrapati Shivaji were the fittest for any martial exploit, they were accustomed to fare hard, journey fast, and enjoy very little pleasure. Even their women did not lag behind them. He further says that although, the soldiers of Shivaji were very good for surprising attack and ransacking, they did not care much for a pitched battle and were of stirring spirit.

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### 13.5 NAVAL ADMINISTRATION

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Chhatrapati Shivaji felt the need of organization of a strong naval power after his Konkan conquest to check the power of the Siddhis of Janjira , who often used to raid the coast of Marathas and pester them unnecessarily. Shivaji's navy had several boats and ferries of various descriptions but they predominated mainly by Gallivats and Ghurabs . Sabhasad gives a detailed account of Shivaji's naval vessels. It says that there were around four hundred Ghurabs, Tarandes , Tarus , Gallivates ,

Shibals and Pagas , which were organized into two squadrons of two hundred vessels each . Each squadron was placed under the supreme command of two officers as 1. Admirals Dariya Sarang , a Muhammadan officer and 2. Mai Naik, a Bhandari. It is said that Daria Sarang was not only the Muhammadan officer in the naval administration of Shivaji, there were many other Muhammadan officers like Admiral Daulat Khan , who joined Shivaji's fleet little later. Chhatrapati Shivaji had manned his navy mostly by Kolis and the men from seafaring tribes of the Malbar coast. There is no detail information available about their uniform but the Maratha sailors used to wear headgear which was very much similar to that of koli hat. It is said that Shivaji tried to check the European powers as the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English in the Indian waters and save the trade of Indian merchants in those waters . Robert Orme says that in 1675 the strength of Shivaji's fleet reached to fifty seven vessels, out of them fifteen were grabs, and the rest of vessels were gallivats, which were crowded with men for all the times . Another foreign traveler Frayer says that when he was on the way to Kharepatan, which was south to Dande Rajapure , he saw a strong castle of Shivaji and his navy, which consisted of thirty small ships and vessels, the Admiral heading the naval fleet had a white flag fluttering aloft. Prof. Jadunath Sarkar says that Shivaji had a large mercantile navy but developed certain weaknesses due to the lack of naval tradition and a good artillery.

Robert Orme says that the Maratha navy predominantly based on two vessels namely the gallivats and the gurabs, which were suited to the Malabar coast. The Maratha grabs had two to three masts, the vessels having three masts had the capacity of three hundred tons burthen and the rest had only the capacity of hundred- and fifty-tons burthen. This vessel was some how similar to that of a Mediterranean galley and covered with a strong deck level with the main dock of the vessel. This structure of the vessel increased its speed when sailing. The deck of the prow was not enclosed with sides as the other vessels , it remains bare that the water which dashed upon it passed off without interruption. On the main deck under the fore-castle were mounted two pieces of cannon of nine or twelve pounders, which pointed forwards through the port holes cut in the bulk head and five over the prow. The cannon of the broadside was from six to nine pounders.

The vessels gallivates were large row boats, built like gurabs but smaller in dimension and had the capacity of not more than seventy tons . They were of two masts boats of which the mizen was very slight , the main mast bore only one sail, which was triangular and very large . These vessels could bear six or eight pieces of cannon from two to four pounders. Although, the European vessels were bigger and larger, the naval soldiers of Shivaji attacked on the Portuguese successfully for more than one occasion . Sabhasad says that among other vessels, tarande was a sailing vessel of large dimension. The next vessel was shibad , which was a flat bottomed two-masted craft having no deck . The third vessel was Pagar , was only a well smoothed Canoe. It is said that these vessels belonged to the mercantile navy and plied

between the ports of Shivaji and the various coast towns of Arabia . That means Chhatrapati Shivaji had realized that there was a need of strong mercantile navy for strong naval power of the Marathas .

Thus, the Navy of Shivaji performed several functions as policed against the siddi's pirate fleets, took possession of foreign vessels wrecked on the Maratha coast, collected duties from the trading ships and regulated exports and import duties as per the orders of the king. The naval power started by Shivaji went on increasing in the later period under the Angrias and the Peshwas considerably. The mercantile spirit of the Maratha traders found a greater scope with the expansion of the Maratha empire under the Peshwas and they began to ply to various places like all towns of Arabian coast and countries like China and others from the south east Asia.

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### 13. 6 FORTS AND STRONGHOLDS

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Although, the military of Chhatrapati Shivaji was numerically lesser than the Mughals and the Muhammadan rulers of the south, he tried to compensate that by increasing quality of his military and made it much more efficient than his counterparts in the north and the south. In order to achieve his objectives, he introduced strict discipline, appealed to the military as well as patriotic instinct of his soldiers and succeeded in his design to the maximum extent. The Mavalis were his earliest adherents who were hardy hill men came to prominence under his leadership. He depended on these hill men and their hills because these hills constituted the best defence and the hill men accompanied him in his all bold and perilous raids. Shivaji trained his hill men Mavalis into an excellent infantry and converted all bare rocks and mountains into impregnable forts, which helped him to restrict the entry of any external power to his country. He had altogether two hundred and forty forts whereas Ranade says "He possessed major and minor two hundred and eighty forts . There was not a single taluka or pargana which was not protected at least by a fort or stronghold. His forts extended over the vast range of mountains, which skirted the western shore of India. Shivaji had regularly fortified his forts , which commanded every pass". Chitnis says that forts were the very life of the Maratha kingdom while Lokhitwadi says that Shivaji was popular for mainly building his forts. His all hill forts were impregnable naturally, which never needed a strong garrison. In general, he had kept around five hundred soldiers to defend a fort but never put the whole responsibility of defending the fort in the hands of only one officer. Sabhasad says that there were three officers like Hawaldar, Sabnis and Sarnobat, who collectively exercised the authority of the fort . They were answerable for the administration of the fort they possessed. There were several sections in the fort and each was allotted to one officer like Karkhanis, who was looking after the store of grains and writing of all accounts of income and expenditure.

Shivaji had made adequate arrangement for the defense of his forts. Where the forts were of extensive circuit, he appointed seven to eight Tat Sarnobats and the charge of ramparts was assigned to them. While appointing the officers as well as recruiting soldiers, the king took

much care as , he assessed their bravery, background, ability and intelligence. He made a team of ten persons, which was headed by a Naik. Thus, all persons put in the defense of the fort were held responsible. Even then, there was a committee of three chief officers as Hawaldar, Sabnis and Karkhanis. Hawaldar was put as the chief of the committee. He was to keep the keys of the fort with him . He himself was to make sure that every gate was bolted properly and the main gate was locked by him personally. He was not to open any gate including the principal gate during the night at any cost. Hawaldar was not to delegate this duty to anybody at any cost. Chhatrapati Shivaji had tested the reliability, efficiency and firmness of officers of the fort personally on several occasions. The second officer was Sabnis, who was put in charge of the accounts in general and the muster roll in particular. The third officer was Karkhanis, who was mainly responsible for the commissariat work. It is said that these officers worked cohesively and kept check on each other.

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### **13.7 RESERVE FUND FOR FORTS**

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Chhatrapati Shivaji used to store sufficient provisions in the fort to be consumed during the period of any emergency or siege by any formidable armies like the Mughals. But this policy could not work for a long time due to certain difficulties. The king, therefore decided to start a Reserve Fund to meet the expenditure of extraordinary needs of the forts surrounded by armies of enemy. A document of the year 1671-72 mentions that Chhatrapati Shivaji began to raise the reserve fund from each Mahal and watan in his kingdom to be used specially when there was no money available from any other sources against the siege of forts by the Mughals. The reserve fund was fixed to one lakh twenty five thousand hons and that was raised from the following Mahals, watans and personages:-

1. Kudal, Kolen and Rajapur twenty thousand hons from each 2. Dabhol fifty thousand hons 3. Poona thirteen thousand hons 4. Nagoji Govind ten thousand hons 5. Jawali, Kalyan, Bhiwandi, Indapur and Krishnaji Bhaskar five thousand hons from each 6. Supa two thousand hons. This amount was set aside as reserve fund and was not spent on any other Government work at any cost but on the forts, which were beleaguered by the enemy.

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### **13.8 FUND FOR REPAIRING FORTS:-**

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Chhatrapati Shivaji was the most farsighted king, his provisions for the reserve fund and repairing forts has been testimony of the same. As the king had kept around one lakh twenty five thousand hons for reserve fund ,in the same way he set aside one lakh seventy five thousand hons for repairing his principal forts . The forts and the amount he apportioned each was as under :-

1. Sinhgad, Sindhudurga , Vijaydurg, Pratapgad, Purandhar and Rajgad had been assigned ten thousand hons each.

2. Prachandgad, Prasiddhagad, Vishalgad, Mahipalgad, Sudhagad, Lohgad, Sabalgad and Shrivardhangad had been allotted five thousand hons each.
3. Korigad and Sarasgad were given two thousand hons each .
4. Manohargad was sanctioned one thousand hons and seven thousand hons were kept for miscellaneous work. Thus, the king tried to keep the forts in tact at any cost.

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### 13.9 ARTILLERY

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It was very effective and offensive weapon of long-range shooting and used on large scale in wars by rulers who came to India like Babar. He ascribed his decisive victories over his Rajput and Pathan opponents to artillery only. Due to advanced knowledge and various strategies of artillery, the Portuguese became a formidable power in south India. Therefore, it became imperative necessity for Marathas to master the art and technique of this weapon to compete and overcome their political opponents in the country.

Chhatrapati Shivaji had a regular department of artillery which was popularly known as Tophkhana or Darukhana. But the king was to depend totally on European companies for supply of guns and cannons used in artillery. A document of 1671 says that Shivaji had permitted the French and the English to establish their factories at Rajapur in order to seek the guns and powder needed for his artillery. He had also purchased around two thousand mounds of lead and eighty-eight iron guns from the Portuguese at Rajapur in 1673. But Shivaji could not get any such arms and ammunitions from the English at Surat. In the same way, neither Sambhaji nor Kanhoji Angre could get any arms and ammunitions from the English. During the period of Peshwas some efforts were made to establish their own foundries for manufacturing arms and ammunition used in artillery. Peshwa Bajirao I had established his foundry in 1739, which was visited by Captain William Gordon, the English envoy at Poona. Madhavrao I had established one more factory at Ambegaon to manufacture cannon balls in 1765-66. In 1770 another factory at Poona was brought up by the Peshwas for the war ammunition.

A document of 1754-55 mentions that Mahadevrao Shivdeo was the head of the artillery of the Peshwas. There were other eight officers used to help him in the department. Another document of 1777 mentions that Narona a Portuguese officer commanded the artillery of Peshwas. The trained battalion of Peshwas under the command of Boyd had employed eight Portuguese gunners on the monthly salary of Rs. sixty each and two Jamadars were paid Rs. thirty each a month. There were two Hawaldars who were paid Rs. eighteen each, whereas forty-two Golandazes or gunners were paid Rs. twelve as monthly salary and twenty-four Khalasis whose salary was Rs ten each month.

Orme Says that Shivaji had supplied artillery to defend his forts. Sabhasad says that when Diler Khan had surrounded the fort of Purandhar, Murar



Baji Prabhu had a dashing sally on the siege of this Mughal officer. Scott- Waring says that Shivaji had no good artillery and was never used in wars. Dr. Fryer says that almost all forts were on the top of the inaccessible mountains and became naturally defensible needed no other artillery but stones only. which were tumbled down upon their enemies by the soldiers of Shivaji. These stones caused certain destructions not less than bullets where they were alighted. Needless to say that the Maratha soldiers had gathered huge heaps of stones at certain stations and they rolled them down upon their enemies as and when they needed their strategy to defeat the assailers. After this strategy, the Maratha soldier sallied upon the besiegers with their swords in hand and finished the enemy totally.

Chhatrapati Shivaji paid his Hawaldar at the fort one hundred twenty five Hons a year. In 1680, Nagoji Bosale was appointed as Mudrahari or chief of Utlur fort on the salary of one hundred sixty Hons per year whereas Krishnaji Suryavanshi was appointed Sarnobat in the same fort on the salary of hundred Hons every year. In addition to these officers some other persons were appointed to help them in various capacities as Muzumdar who was paid thirty six Hons per year , Tat sarnobat was paid twelve Hons a year and there were seven Bargirs, whose yearly pay was nine hons . Despite their regular payment, the king procured them some additional facilities as per rank and importance as palanquin, torchbearers, personal attendants and some other persons also were there . Thus, the king had taken care of each person and their requirements in all areas.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

1. Describe briefly the Infantry of the Marathas.

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### **13.10 SUMMARY**

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The Maratha Empire was primarily a military organization and its civil institutions were closely connected with its military system. The military efficiency demands discipline in the men and the imagination tempered with common sense in their leaders. The ideal of military should be to defend their country and their people from enemies. The Marathas had earned the reputation as soldiers from the seventh century itself but they earned the reputation as the political power during the period of Chhatrapati Shivaji only in the second half of the seventeenth century. This was the new era in the history of the country. Chhatrapati Shivaji had a clear concept of the Military organisation of the Marathas. He wanted a strong monarchy as the solution to prevailing disorder and anarchy. Naturally, Shivaji began his operation with caution initially, which was with the small forces attached to the Jagir of his father. He preferred light Infantry suiting to the guerrilla warfare of the mountainous area of Maharashtra.

His young Mavalas were the fittest soldiers for guerrilla campaigns in the Maratha territory and were the highly appreciated warriors in the

military history of the country. He organized the Infantry into various groups which were kept under the officers of Naik, Hawaldar, Jumledar, Hazari and the Sarnobat. These officers were paid handsome salary regularly. In the same way cavalry was organized into Bargirs and the Shiledars. State provided everything to the Bargirs from the state expenditure whereas shiledars were to spend for horses, weapon and all other things from their own. The cavalry was organized into various sections as the Infantry and had the officers of the same rank but the Panch Hazari was an additional officer. They were also paid handsome salary either in cash or kind.

Chhatrapati Shivaji had prepared several rules and regulations for the advantage of people in his kingdom. These rules and regulations suggest the idea and concern of Shivaji towards his people. Shivaji felt the need of a strong naval power to check the growing power of the Siddis of Jangira, who had threatened the security of the Maratha territories in Konkan. Sabhasad gives detail account of Shivaji's navy and various vessels as Gallivates, Gurabs, Tarandes, Tarus and Pagas, which were organized into two groups of two hundred vessels in each. Shivaji's navy was commanded by Admiral Dariya Sarang. The most important achievement of the Maratha king, Chhatrapati Shivaji was the construction of forts and strongholds. Shivaji constructed and repaired around two hundred and forty forts whereas Ranade says that he had around two hundred eighty forts. These forts were managed by a group of several officers as per the strict orders and supervision of the king. Shivaji had set aside one lakh twenty five thousand Hons for meeting the basic needs of people in the forts during the period of emergency. In the same way he also set aside one lakh seventy five thousand Hons for repair of several forts. Shivaji had very effective and regular department of Artillery, which was known as Tophkhana.

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### 13.11 QUESTIONS

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1. Discuss the Infantry and cavalry of the Marathas.
2. Give an account of the guerrilla warfare of the Marathas.
3. Write a detailed note of forts and strongholds of the Marathas.
4. Assess the role of Artillery in the military organization of the Marathas.

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### 13.12 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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1. Sen S. N., The Military system of the Marathas.
2. Sen S. N., Administrative system of the Marathas.
3. Pagadi Setu Madhavrao, Chhatrapati Shivaji.
4. Ranade M. G., Rise of the Maratha Power.



## ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

### Unit Structures

- 14. 0. Objectives
- 14. 1. Introduction
- 14. 2. No Separation of Power
- 14. 3. Panchayat
- 14. 4. Membes Of Panchayat
- 14. 5. Appeals
- 14. 6. Evidence In The Dispute
- 14. 7. Trial By Ordeal
- 14. 8. Financial Implications In The Civil Suits
- 14. 9. Elphinstone And Hope
- 14. 10. Judicial Officers
- 14. 11. Role Of Panchayat In Criminal Cases
- 14. 12. Fine And Punishments
- 14. 13. Summary
- 14. 14. Questions
- 14.15 Additional Readings

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### 14.0 OBJECTIVES

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After the completion of this unit, the student will be able to

1. Understand the salient features of the Maratha Judiciary.
2. Comprehend whether there was separation of power in the Maratha Judiciary.
3. Grasp the role of Panchayat in the judicial administration of the Marathas.
4. Know the importance of appeal in the judiciary of Marathas.
5. Explain the importance of evidence in the dispute during the period of Marathas.
6. Comprehend the meaning of Trial by ordeal in Maratha judiciary.

As a matter of fact the judicial institutions are in the process of evolution in the world. The evolutionary process has been influenced by the changing scenario, which differed from country to country. In England, much emphasis has been given on the procedure, for which the country passed various acts and made it systematic, scientific and tried to bring clarity in the existing laws. The country had a body of professional judges, who were experts in the laws of land and they tried to give specific shape even to unwritten customary laws of the land. The English suitor knows well the procedure of the judiciary, he believed in it and also knows about the fair decision of the judiciary. On the other hand, the Maratha judicial system and administration had excelled in simplicity. It had no codified laws, there was no fixed procedure and no financial burden of delayed suits except anxieties and worries. The Maratha judiciary practised on the basis of customs, which varied from district to district. There was a trial by ordeal, which again was inconvenient, because it was not possible easily to all people concerned, the result was that the honest poor could not claim his rights against the dishonest rich. Although, Elphinstone criticised the Maratha judiciary, it worked for several centuries with name and fame.

The Maratha administration of justice was simple and it was suited to the temper and situations prevailed during that time. The law was not codified, its procedure was not certain and it was mostly informal. There are several salient features of the judicial administration of the Marathas as

1. It depended upon the old Sanskrit treatises like Mitakshara school of thought and Manus codes for legal theories
2. It also banked upon the old customs which prescribed the trial by ordeal. The Maratha judges allowed the offender to undergo the ordeal of fire and water. They also believed in the divine intervention and taking oath in sacred temple.
3. The Marathas acted as patriarchs of the old laws. They were little softer on the enforcement of the civil suits and emphasised on the amicable settlement of these disputes.
4. They gave almost all facilities or chances to the suitor or complainants to prove his case
5. They also showed some considerations to the defeated party or defend to ensure the good relations between the parties in future.

Chhatrapati Pratap Sinha, the ruler of Satara between 1808 and 1839 had prepared a list which is known popularly 'YADI' of all procedural customs prevailed during the period of Marathas. The ruler has emphasised on the amicable settlement, he further says that in case the parties failed to settle their dispute amicably, they should move to the arbitrator and get satisfactory settlement for both the parties. In this

case the arbitrator should adjudicate the issue impartially, without fear and favour of any party.

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## **14.2. NO SEPARATION OF POWER**

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The judicial procedure of the Marathas followed the old Hindu law givers as the Manu the Shukranitisara and the Vishnu Smriti, who never practised the principle of separation of power i.e. exercising powers of Judiciary, the Executive and the Legislation separately. The Vishnu Smriti and the Mahabharata say that if any offence is committed in a village, let the lord of that village suppress the evil and set right the matter which was wronged. If he is not able to do so it should be moved to the lord of ten villages, then the lord of hundred villages and finally to the lord of district if the each one failed in succession, the lord of district should eradicate the evil totally to the best of his power. Naturally, the separation of power was not exercised. When the amicable settlement was failed, the dispute was taken to Patil, who was the judicial officer of the village. In the succession of judicial institutions, after the Patil, the Mamlatdar, the Sarsubhedar, the Peshwa and the king came one after another. The Maratha king was the fountain of Justice and honour like the king of England. In towns, there were learned judges, well- versed in almost all shastras were appointed for exercising the judicial duties. These judges were popularly known as Nayadhish. In short the theory of separation of power of the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary was not observed.

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## **14.3. PANCHAYAT**

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This was the first instrument of the civil administration of justice under the Marathas . It was the duty of the Patil in each village and Shete Mahajan in the town and market places to appoint a Panchayat to adjudicate cases of simple and minor nature. The disputing parties were to sign an agreement regarding the abiding of the rules and regulations of the Panchayat. It was the Panchayat to study the case and pass its judgement impartially or without any bias to any party. Mamlatdar, the higher officer in the succession of judicial administration was to confirm the judgement. In case, the Patil refused to conduct lighter judgement or appoint a Panchayat or the disputing parties declined the adjudication of the dispute in their village, it was the duty of the Mamlatdar to arrange for Panchayat at another Village with the help of Patil and get the dispute adjudicated. It is also said that if any matter was beyond the jurisdiction of the Patil, the Mamlatdar was to conduct the hearing of the case and was to finalise it in a fair manner. Generally, the Patil and the Panchayat used to adjudicate the cases, which were upheld by the Maratha Government.

The Government neither made any payment nor paid any allowances to the Panchayat members or Panch like the amateur judges of ancient Athens and Sparta in Greece. Elphinstone says that the pay or reward of the Panchayat depended on the nature of the case adjudicated by them. But it was certain that the Maratha rulers never approved any reward or

gratification and private presents to members of the Panchayat. It was noteworthy that the party never abided by the judgement which was delivered in his absence. Such judgement was quashed by the appeal of the absent party to the Government. It also happened that the relatives of the absent party were arrested and put under rigorous conditions in order to mound the pressure on the absent member to be present in the court for the hearing. The defeated party was to sign an agreement in which he was to renounce his all claims to the property in dispute in favour of his opponent. The winner of the dispute was to pay the amount around twenty five percent of the total value of the disputed property or watan to the Government.

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#### **14.4. MEMBES OF PANCHAYAT**

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Although there was no requisite qualification of a member appointed on the Panchayat, the people from the same village or the caste men were preferred for the job. Generally, the people like Deshmukh, Deshpande and relatives of the disputing parties were appointed to settle the boundary disputes. Elphinstone confirms this view and adds one more member who used to be the village watchman, considering that he knew almost all boundaries of the individual land. There was a general practice that when the watan was in dispute, the Zamindars of neighboring Pargana and Patils of adjoining village were appointed on the Panchayat to adjudicate the matter. Because it was expected that these people would know all procedural matters and were aware of the tradition, custom and unwritten laws relating to the landed property and watans in the kingdom. D. B. Parasnis says that a Majalasi or a special council was constituted to hear and adjudicate the appeals of watan and property, in which some Brahmins were included. It is also observed that the appointment of such Majalasi, Panchayat and their members were to be approved and authorised by the government in some important cases and then permitted to perform their judicial duties. The Peshwas overlooked such irregularities in several cases after going through the motive behind the appointment of these councils and their members.

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#### **14.5 APPEALS**

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During this period, if any party dissatisfied with the judgement of the Panchayat was able to appeal to the appellate court. The appeal was made generally on the pretext of corruption of the Panchayat members. But the responsibility of proving or substantiation of his charges used to lie on the person appealing, otherwise, he was to pay fine, which was known popularly as Gunhagiri. The amount of fine was imposed after considering the means and financial capabilities of the appellate. The Panchayati members were being the co-villagers of the appellate, the appeals were generally rare. The another reason of this was that the appellate was to suffer teasing in day to day. Naturally, people very rarely were going for appeals. The Government used to appoint a new Panchayat for appeals or assigned the work to a Government officer like Mamlatdar. Elphinstone says that although, the decision of appointment of Panchayat



rested in the Government based on the nature of the case, it was considered gross injustice to refuse the right of the appeal of the appellate. It is said that when the judgement was delivered by Patil, it was considered one of the sufficient evidences to order a fresh investigation. Although, Elphinstone says that the Panchayat was generally open to corruption and partiality but this view is totally unfounded because the Panchayat adjudication was the most popular judgement and approved by almost all people during this period. The Panchayat being plural was called Panch- Parmeshwar or they were treated as parents of the disputing parties. In short, the Panchayat had commanded the confidence of the people because the people considered the voice of Panch as the voice of God. Thus, the Panchayat judgement was the acclaimed judgement during this period.

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#### **14.6. EVIDENCE IN THE DISPUTE**

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There is an urgent need of evidence in any disputing case to prove one of the parties either guilty or innocent and facilitate to deliver the correct judgement. During this period several forms of evidences were taken into consideration, one of them was the oral evidence and if it had done by way of ordeal that was considered very effective evidence. There were several people, who were qualified to work as witnesses and deposit evidences in connection with the dispute. The people who were well-versed in the history and traditions of the village, its people and watan-holders were generally called to deposit their evidences and help the Panchayat in delivering judgement. Among such people following were some of the important people invited for presenting their evidences as 1. the Village officers 2. the villagers 3. The caste people or gotras 4. the Balutedars, who were familiar with the history of the village. In the case of Joshi and Kulkarni watan the people like Patil, Chaugule, Carpenter, Blacksmith, Potter, shoe-maker, attendant of a village temple, fisherman, barber, village watchman and drummer were invited to deposit their evidence to adjudicate the above case. In another dispute of Patilki watan of Wadgaon in 1741-42, the people like a gardener, barber, village watchman, carpenter and shoe-makers were invited to present their evidence and help finalize the case. In some other cases the old people were called as witnesses asked them to deposit their evidences. Thus, the evidence was utterly necessary to comprehend the case and reach to the conclusion correctly.

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#### **14.7. TRIAL BY ORDEAL**

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This was a very popular trial during the period of Marathas. Because many a times, the defeated party reneged the agreement, which it had signed before the trial. That party used to ask decision by ordeal in water and fire or an oath in temple or mosque. These ordeals were done till the defeated party was satisfied. The ordeals were done in order to give justice to the defeated party. The idea of the judicial administration of the Marathas was that there should not be any injustice to any party and generate anger or rivalry among them. It is said that in one of the

cases, the defeated party, although had signed the agreement was not satisfied with the decision by the caste men. Then the party took the Panchayat to the sacred river, the defendant and the plaintiff were made to stand in the sacred water, the person who was to do ordeal by water he was asked to deliver his judgment in presence of all those people in the sacred river water. He was to take bath in the sacred water and give his decision there itself. The judicial system presumed that an ordinary would never speak wrong at such auspicious time and in presence of all people as well as the verdict would go no wrong; this was the basic principle behind such ordeal.

Although, there were several ordeals performed in the process of deliverance of judgment, very few were practiced for the convenience of the administration, which depended on the nature of the dispute. For example in a Patilki watan dispute between Devji and Shankararji Dhangat in the district of Pali, the ordeal of Agnidivya was performed. In this ordeal the contending party was asked to take out a metal piece from the boiling oil pot. The moment the party took out the metal, his hand was bandaged and presented him before the District officer or Majalisi or the Council. If the hand of the party did not get any injury or burn, the party was declared successful. The ordeal was called complete and the party was restored with for which it was fighting. Regarding the boundary dispute between two villages, one of the Patils was to fix the right boundary with cow's hide on his head. It was presumed that if the person doing ordeal lied, some illness or other mishap was expected to befall him or his family, if he did not sustain any injury or left undisturbed, it was believed that his assertion was true and corroborated by the God. Thus, the Maratha judicial administration sanctioned all these ordeals.

Despite these ordeals some several disputes were taken to the court of celebrated judges or Nyayadhish like Ram Shastri Prabhune, who were very popular for uprightness in the history of Maratha judiciary. These Nyayadhish interviewed or examined the people or disputing parties in their own houses in private, even they also consulted the friends of the disputants with firmness in order to get complete and correct idea of the dispute to give justice to the parties in dispute. The Maratha judges like Ram Shastri were not the people to deviate from the path of justice for any man in whatever position or for any advantage under the Sun. The procedure of the Maratha judiciary was mostly informal while the European emphasized on the form, procedure, hard and fast rules. The absence of these formalities led the Europeans to pass several remarks on the Maratha judicial system. Elphinstone says that in general rich, influential and the men of ranks received some favour across the countries and the ages, who defined the law with more or less impunity. But this was not the case in Maratha judiciary, in which high rank officials were punished for their misconduct and their watans were liquidated for debts. It is said that observation and remarks of Elphinstone were befitting to the European countries when feudalism was practiced.

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## 14.8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE CIVIL SUITS

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The Maratha Government charged fees variously to different suitors based on their cases. But that depended on the money bonds and the amount usually realized in the dispute. The Government charged around twenty five percent on the realized property. If the suitor was not able to pay the amount, it was lowered to twenty percent. As a matter of fact, the creditors very rarely approached the court for recovering their money from the debtors because the existing tradition and customs allowed them to recover the money from their debtors by any measures. In the extreme cases, the creditors used to take support of Dharna or picketing, which prohibited the debtors to take any food or drink water unless they repaid their debt to their creditors. Broughton says that this Dharna was executed against the men of higher ranks. During the period of Peshwas, some Muhammedan soldiers had undertaken Dharna to Daulatrao Sindhia for realizing their money.

It is said that in the Partition suits, the property up to the value of Rs. three hundred was exempted from any charges by the Government. But the property above the value of three hundred rupees was charged at the rate of ten percent. In the case of inheritance the right of seniority that of the son of legally wedlock was maintained, even if he was younger to the son of widow remarriage. A mother could claim maintenance as well as money for religious work and going on a pilgrimage. Brothers used to inherit the childless brother on payment of inheritance tax to the Government. But due consideration was made for widow sister-in-law, she was permitted to adopt a child which required formal sanction from the Government and secured it without difficulty. A foreigner died within the territories of the Marathas, leaving some property, his legal successor was searched and the property was handed over to him, otherwise the property belonged to the Government.

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## 14.9. ELPHINSTONE AND HOPE

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Among the experts who commented on the Maratha administration of Justice, the views expressed by Elphinstone and Hope are considered very important. Elphinstone says that the Maratha judicial system was very imperfect, there was no regular administration of justice, no means to file suit and there was no fixed rule for proceeding after the suit had been filed. It was also up to the officer to accept a complaint or to reject it altogether.

Although, Elphinstone was critical and skeptical of the functionality of the Maratha judicial administration, the system worked perfectly, because, the plaintiff could approach the chief justice at Poona, the Peshwas and the King at any time. The chief court at Poona was always kept under the brilliant scholars and independent judges like Ram Shastri and Balkrishna Shastri Tokekar, who were always accessible to the people, rich and poor alike. Moreover, the Peshwas went on tour every year,

accepted complaints and punished guilty people severely. Broughton is one of the admirers of the Maratha judicial administration who says that the Maratha rulers were enough accessible to the people even during the time of emergency or expedition. Dr. Hope one more European writer expressed his views in favour of the Maratha judicial administration. He says that there was much to admire about the Maratha judiciary and one of them was the simplicity of the system and there was very little to detest in that administration.

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#### **14. 10. JUDICIAL OFFICERS**

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Although, Elphinstone was very critical about the Maratha judicial system, he himself admitted that the Maratha country was peculiarly free from crimes and gang robberies were never taking place. This is the credit goes to the system, the ruler and the people involved in it. There were several judicial officers involved in it as 1. The Patil at village 2. The Kamvisdar or Mamlatdar at the district level. 3. The Sarsubhedar at the province 4. The Peshwa or the chief justice at Poona 5. The highest judicial authority was the king himself, who was generally represented by the chief Nyayadhish. In the preceding period of the Marathas, the Hazir Majalasis worked as the final court trial which consisted of lawyers, civil and military officers of the state. Shukranitisara says that there were Sabha Naiks and Mahaprashnikas, who were also involved in the judicial administration of that period.

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#### **14. 11. ROLE OF PANCHAYAT IN CRIMINAL CASES**

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In the Maratha judicial administration, the authorities or judges like the Patil, the Panchayat, the Kamvisdar, the Sarsubhedar, the Peshwas and the king were adjudicating the civil as well as the criminal disputes as per the laws of the land. It is said that the Panchayat had not that much jurisdiction in the criminal cases as it had in the civil cases. But it was called some time to make inquiries and pass judgement in those criminal cases without hesitation. This is clear from the incidence of 1760 in which Yashwantrao Kshirsagar, sixty one of Kameri and two others were killed in a land revenue dispute, after a complaint about the incident by the victim's son. The Patil, Kulkarni and some people of the village were summoned to the Huzur, after the enquiry, the Panchayat fixed appropriate compensation, which was paid to the victim's son. But such serious crimes were taking place very rarely.

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#### **14. 12. FINE AND PUNISHMENTS**

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The Marathas had realized that whatever punishment was inflicted should be corrective and that should not push the offender into extreme frustration and convert him as a sworn enemy of people and the government. The second important provision the Marathas had and that was that while fixing the punishment the capability of the offender was taken into consideration and he was allowed to pay the sum of his punishment into several installments. There was no capital punishment during the period of Chhatrapati Shahu. The government punished the

offenders of murder and treason with fine, confiscation of property and imprisonment for several years. In short, the Marathas inflicted fine according to the resources of the offender, i.e. it was based on the earning sources of the culprit. For example, a resident of Peth Somvar guilty of his wife's murder was fined as per his earning capability. As guilty was punished, an innocent, if he was also accused of any crime could not escape punishment or fine, which was based on the earning capacity of such person. If the innocent person proved his innocence, the accuser was punished severely. Although, there was punishment to every offence, some of the noteworthy offences and sentences were as under.

**1. Witchcraft:-** This was considered a very serious offence in European countries. England had a statutory provision during the period of Elizabeth to suppress the offenders of this offence, which was continued till 1736. Due to this provision more than thirty thousand men and women lost their lives because they were accused of this offence. In the same way, one more European country Austria also had a similar provision in their judicial statute which was continued up to 1766. The Marathas had a provision of fine and imprisonment for the guilty person of this witchcraft and they used to undertake special measures against the crimes of witchcraft and sorcery. In 1775, Martand Joshi a culprit of this offence was jailed in Killa Ghagad, the officer in charge of this Killa was instructed that the accused should not be allowed to apply sacred sandal mark on his forehead, perform his daily religious rites and recite sacred hymns. The accused was to be allowed to take his food once a day and cook his own food. The Maratha judiciary also excommunicated and removed some frontal upper teeth to extinguish the evil powers of the accused. The Maratha government was so keen and serious in preserving the properties and lives of the people from the influence of evil powers of witchcraft and sorcery that the government had appointed and deployed several officers in the year 1774 in Ratnagiri, Vijaydurg and Devgad to trace out such Wizards and punish them on the spot.

**2. Adultery:-** This was considered one of the offences during the period of Marathas. There were several fines and punishment to the accused of this offence. The penal servitude and slavery were the punishments inflicted on the female offender. However, such offender was set free if some relatives assured and ensured about the good conduct of the accused in future and paid certain fine to the government. There was one more provision existed in the Maratha judiciary that a slave woman was set free if she was able to replace herself by another slave. Such case had taken place in 1741-42; the husband of a slave woman rescued her by providing another slave. In the same way in 1754 a Koli woman accused of adultery was rescued by her caste men after the payment of fine Rs. fifty. On the other hand, the punishment was little soft to the male offender who used to pay a fine and some time he was undergoing a term of imprisonment for the crime.

**3. Slavery:-** There are several references that a guilty of adultery was punished with enslavement. According to Manu, the slave should not have any property or wealth, whatever slave earns should belong to its master.



But during the period of Marathas as Chanakya says the slave was able to enjoy whatever he used to earn and entitled to inherit the property of his father. In short, the slavery under the Marathas was different than the slavery in Europe and America. The slaves were treated well, they were set free on several occasions, festivals and due to their old age. They were released on the suitable substitute for their owner and allowed to marry with the person of their choice. The marriage of slave girl means it was as good as her manumission.

**4. Bigamy and Forcible Marriage:** -During the Maratha period, there were several offences related to marriage of the Hindu male and female. Many a times, male was able to get rid of any such offences but female was punished with severe punishment. Among such offences two offences were generally taking place as 1. Bigamy and 2. Forcible marriage. In case if for bigamy, the parents or guardians were responsible then they were to be blamed. Because during this period, child marriages were practiced and the young girls used to be victims of this offence. In the year 1752-53 a person was punished with Rs. eighty because he had married a girl, who was already married with somebody else and he was present when the second marriage of his wife was taking place. Thus, the second husband became guilty automatically because, he did not enquire about the girl's earlier marriage. In another case of 1770-71, a Brahmin family was imprisoned on the charge of marrying their girl twice, when her husband by the first marriage was alive. In the same way, in case of forced marriage the punishment was manifold as 1. The confiscation of property, 2. Excommunication of the parties 3. Imposing fine on the parties. It is said that a family was punished with fine when it was proved that it had married a forty-five-year-old male with a three-year-old girl forcibly, when the parents of the girl were not in sense. Thus, the judiciary under the Marathas worked meticulously and adjudicated such cases and disputes.

**5. Mutilation:** - Elphinstone says that there were no crimes during the period of Marathas. The most important reason for this was that the Maratha rulers were not cruel, they used to be very considerate for a deserving offender, they punished them with a small fine and set them off. But this situation was not continued for a long time. the Marathas were constrained to inflict some sort of severe and exemplary sentences to overawe the would-be offenders. Although, there was no capital punishment during the period of Chhatrapati Shahu and the Peshwa Balaji Bajirao, the Peshwas like Madhav Rao and Madhav Rao II were constrained to inflict very serious punishment to serious offences like treason, murder, dacoity, robbery and causing any serious hurt. Madhavrao Peshwa convicted the serious offenders to death on one occasion and on the other he inflicted the offenders to be mutilated.

It is said that there were the following punishments and sentences for the crime of theft as 1. Capital punishment 2. Right hand and left leg were to be cut off 3. Right hand only was to be cut off 4. Right hand, one ear was to be cut off 5. Right hand and right leg were to be cut off 6. One ear was to be cut off. These were sentences inflicted on criminals depending on



the severity of their crimes. Although, these punishments were cruel but it should be noted that there was no influence of humanitarian principles on the criminals to deter them from committing crimes. Thus, The Marathas had judicial administration which was exemplary.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Explain the role of Panchayat in the judicial administration of Marathas.

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### 14.13. SUMMARY

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The Maratha administration of justice was simple and suitable to the temper and situation prevailed during that time. The law was not codified, its procedure was not certain and it was mostly informal. It depended on old Sanskrit treatises, old customs, which prescribed the trial by ordeal of fire and water. The Maratha judiciary also believed in divine intervention and taking oath in sacred temple. The whole emphasis of the judiciary of this period was on the amicable settlement of disputes and establishment of good relations between the parties in future.

The Maratha judiciary followed the procedure and rulers laid down by the Manu, Shukranitisara and the Vishnu Smriti, which had never followed the principle of separation of power. The dispute was taken to Patil, who was the judicial officer of the village, when the amicable settlement was failed. The next in succession was the Mamlatdar, the Sarsubhedar, the Peshwa and the final judgement was in the hands of the king. Panchayat was the authority at the village level to adjudicate the disputes of simple and minor nature. The parties in the dispute were to sign an agreement regarding abiding the rulers and regulations of the Panchayat. If any party was not satisfied or the case was beyond the jurisdiction of the Patil and the Panchayat, then Mamlatdar was to organize a Panchayat, to conduct the hearing and adjudicate the dispute in a fair and clear manner. But, generally, Patil and Panchayat used to decide disputes and the Government upheld them.

In case of any party not accepting the judgement of a Panchayat on the pretext of corruption, the party was allowed to go for appeal to the higher court or authority. But the charge of corruption leveled by the person appealing was to prove the charge, otherwise, he was to pay the fine, which came to be known as Gunhagari. Generally, the people from the village, like Kulkarni, Deshmukh and Deshpande and who were conversant with customs and existing laws were appointed as the members of the Panchayat.

There was an urgent need of evidence in any dispute to prove the parties right or wrong and deliver judgement. During this period, several forms of evidence were considered. In the same way, the trial by ordeal had come to popularity. If the defeated party was not happy with the decision, it would ask the trial by ordeal either ordeal by water, fire or an oath in a temple or masque. Naturally ordeals were done to satisfy the parties and bring to an end to the rivalry between the parties. As a matter of fact,

there was no much financial burden of the civil suits of the parties. The Patil, the Kamvisdar or Mamlatdar, the Sarsubheddar, the Peshwa and the king were the officers one after another in succession, who delivered judgements during this period. Although, the Panchayat. had no that much jurisdiction in criminal cases as it had in the civil cases, but sometime it was asked to conduct an enquiry and pass a judgement in the case concerned. Although, there was no capital punishment during the period of Chhatrapati Shahu, the Later Peshwa had long lists of fine and punishments inflicted on the accused. These fines and punishments were based on the nature of crimes and their severity. The crimes like witchcraft, adultery, bigamy, forcible marriage was treated very seriously. During the period of Peshwa Mahadhavrao, very serious punishments were inflicted to offenders of treason, murder, dacoit, robbery and causing serious hurt. It is said that mutilation also was in practice as a punishment for a serious offence.

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#### 14.14. QUESTIONS

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1. Evaluate the role of Panchayat in the judicial administration of the Marathas.
2. Assess the importance of evidence in the dispute during the period of Marathas.
3. Give an account of trial by ordeal in the judicial administration of Marathas.
4. Write an essay on the fine and punishments in the judicial administration of Marathas.

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#### 14.15 ADDITIONAL READINGS

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1. Sen S.N. Administrative System of the Marathas.
2. Sen S.N. The Military System of the Marathas.
3. Dr. Gune, the judicial System of the Marathas.
4. Setu Madhavrao Payadi, Chhatrapati Shivaji.



## LAND REVENUE

### Unit Structure:

- 15.0. Objectives
- 15.1. Introduction
- 15.2. Land Revenue
- 15.3. Principles of Assessment
- 15.4. Other Taxes
- 15.5. Summary
- 15.6. Unit End Questions
- 15.7. Additional Readings

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### 15.0. OBJECTIVES

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After the completion of this unit the student will be able to : -

1. Know the land revenue system under the rule of Chhatrapati Shivaji.
2. understand the land revenue system during the period of Peshwas.
3. perceive the policy of other taxes than land revenue under the Marathas.
4. comprehend the historical perspective, application and recovery of Sardeshmukhi and Chauthai.
5. know forest as one of the sources of income of Marathas.
6. understand mint and an important source of the Marathas.
7. perceive customs duties as significant source of income under the Marathas.
8. comprehend how remission in various taxes and land revenue was made under the Marathas.
9. know the policy of taxing excise duty on various manufacturing processes.
10. understand the various revenue divisions and revenue officers who were working under the Marathas.

During the period of Marathas there were several sources generated income or revenue for the Government. A document known as the 'Mestaka' mentions around eight sources which were exploited as basic sources of revenue as Jakat, Jairal, Bagait, Barnagjag, Bargujarat, Badast, Katubana and Jujuya. Apart from these sources, there were some direct taxes, which were levied on the income of individuals, professionals and properties of people. As direct taxes, indirect taxes like customs duties, transit dues, octroi, sales tax and the excise duties on manufacturers were also charged and revenue was raised. Although the Administration of Justice raised some revenue as a fine and judicial fees, it was very negligible and a small amount which was even not enough to defray the expenditure of one of the years of judiciary. There were some miscellaneous sources of income as the property which was not claimed by any one went to the Government, presents received by the king, spoils of war and sometime plunder from the territories other kingdoms formed the sources of income under the Marathas.

As a matter of fact whatever was collected from the people was not deposited with the Government. The hereditary officers who used to collect the taxes as well as revenue kept with them the major part of the collection as their own share in lieu of their salary and remaining part they deposited with the Government. It was not possible to trace many a times whether the officer recovered authorized or unauthorized taxes from the dues of people. The land revenue was the major source of income and was referred to it as the share of the king. The land revenue was collected in cash as well as in kind. The levies associated with land were referred to kali, kharip, bargujar, rabi, bagait, ghagria, zhadzadora and kadba. It is, therefore, in the following pages an attempt is made to describe the legal and authorised sources of income of the Marathas. They are divided into various divisions for the convenience of study as :-

1. Land Revenue
2. Other taxes
3. Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi
4. Forests
5. Mints
6. Customs Duties and
7. Excise Duties

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## 15.2. LAND REVENUE

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This source of income is again divided into two parts as the land revenue under the period of Chhatrapati Shivaji and the land revenue during the period of the Peshwas.

**1 Land Revenue during the period of Shivaji:** - Chhatrapati Shivaji was the founder of the Hindu padpadshahi and creator of civil institutions. He took care of lands under him and adopted several measures to improve the cultivation of agriculture. Therefore, his subjects enjoyed plenty of agricultural production and the status of prosperity. He introduced a very flexible system of assessment and collection of land revenue by appointing efficient officials at each and every level for the same. It is said that the peasants of Shivaji knew it better what revenue

he was to pay and he paid it easily and without any oppression. Chhatrapati Shivaji studied the revenue system of Malik Ambar, which he felt that it would suit his kingdom and he adopted it with some minor modifications. Malik Ambar was a great foreigner, who worked with the ruler of Ahmednagar in the same circumstances as Chhatrapati Shivaji. He tried to defend the tottering Nizamshahi kingdom against the onslaught of Aurangzeb by introducing several measures to reorganize the exhausted resources of the revenue system of its kingdom of Ahmednagar. He divided the land into four classes on the basis of its fertility, ascertained its production and fixed the revenue once for all. He removed the intermediary agency of revenue collection and assigned the responsibility of revenue collection to the hereditary Patil and Deshpande and he held them responsible for fully realization of revenue. Thus, this system proved useful for collection of maximum land revenue and it was adopted with some minor modification by the Marathas.

**1 Land Survey of Anno Datto :** - Although , Shivaji adopted the revenue system of Malik Ambar , he did not adopt it in toto and removed all defects prevailed in it. As Malik Ambar could not conduct the land survey with care and caution that Chhatrapati realized. Shivaji found that there were several units of measurement, which created variations in the measurement as traditional rope and tenab or measuring chain. These units changed in length in various seasons and gave no accurate measurement. Shivaji, therefore, searched a standard unit, which was a kathi or measuring rod. This was of five cubits and five fists (muthis) in length. Such twenty kathis made one bigha and one hundred and twenty bighas made a chavar.

After fixing the standard unit of measurement, Chhatrapati Shivaji ordered Annaji Datto, his Sachiv to undertake the systematic survey of the land in the Konkan region of his kingdom. Accordingly, Annaji carried out the measurement of land accurately. But he did not rely on the Government officials, who did not possess the accurate knowledge of local land and its fertility. Annaji invited the senior local people, whose interest was directly connected with the land. In addition to this, the Pargana officials, and village officials were asked to take the help of prominent local people and carry out the survey jointly. Since in this survey of Annaji Datto, people from all sections were associated, it became the settlement of all people . This survey had outstanding features as under : -

1. The village land was categorized into four classes as first, second, third, and fourth respectively.
2. The record of each cultivator with the quality, level and quantity of land was prepared.
3. The record of land holding with crop wise estimation was prepared.
4. When the joint survey was submitted to Annaji Datto, he himself visited at least one village of each description, estimated its yield, compared his figures with the figures submitted by the joint survey

officials. This was done to avoid the over estimation and the loss of people.

5. After the completion of survey in this manner of each village, the record was forwarded to the Finance minister.
6. After taking such survey, comparison in the figures, the assessment was fixed was carried out. Regarding this survey, Chhatrapati Shivaji had issued a circular in 1678 .

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### 15.3. PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

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During the period of Shivaji, the land, under cultivation was only assessed for levying revenue. The land occupied by trees, pastures, and barren land was excluded from the assessment for the purpose of revenue. The rate of assessment was varied from land to land and it was based on 1. the quality of land. 2. crops cultivated in the land 3. the number of crops produced. 4. the number of seasons as kharip or rabi thrashed in the land 5. the nature as jirayat or bagayat of land. These factors were considered while assessing the land revenue. Naturally, the land survey, mentioned above was needed to give detail information of the land and its holders for this purpose.

Annaji Datto had fixed the land revenue around thirty-three percent (33 % ) of the total production of land. Chhatrapati Shivaji made it forty percent (40%) for the administrative purposes and abolished all extra taxes. Major Jervis, a British revenue officer referred to the method of land revenue assessment of Chhatrapati Shivaji, in his statistical survey of the Konkan. He says that Shivaji after surveying, measuring and classifying all kinds of land, fixed the amount of production in the land at least two villages from each Mahal for three years. Thus, this was the basis for ascertaining the land revenue during the period of Shivaji. He further says that the cultivator was allowed to pay the revenue as per his convenience i. e. half in kind and half in cash to the Government. The land cultivating rice was classified into twelve categories as awwal-, the best quality of land; doom- the second quality of land; seem- the third quality of land; charum- the fourth quality of land; ranpal- kharwat means coast land; bawri-means rocky land; khadi- means stony land; turwat- the land cultivating pulses; khathani; manut and ruho land. These lands were levied revenue ranging from five maunds to twelve and half maunds per bighah.

Major Jervis says that, although the cultivable waste land was not assessed on the basis of plough and not bighah as well as its fertility and the crops produced were also considered for the same purpose. Nachni in such land was assessed at four maunds per plough in fertile soil and three maunds per plough in infertile soil. Wari and Harik were assessed three and two and half maunds per plough respectively. Turmeric, Hemp and sugarcane were assessed from five maunds per bighah to three and half maunds per bighah. The costly products like sugarcane, coconuts and betelnut had special consideration in the assessment because, the



cultivators were to nourish them for a long time and wait little longer for reaping the production.

As per the Jedhe Shakavali, Chhatrapati Shivaji had started Batai system of revenue in his Rohidkhore area in 1676. It seems that the Batai system means charging half produce as revenue did not prove profitable to the cultivators, who complained that this system raised the prices of food grains in the market. But this version is not accepted by most of the historians because this was not implemented throughout the Swaraj but in some segments of his kingdom.

### **15.3.1 Revenue Divisions under the Marathas :-**

Chhatrapati Shivaji had divided his kingdom in various revenue divisions for the convenience of recovery of the revenue in a systematic manner. But there is no unanimity on the number of revenue divisions. There are several versions of his revenue divisions as under: -

1. Justice Ranade says that there were sixteen revenue divisions, which Chhatrapati Shivaji created as Maval, Wai, Satara, Karad, Panhala, South Konkan, Thana, Trimbala, Baglan, Wanagad, Bednore, Kolhar, Shirangpattam, Karnatak, Vellore and Tanjavar..

2. S.N. Sen says that the revenue divisions of Chhatrapati Shivaji referred by Shankarji Malhar in his document seems to be more authentic, which were about thirty seven in total as Ramnagar, Jawhar, Bhiwand, Kalyan, Chaul, Rajapur, Kudal, Bhimgad, Phonde, Akole, Poona, Baramati, Indapur, Maval, Wai, Satara, Karad, Man, Phaltan, Belgaum, Sampgon, Gadag, Laxmeshwar, Navalgund, Nalyal, Bete giri, Malkapur, Kopal, Panhala, Tarab, Ajra, Junnar and Kolhapur. These divisions differed in size and number of talukas they contained.

### **15.3.2 Revenue Officers under the Marathas: -**

Chhatrapati Shivaji brought out several changes into the existing revenue system, which was in practice during the earlier rulers of Muslim dynasties. These changes were as:- 1. He reduced Mohammedan revenue divisions of Mauje, Parghana, Prant and Subhe to Mauje, Tarf and Prants .

2. He removed the hereditary revenue collection officers Patil and Kulkarni in the village and Deshmukh and Deshpande in the district.

3. Shivaji assigned the responsibility of collection of revenue to the officers who were directly appointed by him or the king.

4. He appointed Havalda, Karkum or Paripatyadar as in-charge of Tarf to collect the revenue of the same place. 5. He entrusted the responsibility of collecting revenue of Prant to Subhedar, Karkum or Mukhya Dandadhikari. 6. He assigned the responsibility to supervise over several Subhedars to Sarsubhedar as main officer. He had several other hands to assist him as Dewan Muzumdar, Phadnis, Sabnis, Karkhanis, Chitnis, Jamadar and Potnis, which were shifted from place to place in

order to avoid the corruption in the process of revenue administration. Shivaji also deployed his spy agency to supervise and keep strict watch on these revenue officers. Among the officers in his intelligence department, the Pant Amatya and the Pant Sachiv were very important, who looked after the revenue collection agency, as per the orders of the king released from time to time.

### **15.3.3 Land Revenue under the Peshwas: -**

The main emphasis of the revenue system of the Peshwas was on the policy that making the Maratha country rich and the cultivators prosperous. The Peshwas encouraged the cultivators or peasants to produce more production and increase the wealth of the country. To actuate this objective, there was a need of bringing the fallow land under cultivation. The Peshwas helped the cultivators in this direction and the maximum land was brought under cultivation. The cultivator, who did this, he was exempted from the revenue and taxes for some years till he compensated the money spent on the above purpose. The Peshwas divided the land into four categories as:-

1. Shiri means cultivable land 2. Kuran means the land used as pasture or grazing land 3. Bag or garden 4. Ambarai means orchard or garden of fruits. These lands were often leased to leaseholders for better production and revenue to Government.

### **15.3.4 Principle of Assessment: -**

As Chhatrapati Shivaji had fixed some basic principles on which land assessment was carried on for the benefit of farmers. In the same way, the Peshwas also determined some principles for assessing land for revenue purposes which were as under :-

1. The Peshwas had instructed the officers who carried the land assessment to consider the actual conditions of farmers and the care must be taken to assess the land or area, which was actually cultivated by the farmers. This was done in order to avoid the over assessment and unnecessary burden of revenue on the farmer.

2. The Peshwas, in order to increase the revenue and systematize the assessment work, tried to create permanent interest of cultivators in their land. The Peshwas for this purpose began to give long leases for five to seven years and also forbade the sale and mortgage of the land of cultivators.

3. The Peshwa rulers appointed officers like Kamvisdars to look into the matter that neither the cultivators nor the Government suffer any loss on any account. In case such condition arose, the officer should compensate the cultivator for the same. It is clear from this that the above designation should see the increase in revenue as well as increase in the actual cultivators of land or area under their jurisdiction or districts.

4. The Peshwas assessed the land revenue of their farmers on the basis of standing crops in the land. Such crop was inspected by the inspectors appointed by the Government. There are several references regarding the appointment of such inspectors from various local officers and the payment made to them for the same job of inspection of the standing crops and recommendations made for the fixation of land revenue.

5. The government under the Peshwas categorized the land as superior, inferior and ordinary classes and accordingly, the land revenue was fixed or assessed.

6. For the purpose of assessment of the revenue the type of land as arable or irrigated was seen and the nature of crops had to be taken into account for the same.

7. The last and not the least principle at the time of land assessment was considered and that was the land whether being cultivated from several generations it was reclaimed recently. Thus, it is to be cleared that the scale applied for the land assessment and the manner and system used for the same differed from area to area. A document of 1740-1741 gives detail information of the land assessment crop wise as under; - 1. The land in Haveli and Tarf for rice was assessed at ten maunds per bighah, sugarcane at five maunds per bighah, vegetables two maunds per bighah while all summer crops were assessed at two maunds per bighah. 2. A document of 1749-50 gives the following description of the land assessment in the Pargana of Chandwad. Jirayat land assessed at two rupees per bighah, rocky land at one Re. per bighah, new black land at four annas in the first year and rs. two in the fifth year per bighah. Bagayat land of sugarcane was assessed at ten Rs per bighah while newly irrigated sugarcane land at Rs. five in the first year and Rs ten in the fifth year per bighah. Although, the mango trees were not assessed separately, the mango trees of Patil were assessed at Re one per thousand fruits. 3. A document of 1772-73 gives a detailed description of the land assessment of Neral Taluka as under:- All Jirayat land was assessed at RS. 3 to 5 per bighah, Rabi land assessed at Rs. two per bighah, hemp and sugarcane land at Rs. five per bighah, while coconut and palm land was assessed at Rs. four per bighah. It is observed that the cultivators were permitted to their land revenue either in kind or cash as per their convenience.

#### **15.3.5 Assessment of Coconuts and Plantations: -**

Coconut and other plantations need much investment and a longer waiting period for getting return by way of production as well as fruits. Naturally, it was required that the assessment in this regard should be delayed till the production is reaped. The Peshwa Government knew this fact and did not levy tax on the coconut trees and other plantation like betelnuts for 15 to 20 initial years. This step was adopted in order to encourage the farmers to cultivate coconuts, betelnuts and other plantations regularly. There were some other measures also as the Government granted some concessions to the cultivators. In the same way, Brahmins

were assessed at little lower rates from Rs. two to Rs. five per bighah of land .

#### **15.3.6 Assessment of waste lands :-**

The Marathas had encouraged the cultivators to bring more fallow land under cultivation to cope up some problems like shortage of food grains or poor collection of revenue. The Peshwas adopted the policy of encouraging the cultivators for the same and also granted concessions to the farmers who converted barren land into cultivable land. In addition to this, the Peshwas had announced the following measures and rewards to cultivators: -

1. A cultivator, who converted the top of a hill into cultivable land or brought rocky land under cultivation, covered it with the fertile soil and prepared embankment around the land , the cultivator was given the half of the land gratis and the other half was given the same cultivator rent free for twenty years and with reduced rate for subsequent five years .
2. A cultivator, who reclaimed the land from the sea coast, such cultivator was given the 1/4 land as inam. The remaining  $\frac{3}{4}$  land was taxed after the determined period, which was considered after assessing the money spent and the labour used for reclaiming the land.

#### **15.3.7 Remission in Land Revenue :-**

Although, the cultivator or the farmer contributed to the funds of the Government by way of land revenue , sometime the same cultivator needed Government help as well as remission in the land revenue paid to the Government .There were several such occasions as 1. famine 2. shortage of rainfall 3. failure of crops 4. destruction of crops due to war, wild animals and insecticides 5. any other natural or manmade calamities. The Government used to order for preliminary assessment of the loss caused and announced remission of revenue full or partial based on the circumstantial evidences. Even the Government never recovered revenue soon after such calamity. The cultivator was given respite till his recovery from the loss he had sustained. The Peshwas gave remission in revenue to all cultivators, as and when it was required in common and general distress. The Government also helped individuals on various occasions whenever such persons were affected due to misbehavior of the soldiers or other calamities. Many a times so happened that soldiers of the Government misconducted with the people, as and when they encamped near a village. The Government ordered to ascertain the losses first in such cases in the presence of the district officer and the affected person himself and compensated him suitably.

The Peshwas followed the other traditional methods of improving agriculture and irrigation by way of supplying water to agriculture. The Government used to construct dams and lakes and stored up river water for the use of agriculture. Many a times the Government paid entire expenses of such construction on other time the villagers were asked

to bear the cost of its repair or desilting the reservoir. In short, the cultivators were helped and encouraged for more production and revenue.

The Government under the Peshwas came to know that the cultivator used to borrow loans from private bankers or sahuks or moneylenders on the unreasonable terms and conditions and the cultivator was forced to pay much more interest than the actual amount he borrowed. The Peshwas wanted to stop this exploitation of the cultivator and started the policy of state loan or Tagai, which served double purposes as it supplied loan to the cultivator and saved the cultivator from the clutches of the private money lenders. The Peshwas had appointed special officer known as Mamlatdar. This Mamlatdar was to advance loan on his own to the cultivator less and easy terms and conditions and the cultivator was allowed to repay it in cash or kind as per his convenience. Thus, the Peshwas did every this possible to help the cultivator in distress.

Justice Ranade regarding the revenue management of the Peshwas says that the Peshwas adopted a very careful policy of land assessment and revenue collection system. The Peshwas were very anxious to see that the cultivator was not oppressed at any cost. Ranade further says that Wellington a British officer, who carried his campaign of Maratha country found it highly cultivated revenue system, Jervis surveyed the whole Konkan and adopted the same in toto and Elphinstone recommended to continue the same system when the British conquered the Maratha territories later. Thus, the Peshwas paid every attention towards the betterment of cultivator, reduce problems and maximize the revenue of the Government.

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## 15.4. OTHER TAXES

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During the period of Marathas, the cultivator and the people involved in trade and commerce were to pay some certain amount to several elements. These elements were as 1. Government 2. criminals 3. invaders 4. village officials 5. artisans and so on for various reasons. A cultivator was to pay land revenue to the Government, some share of food grain to village officers and artisans. The cultivator used to share his vegetable with the Patil and Kulkarni, the village officers as and when he brought the vegetable to the market. In short, the cultivator was, forced to pay several taxes to several elements on various occasions. These taxes were not alike to all and at all places or areas. They were different in nature as some of the taxes paid by the cultivator were levied once in a life time, the others were collected on special occasions while some other taxes were levied in particular locality on the eve of particular celebrations. Such taxes, the records say were around fifty in number, during the period of Chhatrapati Shivaji and they were around forty in the period of Peshwas. Some of them can be listed as under:-

### 5. Taxes under the period of Chhatrapati Shivaji :-

The almost all taxes under Shivaji cannot be identified completely but they are referred in various documents as :- Vethbigari, Farmasi,

Balekati, Paiposi, Mejbani, Mohimpatti, Kanchapatti, Talpahi, Tup, Faski, Sadilwar, Tutpatti, Idsubrati, Toranbhati, Unt, Ambe, Karujati, Hejib, Patewari, Ashwajakati, Shetsara, Bharad Taka, SalBail, Jangampatti, Peshkashi, Patisika, Humayun Kar-i-Humayuni, Thamebhat, Dasrapatti, Huzurbhat, Hal patti, Ahistari, Sardeshmukhipatti, Mashahire, Gaon khandi, Dani, Teji Bheti, Jhadjhadora, Bargujar, Inampatti, Akhduldiwani, Karinamati, Vihirhuda, Sinhasanpatti. These were the taxes collected from the cultivator by various agencies.

## **6. Taxes under the period of Peshwas :-**

As taxes in the period of Shivaji were recovered, there were several other taxes during the period of Peshwas as under:- Duhuk Patti, Hak Chouthai, tax as the inam of village Watchman, Miraspatti, Inamtigai, Inampatti, PundiGuna, Vihirhoonda, Gharpatti, Bat Chhapani, Tug, Lagan Takka, Patdam, Mhais Dubhi, Kharbuzwari, Watanjapti, Nazar, Kotwali, Jastapatti or Karjapatti, in addition to these taxes the cultivator was to pay his land revenue. Some of these taxes were to be paid in kinds. There was one more feature of the taxes during this period that some of the above taxes were farmed out to the highest bidder, who used to collect them through his own agency or machinery of tax collection.

## **7. Chauth and Sardeshmukhi :-**

These were also the sources of income of the Marathas, which were legally conceded by the imperial authorities at Delhi in 1719. To understand the true nature of Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi a brief historical review is needed-

1. The demand of chauthai and sardeshmukhi was made first by Chhatrapati Shivaji, the founder of Maratha Raj in 1650 to Shahjahan, the Delhi emperor in the Prants of Junnar and Ahmednagar. Shivaji claimed that his family had hereditary rights of Deshmukhi Watan over these prants and offered to enter the Mughal service with five thousand horses. Shahjahan asked the king to submit the same in person in Delhi.

2. Shivaji made the demand for sardeshmukhi and chauthai in 1657 to Aurangze, when he secured the command of Deccan. Shivaji sent Raghunath Pant and Krishnaji to Aurangzeb to negotiate with him and allow Shivaji to conquer Dabhol and other sea-coast dependencies during the war of Aurangzeb with his rival brothers. Aurangzeb promised Shivaji about his claims and the conquest. Aurangzeb discussed the matter in detail with Abaji Sondev, the trusted advisor of Shivaji in Delhi

3. Shivaji made his claims of sardeshmukhi and chauthai in 1666 at the time of Treaty of Purandar with Raja Jaising and offered a Peshkash of forty lakhs in the instalment of three lakhs each year. Shivaji also claimed the territories of Bijapur and Nizamshahi kingdoms and agreed to maintain a body of troops on his own cost. Aurangzeb again promised for a favourable consideration provided Shivaji submitted the proposal personally at Mughal court Delhi.



4. When Shivaji reached Delhi, certain developments took place. Shivaji was insulted by the Mughal court and nothing could take place. After Shivaji reached back to his kingdom and commenced wars again the Mughal in 1667. Aurangzeb agreed to Shivaji's claims, he was given a Jagir in Berar with the title of Raja, and Shivaji's son, Sambhaji was given a Mansab. But Chhatrapati Shivaji was not happy with these sanctions, he started dictating his own terms and conditions and imposed chauth and sardeshmukhi on Golconda and Bijapur kingdoms. Thus, Shivaji began to recover them regularly without any hinderances.

5. Shivaji received chauth and sardeshmukhi Rs. three lakhs from the Bijapur kingdom and Rs. five lakhs from the kingdom of Golconda in 1668, which became the regular feature of the revenue of Chhatrapati Shivaji and the subsequent rulers.

6. In the year 1671, Shivaji extended his claims of chauthai and sardeshmukhi to other territories like Khandesh which was under the Mughal empire and recovered it from them.

7. Shivaji widened the area from where he recovered chauthai and sardeshmukhi to Portuguese territories in the year 1674.

8. Chhatrapati Shivaji invaded Karnataka in 1676 and forced the rulers of Bednore and Soonda to pay chauthai and sardeshmukhi. Thus, Shivaji had sardeshmukhi and chauthai a source of income in return for this tribute, Shivaji undertook to protect those rulers from the external aggressions. After the war of Independence, the Marathas extended the chauth and sardeshmukhi to Karnatak, Gangthadi, Berar, Khandesh, frontiers of Gujrat and Malwa as well as to the territories of Mughal empire. Later Balaji Vishwanath, the Peshwa of Chhatrapati Shahu received three sanads for Swarajya, Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi from the Mughal emperor in 1719.

Shivaji claimed sardeshmukhi i.e. ten percent of the total collection or revenue on the basis that he considered himself as the hereditary Desmukh of his country. On the other hand the chauth recovered was twenty five percent of the total revenue and was reserved for the expenditure of the Government which was divided as under :- 1. Bakti, was the twenty five percent of the total chauthai, which was for the use of the king and collected by his special officer, who was Peshwa or pratinidhi or pant Sachiv of the king. 2. Sahotra:- was the six per cent of the total collection of chauthai, which was reserved for the Pant Sachiv of the Chhatrapati 3. Nadgaunda, was the three per cent of the total chauthai, reserved for gifts and presents made by the king to various people on different occasions. The king did this out of his generosity and the needs of individuals. 4. Mokasa, was the sixty percent of the total collection of chauthai and was distributed among the sardars, who spent the amount on maintaining their troops. The sardeshmukhi also was divided in the same manner. Later on and used for various purposes of the swarajya as one of the sources of income of the Marathas.

**8. Forests :-** Although , forests did not yield much more income for the Marathas , they were called one of the important sources of the income of the Government . Forests gave income variously , which can be divided into following categories as 1. It was a source of wood for construction and fuel . The Government formed out the contract of wood in the forests to the highest bidder. The bidder paid specific fees to the Government and sold it to the needy people. 2. The forest gave honey to the people, which was a good source of income. 3. Grazing land. The forests were also used as a grazing land for animals and farmed out to the highest bidder. The bidder used to reserve some of the parts for grass, which was used as fodder for bullocks, buffaloes and other animals during the time of warfare. 4. Forests were also a source for various fruits, gums and a store of Ayurvedic medicines and medicinal herbs. Thus, Forests were considered as a source of income.

**9. Mints :-** During this period, the mints were not owned by the Government. They were owned by private persons. The duty of the Government was to assay the gold or metal brought to the mints. The Government had no right to assess the intrinsic value of the coin or it is deformed, deficient or coins are redundant in the circulation. This was the duty of the bankers, traders or the persons who owned the mint. The Government appointed some of the officers known as Shroff or Potdar, who assayed the intrinsic value, content, metal and also exchanged the coin for old after minting new coin. Thus, Mint was a source of income because the Government sanctioned licenses to the private persons to hold mints and charged fees to such mint holders. It is said that the mint holders were mostly Sonars known as Goldsmiths, who used to pay Government some sort of royalty, which varied mint to mint and area to area. The licensed mint holders were to promise. The Government for maintaining standard proportion of metals used to mint the coins and adhere to the principles of purity of the metal. If any mint holder breached with this rule, the mint holder used to lose his license or was to bear a fine for the same. During the period of Peshwas, the mint charges were seven coins per thousand coins minted i.e. the Government used to receive six coins while one coin went to the officer. The Peshwas never tolerated unlicensed mints, spurious, debased and counterfeit coins in circulation. Although, there were several coins of several rulers in circulation, the important financial transaction was done through Hundi or bill of exchange. In short, the mint was one of the important source of income under the Marathas.

## **10. Customs Duties :-**

This was one more source of income of Marathas. These duties were divided into two classes as 1. Mohatarfa and 2. Zakat .

**10.1 Mohatarfa** were the duties imposed on traders, even they were treated as income tax where as Zakat were the duties imposed on sales and purchases as well as called octroi duties The Kamvisdar of Mamla Revdanda had levied the Mohatarfa duties as under;-1. Goldsmith. the Goldsmith was taxed at the rate of Rs. 3 per shop per

year . 2. Oilman . The oilman was taxed Rs. 7 per oil mill per year . 3 . Shoemaker. The shoemaker was charged mohatarfa duty Rs. 6 per shop per year . Blacksmith. Mohatarfa was charged at Rs. 4 per shop per year on the blacksmith. 5. Shopkeeper was imposed with Rs. 7 as mohatarfa per shop per year. 6. Koli. Mohatarfa was imposed on Kolis Rs.8, 5, and 2 per palanquin per year on the basis of the size and nature of the palanquin . 7. Potter. Every potter was charged with

Mohatarfa of Rs. 3 per wheel per year. 8. Basketmaker was taxed with Rs. 3 per house per year as mohatarfa. 9. Boatman. Every small boat was charged mohatarfa with 4 annas while every big boatman was taxed at the rate of 8 annas per trip as mohatarfa. 10. Gondhali. was taxed Rs. 3 per year for his work. 11. Stone cutter. or the stone quarry man was charged at 55 of his income as mohatarfa. 12. Mason was taxed with one Rs. for every month as mohatarfa . Thus, the tax mohatarfa varied place to place, shop to shop and profession to profession . It depended on the earning of each trader.

**10.2. Zakat:-** This was the tax levied on the goods in transit means movement from one place to another place. The Government charged octroi on such goods. In some countries such goods was heavily charged at various places in medieval period. Although, this situation was totally absent under the Marathas, the rulers had sternly instructed the concerned officials for not charging the same goods again. A document of 1745-46 states that Balaji Bajirao had specifically ordered officials at Burhanpur and Sironj that the goods moving between these places should be taxed zakat at one place only. Because zakat was farmed out to the highest bidders and the bidders, in order to get maximum taxes , used to charge again and again at various places. Many a times, this tendency created many difficulties in the policy of encouraging traders and merchants, inducing them to settle down in the Maratha country and generated prosperity. To remove some of the lapses in this taxation, the Maratha Government began to assess, levy and collect zakat through her officials On other occasions, the work of supervision was assigned to the officials like Darkdar and on some other time , even zamindars were authorized to supervise the process of assessment and collection of zakat. These charges were made to avoid any kind of oppression or exploitation of the traders artisans and merchants under the Marathas.

**10.3 Remission in Customs Duties:-** Due to several constraints , the Maratha Government agreed for remission in not only the land revenue but also in custom duties . The Government never wanted to oppress the tax payer because the prosperity of the kingdom and also the empire depended on the wellbeing of the tax payers . Due to drought in prants of Poona and Junnar, the document of the year 1763-64 states that the Peshwa Government ordered the Kamavisdars of those prants to recover only half zakat on some eatable items, which were badly hit by the drought . In the year 1769-70 there took place a total failure of crops, the Peshwa Government cancelled all duties on the purchase of bullocks and buffaloes in the same prants. In short, the Government adopted the

policy that no zakat or taxes should be recovered from the subjects, on the other hand a generous help or tagai should be advanced for them. There were some other practices also that government officials used to get transported their goods without any duty charged upon them. But in the period of scarcity that facility used to be ceased automatically and in the period of abundance they enjoyed the facility ceaselessly.

**11. Excise Duty:-** Although, this was one of the sources of income under the Marathas, it was not considered a legal and popular source and was neglected in some proportion. The Peshwas did not approve of drinking liquor and hence used excise duties to control the manufacture and sale of liquor. Although the policy of excise duty of Peshwa was guided by shastras and religious ideas of the Peshwas, the Peshwas never allowed any hardship to their subjects. The Government permitted Kolis and Bhandaries, the traditional brewers to brew liquor on some terms and conditions. One of their terms was that the manufacturer should not sell liquor to Shenvis, Prabhus and Brahmins as well as to the Government servants. The Government extended the permission to the Westerners. Among them were the British, French, Portuguese officials and soldiers in India. The Government charged the excise duty on each tree which was used for manufacturing liquor, the tax was imposed on each tree as Rs.1. The documentary evidence suggests that this excise duty on the liquor was farmed out to the highest bidder with all rights of purchasing all commodities, in connection with the manufacture and sale of liquor. In addition to liquor, the excise duty was also imposed on tobacco. The license was issued to a private person to sell tobacco. The license for tobacco was farmed out to the highest bidder with some terms and conditions, one of the terms was that tobacco should be sold at the rate of Rs. 5 to ten per maund. In Konkan region, tobacco was consumed by plantation workers on agriculture. Hence, the license holder was permitted to sell tobacco to cultivator also. The Peshwa Government used to get Rs. three thousand eight hundred excise duty from the sale of license in Prant Salsette only.

Salt manufacture could bear excise duty, which varied place to place. The duty was Rs. 2 and 10 annas per khandi salt. Whereas at some places each salt pan was charged with the excise duty as one Takka. Total excise tax on salt collected in kind was around seven hundred khandies of salt per year. Another item fetched excise duty was jaggery, which was paid in kind. The most important item invited excise duty was the industry of fishery, the duty was charged on each tank or lake of Fishery as Rs. 50 per tank per year. In the prant of Rajapur weaving industry was functioning, which gave Rs. three per loom per year the excise duty. Thus, under the Marathas this tax was one of the sources of income.

The total revenue from all the sources bears no mention anywhere. Even it seems it was impossible to come to conclusion to a figure accurately. Because the period was insecure due to the threat of external aggression from the Mughal. However, there are certain versions about the total revenue of Chhatrapati Shivaji as Sabhasad says that Shivaji started with the jagir of his father which yielded around forty thousand hons and

went on increasing to one crore hons. The exchange value of the hon was Rs. four and total revenue of Shivaji was around Rs. four crores. Besides this regular income from various taxes, the Marathas also got revenue from chauthai and sardeshmukhi was Rs. eighty lakhs each year. Jadunath Sarkar did not agree with the version of Sabhasad.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS :-**

1. Explain the land survey of Annaji Datto.
2. What were the principles of assessment of land revenue under the period of Chhatrapati Shivaji ?
3. Discuss the revenue divisions and revenue officers during the period of Shivaji .
4. What were the Principles of Land Assessment under the period of Peshwas?
5. Examine the assessment of coconuts, other plantations and waste land during the period of Peshwas .
6. Assess the policy of remission in land revenue under the rule of Peshwas.
7. What were the different taxes other than land revenue under the Marathas?
8. Give a brief account of chauthai and sardeshmukhi .
9. Assess the forests and the Mints as the sources of income under the Marathas.
10. Analyse the customs duties and excise duties as sources of income during the period of marathas .

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### **15.5. SUMMARY**

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During the period of Marathas several sources were used to generate income or revenue to the Government. A document known as ' Mestaka' mentions around important eight sources of revenue of the Marathas as Jakat means revenue raised from octroi, custom duties, Jaraib means revenue raised on arable land, Bagait revenue raised on garden land , Barnagjag revenue raised on mango-groves, Bargujarat revenue from creepers,Badasti revenue raised on trees , Katubana revenue raised on barren land and Jujuya. revenue from various items. In addition to these there were some direct and indirect taxes, chauth, sardeshmukhi , forests, mints and other duties . The land revenue was the major source of tax collection which was divided into two periods as land revenue under the period of Chhatrapati Shivaji and the land revenue under the period of Peshwas. Chhatrapati Shivaji was the founder of the Hindupadpadshahi , and the build of civil institutions , was well aware about the financial situation of his kingdom. He, therefore wanted to

improve the land revenue of his kingdom. He adopted the land revenue system of Malik Ambar from Nizamshahi kingdom with several modifications. After fixing accurate measure for land survey, Shivaji ordered, Annaji Datto, his Sachiv to conduct land survey. Annaji Datto carried out very systematically the land survey and fixed the land revenue. During the period of Shivaji, the principles of assessment were the quality of land, the crops cultivated in the land, the number of crops as kharip or rabi crops, the nature of land and the crops were considered and the revenue was fixed at thirty three per cent by Annaji Datto but Shivaji raised it to forty percent due to the convenience of recovery of the revenue. Shivaji had divided his kingdom in various revenue divisions. Justice Ranade says that Shivaji had sixteen revenue divisions while S. N. Sen says he had total thirty seven revenue divisions. Shivaji as practiced by Malik Ambar created his revenue collection machinery. He changed the Mughal revenue units from Mauje, Pargana, Prant and Subha to Mauje, Tarf and Prant. He appointed officers like Havaladar, Karkun, Subhedar, Diwan Muzumdar, Phadnis, Sabnis, Karkhanis, Chitnis, Jamadar and Potnis. Through these officers Chhatrapati could collect around four crore rupees revenue per year.

Land revenue under the Peshwas was based as the policy of encouraging cultivators to bring maximum land under cultivation. The Peshwas asked the officials who carried the land assessment, to consider the actual condition of cultivators and standing crops in the land for assessing and fixing land revenue. In addition to these the quality of land, the type of land and whether the land is fresh i.e. reclaimed recently also was seen at the time of assessment of land revenue. The Peshwas considered the coconuts, other plantation, waste land and the remission in land revenue on account of natural calamities while fixing the revenue. Despite land revenue the Marathas recovered other fifty taxes from the subjects. Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi formed one of the major sources of land revenue. Although, Balaji Vishwanath, the first Peshwa secured the sanad of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the Mughal emperor in 1719, the recovery of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi were started by Shivaji since he came to power. The Marathas could get Rs. eighty thousand lakhs as Chauthai and Sardeshmukhi. As chauthai and sadeshmukhi, forests, mints, custom duties and the excise duties were some other sources of income of Marathas. As per the records of Sabhasad, Chhatrapati Shivaji could earn the total revenue around four crore rupees from all above mentioned sources. But Jadunath Sarkar understates the income of the Marathas to considerable extent.

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## 15.6 QUESTIONS

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1. Examine the land revenue as important source of the income of Marathas.
2. Discuss the Annaji Datto's survey, principles of land assessment, revenue divisions and revenue officers of the Marathas.



3. Give an account of the chauthai and sardeshmukhi as source of income of the Marathas.
4. Assess the various sources of income of the Marathas.

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### **15.7 ADDITIONAL READINGS**

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1. Dr. T. T. Mahajan, Industry, Trade, Commerce during the Peshwa Period.
2. M. G. Ranade , Rise of the Maratha Power.
3. A.R. Kulkarni , Maharashtra in the Age of Shivaji .
4. S. N. Sen , Administrative system of the Marathas.



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## WATANDARI SYSTEM

### Unit Structure

- 16.0. Objectives.
- 16.1. Introduction.
- 16.2. The Village Land.
- 16.3. Watan and Watandari.
- 16.4. Types of Watandari Land.
- 16.5. Creation and Confiscation of Watan or inami land.
- 16.6. Sale, Purchase, Mortgages and gift of Watan land.
- 16.7. Mirasdars and uparis.
- 16.8. Duties and Responsibilities of a Watandar.
- 16.9. Importance of Watan
- 16.10. Watan System and the Adnyapatra
- 16.11. Capital Grant and Watandary System
- 16.12. Evolution in the Watan System.
- 16.13. Watan System and the Maratha war of Independence.
- 16.14. Summary.
- 16.15. Questions.
- 16.16. Additional Readings.

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### 16.0 OBJECTIVES

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After the completion of this unit the student will be able to

1. Understand Watan and Watandari system.
2. Know what is Khalisati land and Inami land.
3. Perceive the various types of Watandari lands.
4. Comprehend the creations and confiscation of watan or Inami land.
5. Understand the sale, purchase, mortgage and gift of Watan land.
6. Know who were Mirasdars and uparis.

7. Understand the various duties and responsibilities of a watandars.
8. Comprehend the importance of watan.
9. Perceive the watan system and Adnyapatre.
10. Understand the thoughts of Elphinstone on watan system existed during the period of Marathas.
11. Comprehend the evolution of watan system under the Marathas.
12. Know the position of watan system during the period of Maratha war of Independence.

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## 16.1 INTRODUCTION

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During the period of Marathas land was the main source of income. It was considered much more important than any other sources and was called Watan. Watan means one's own native place and the land it possessed over there. The one who held land was very proud of that and was called Watandar by virtue of its possession. The Marathas who were the land holders were ready to do everything as well as prepared to undergo any ordeals to retain the title of their land because their land was called Watan. The Maratha History is full of such ordeals or disputes which ensued on the issue of possession of land or Watan. The land or Watan also was called inam was inherited by one's children as successors. In absence of such sons or direct successors other successors made claims and counter claims to possess the land or Watan. There are several evidences that the land or Watan or inam partitioned among the living successors on the order of the Government.

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## 16.2 THE VILLAGE LAND

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The village land was generally divided in various sections as

1. Dwelling land 2. Arable land and 3. Waste land. The dwelling was occupied by the villager for habitation but they did not occupy the whole dwelling land. Some of the portion of the land was spared for newcomers to that village and reside over there. The land which was arable was used for agricultural purposes - means production of crops. The land which was waste divided into 1. Pasture and 2. Common land which was used by all villagers for common purposes as holding cultural programs, sports or games and markets. There were standing orders from the Government that the king's revenue should be increased upwardly by bringing in cultivation the waste land that each village possessed. Naturally, Mirasdars who were peasant proprietors and uparis means outsiders or newcomers to that village were tenants or farmers having no rights of occupancy were encouraged to bring more and more waste land under cultivation, increase their production and add to the revenue of their king.

The king was the ultimate owner of the land in his kingdom up to the medieval period in India and other countries of the world, But in order to cultivate the land, it was handed over to the cultivators. Gradually, they possessed it and they came to be known as the owner of the land. The king ultimately, conferred the title of ownership of land upon the cultivators, who were cultivating the land since the beginning. Thus, the class of Mirasdars or the peasant- proprietors come into existence and most of the village land was held by such peasant- proprietors under the Marathas. The rest of the land was controlled by the Government assigned it to the uparis or tenants or farmers for appropriation of revenue. Thus the village land was categorized as 1. Khalisati and 2. Inamati.

**1. Khalisati land:-** it means the revenue of this land was directly deposited in the King's treasury. Even that was also recovered by the Government machinery.

**2. Inamati land or watandari land:-** This was the land which was allotted to various inamdars or watandars by the King or Government. These inamdars or watandars were allowed to appropriate the revenue from this land in lieu of cash payment by the Government or King. Therefore, this land was called Inamati or watandari land. In short, the land held in perpetuity by virtue of office was called watan or watandari land or inamati land. There were Several such inamdars or watandars in every village as Deshmukh, Deshkulkarni, Mukadam, Kulkarni, Padewar and several military officers. These officials were hereditary inamdars or watandars, who held around twenty percent of land under the Marathas. Although, these watandars or inamdars or jagirdars collected the land revenue with the help of their own machinery, they did not dispossess the cultivators under them from their rights. These cultivators paid the land revenue as the cultivators of Khalisati land and other cultivators in the village. It was with these inamdars or watandars or jagirdars whether to use the whole land revenue for themselves or part with some portion either to the king or for any other purposes.

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## 16.4. TYPES OF WATANDARI LAND

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There were several personal and impersonal kinds of land grants made by the king or the Government from which watandari or inamdari system came into existence. These inami or watandari grants can be summarized as under:-

**1. Religious Grants or Watans :-**These were the impersonal grants or watan sanctioned to religious bodies or institutions. These institutions employed cultivators to cultivate the land sanctioned to them and used the land revenue for maintaining such institutions or defray the expenditure incurred by these institutions. these grants, watans or inams also were called Devasthan inama or watans. They were granted to 1. Temple 2. Mosque 3. Math 4. Samadhi 5. Varsanas. These watans or inams are discussed in detail as under:-

**1.1:-Temple:-** The Marathas sanctioned grants or watans to Temples for religious worship or performing religious services or rites and rituals. As Chhatrapati Shivaji had assigned a piece of land as watan or inam to the temple of Dnyandeva at Alandi. During the period of Peshwa not only this watan or inam was confirmed but a new inam also was sanction for the same temple.

**1.2 Mosque:-** Sabhasad Bakhar mentions that Chhatrapati Shivaji granted land as well as sanctioned allowances to temples as well as mosques equally for defraying the daily expenditure of them and other purposes of those religious institutions. Chhatrapati Shivaji granted three cavars of land to the Kazi of Indapur to look after the mosque at Indapur. Shivaji also conferred the watan granted by Malik Amabar to Abdulla, the Khidmadgar of the mosque at Bhabode. Thus, these watans were also continued in later period of the Maratha rule.

**1.3 Mathas:-** As watan to temple and mosques, the Marathas also granted some watans to mathas located at various places. Chhatrapati Shivaji granted watan and inam to Ramdas, his guru for the maintenance of his own matha at Chaphal. He also had sanctioned some of watans or inams to Maunibaba of Patgar for maintaining the math-located at that place. The other mathas that received generous grants or watans were the math of swamy Sadananda at Nimbha and the math of Moraya Gosavi at Cinchwad.

**1.4 Samadhi:-** There were a number of saints during this period, who attracted the attention of people in general by their spiritual and religious instructions to them. Such saints received posthumously some watan or grants for maintenance of their Samadhi. For example, the Samadhi of Sopander at Saswad received watan for its maintenance

**1.5 Varsasanans :-** This was one more type of religious watan or inam which was sanctioned for performing religious services under the Marathas. It was the Varsasanans. It is said that a Brahmin was granted thirty bighas of land for performing puja to a deity as his maintenance. In the same way Gosavi of Jejuri received twelve bighas of land as watan for the similar work which he used to perform to a local deity. It is also said that these Varsasanans were paid either from the treasury or at the time of collection of revenue of the Mahals, which were mostly on the basis of year to year mode. In this regard Adnyapatra says that watan or inam in the form of land was given for the purpose of maintenance of Dharma as an act of eternal merit. Village land was granted to great temples where divine presence was felt. Not this much even to the hermitages of saints, to the places of Samadhi, where the act of worship, offerings, pilgrimages and the distribution of food used to regularly do, such places needed watan from the Government and was accordingly granted.

**2. Agrahara watan or inam :-** This was one more type of watan or inam granted during the period of Marathas. Wilson defines Agrahara in his Glossary it as a village or a part which was occupied by Brahmins, held either rent free under special grants or at reduced rate of assessment for the period of their education.

Agrahara inams or watans were granted generally to Brahmins for their sustenance during the period of their education and learning. these inami or watan lands were either exempted completely from the taxes or were made to pay rents at reduced rate. The Agrahara lands which were exempted completely were known as sarva- Agrahara land. Shivapur and Tulapur villages were agrahara villages i.e. all land in these villages was granted to different Brahmins as agrahara watan for purpose of their learning. There are several evidences that Chhatapati Shivaji had granted entire villages to the Brahmins of Poona as agrahara watan.

### **3. Sanadi and Gav Nisbat Inami or watan lands :-**

The watan or inami lands granted during this period could be classified as 1. Sanadi inami lands or watans 2. Customary inam or watan.

**3.1. Sanadi Watan:-**In this watan, Sanad (charter) in connection with the watan was given by the ruler or king to the watandar. In this watan the nature of the watan like free from the government taxes, perpetuity or the period, whether any portion was reserved like an half, one third, one fourth as government claims were mentioned. Therefore, such watans were called as Nimai watan, Tijay watan and Chauthai watan. The king or the ruler created and confirmed such watans by the royal firman as and when the king wished.

**3.2 Customary inam or watan:-**This watan was not reduced to any writing or conferred by any sanad or firman. This watan was oral and as valid as the sanadi watan.

Chhatrapati Shivaji had created such watans whenever circumstances permitted him and granted rent free lands to various watandars. For example Chhatrapati Shivaji granted watan to Balaji Avaji Chitnis for his loyalty, Balaji Deshmukh of Kanadkhore for assistance and Ramchandra Nilkanth was awarded Sabnisi watan for his valuable service to the king. In the same way, the king also rewarded his loyal servant Bakaji Pharzand with the watan of Patilki of several villages.

**4 Dudh-Bhat and Sadi-Choli watan :-** As the king granted watans to his loyal servants and officials for their good services to the ruler and people in general of the kingdom. In the same way, the king also granted some watans to the daughters of his faithful servants who had projected outstanding bravery in the safety and security of the State. Such watan was called Dudh-Bhat watan or Sadi-Choli watan. For example, Jijabai had gifted one cavar of land as watan to the wife and daughter of one Kulkarni who had rendered very faith and useful services to the king. Jijabai, therefore, was very pleased and rewarded the watan to Kulkarni's wife and daughter in perpetuity. In the same way Jijabai granted one cavar



land as watan to a village watchman, Rajopadhe, the family priest of Bhosale and several servants in the court on the occasion of the Solar eclipse. Adnyapatra refers to the watan granted to daughters and wives of the trusted servants as Kakan- Choli watans.

**5. Watans granted to Artisans:-** Artisans in every village were granted some land as watan on which they were not required to any revenue or taxes. Generally, these Artisans were given the land in watan which was reclaimed from the waste land. Such inam or watan was called as Tikanati Begari, which means the land given to certain people for particular services to the village without any remuneration. Artisans could mortgage this kind of watan but could not sell it and they could also resume the watan even if they failed to render the particular services to the people. Wilson in his Glossary mentions such inam or watan as watan Maval means such watans were granted in the Maval area than the Desh or the Ghat-matha. These watans were also called Dehangi watan. Because they were granted to variety of people like servants, musicians, dancers and the families of the people who had made supreme sacrifice during their service to the State as well as the village people. These watans or inams were included in the Gav Nisbat inam and made out of the land of the village. They being rent free inams, the villagers were to make good the loss of revenue caused to the king or the state. Thus, this was also a kind of watan granted during the Marathas.

Principally, the king was the ultimate owner of the land in his kingdom, any land without valid title was reverted to him any time. In practice, such reversion never took place, except in case of sudden death of the watandar or the land holder. The watandar or the land holder without issue could adopt a son and could continue the watans till the pleasure of the king or the Government. Whenever title to watan or inami land failed or could not be established clearly, that watan reverted to the king. Such land was granted to others in case he established his title clearly. Before doing so all available evidences were scrutinized minutely. It is said that this was done in order to cultivate all available land and get maximum income from it.

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## 16.5. CREATION AND CONFISCATION OF WATAN OR INAMILAND

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The king or the village granted watan or inam to appropriate persons and they terminated the watan in case of failure to perform the duties or the functions for which the watan or inam was granted.

Chhatrapati Shivaji had confiscated watans and inams of several watandars as 1. The Watan of Desh-Kulkarni of Pune was confiscated on the reason that he had joined the Mughals. 2. The watans of Deshmukh and Desh-Kulkarni of Muthekhore and Deshmukh of Rohidkhore were also confiscated for their misconduct. 3. The watan of the Patil of Ranje was confiscated by the king for his misbehavior and causing loss to the revenue of the state. While confiscating the such watan care was taken that the state

or the government advanced some certain amount to landholders for their rights attached to that land.

In case of land reverted to the king where the watan was terminated, the actual cultivator of the land was not dispossessed. In the same way when new areas were added to the kingdom, the actual cultivators working on the land were never disturbed. Even, the king used to order the village officers to employ new cultivators in case the old cultivators had fled the village due to fear. The king ordered the village officers for doing everything possible to get every piece of land cultivated.

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## **16.6. SALE, PURCHASE, MORTGAGES AND GIFT OF WATAN LAND**

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Watandars and inami land holders as well as other cultivators were allowed to sell or dispose their title to the land or to the land revenue thereof. They were also permitted to raise loans against the securities of such lands. Village officials could sell their rights to collect land revenue only with the consent of the villagers. The villagers accepted the officers those who were appointed for the collection of land revenue.

A watandar or inam holder could dispose his land either wholly as and when he was in need of money. Sometime Patil of the village was required to pledge his watan or inam as security against the advance he received from the government. Although, in theory, land could be sold and purchased freely by anyone but in practice, it was very difficult task and invited several hurdles in its process. Therefore, watan or inam could not find any buyer. When a village official sold or disposed his watan his rights of performing certain duties were also transferred to the person who bought the same watan or inam. In order to validate or legalize the deed of either sale, purchase or gift of watan, it was to be reduced to writing and the same document had to be attested by prominent members of the village community. As a matter of fact, the transition or the sale and purchase of watan or inam was discouraged by the government to avoid any complication subsequently and to maintain the dignity of the inam or watan. Pralhad Niraji, the Nyayadish of Shivaji said that no one should purchase or sell his watan or inam and person doing so should be punished and penalised. This action would prevent watan from becoming an ordinary commodity, which was sold and purchased as other ordinary commodity time to time.

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## **16.7. MIRASDARS AND UPARIS**

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There were two types of land holders in any village under the Marathas as 1. Mirasdars and 2. Uparis.

**1. Mirasdars :-** They were the land holders who had hereditary and proprietary right in the land they cultivated since a long. These mirasdars held the land in perpetuity on payment of certain rent to the government. They were the absolute masters of their land as long as they paid the fixed rent to the government. In ancient times it was believed that all land was

mirasi land. These mirasdars used to pay certain taxes to the government. Even if such mirasdars failed to pay such taxes for some time, the government never tried to possess their land. It was considered that if one of the mirasdars was unable to pay taxes, it was the duty of the other mirasdars to pay off on his behalf the rent or taxes to the government. When a mirasdar had fled from his village to another village, the government shifted that land to somebody else on certain terms and conditions. It was presumed that no mirasdar would flee on his own or without any difficulties; it was the duty of the Patil to remove all difficulties of mirasdars in his village and assure the mirasdars of good treatment. Any mirasdar who was from his land was called Parangada mirasdar. Such mirasdar was required to renounce his lands in writing to enable the Government to dispose it for better revenue to some other cultivator.

**2. Uparis:-** It is said that the land which was not mirasis was called uparis land. some of the portion of such land was reserved and cultivated for the Government. That part of land was also exempted from the local taxes. The remaining uparis land was leased away to new comers by Kulkarni and Patil, the village officers, Since the Patil and Kulkarni were expected to bring more and more land under cultivation, they often persuaded the new comers to come and settle down in these villages, cultivate the land available there and increase the productions of the village. Such new comers holding land in the village were called the uparis land holders. These uparis land holders used to become mirasdars after some years and paying certain amount as tribute or Nazar or gift to the king. This was needed no special communication but only necessary charges in the register maintained by the land record office.

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## 16.8. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A WATANDAR

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Watan means one's own country, which signified under the Marathas as a grant made by the state to a person who held certain office with specific duties. The grant of watans continued as long as the services were rendered efficiently and till the watandars remained loyal to the king and the village. Sometime, the watandar was paid in cash and kind for the services he rendered to the village. The watandar referred to such payment as his privileges and dues. These privileges and dues were recognized by the state and were specifically noted in the watan deeds of the watandar. The watandar being the permanent officer of the state and the village no change in the Government affected his position at any level. Therefore, several watandars who were working under the Mughals were continued by Chhatrapati Shivaji as watandars when annexed the Muslim territory to his kingdom. The watandar was to perform the following duties and responsibilities under the Marathas.

1. The main duty of the watandar was to collect the assessed revenue of the villages which were under his jurisdiction.

2. The watandar was to undertake the systematic policy of colonization and bring more and more barren land under cultivation.
3. The another duty of the watandar was to settle petty local disputes in the village with the help of community council, which was called Gotsabha.
4. The watandar was to take initiative in social, religious and cultural programmes. He was to organise i) Village festivals ii) public functions iii) religious ceremonies iv) various games v) Programmes for public recreation.
5. The most important duty the watandar was to perform was to maintain law and order in the village of his watan, it means he was answerable to higher authority for any lapses in his watan.

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## 16.9 IMPORTANCE OF WATAN

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Watan had much more importance during the period of Marathas. That can be summerised as under:-

1. The watan was treated as an instrument of political career. It was possible to any watandar to progress in his career with the help of his watan. Because he used to come in touch with the upper rank holders even it was possible for him to win over the mercy of his king and build his career.
2. The watan was the most important means for livelihood. It was main source of income.
3. It was sign of dignity and prestige. It was a coveted institution and became a root cause of disputes in the society. Watan invited several claims and counter claims and generated lengthy and excessive litigations against each other. It gave birth to severe feuds, conspiracies, violence and ultimately led murder in the watan area.
4. Watan was considered as a matter of great honour and it was held in such a high esteem that they preferred to remain as watandars rather than to be promoted to a higher position in the government. For example, Balaji Avaji Prabhu preferred to retain the traditional watan Chitnisi than to the new elevated post offered by Chhatrapati Shivaji in his Ashta Pradhan Mandal. Even, Chhatrapati Shivaji himself liked to be called as watandar. In 1672, Shivaji had ordered his officials to keep separate the account of his watan lands in Konkan and use the amount to protect the cultivators in his watan from the onslaught of various enemies.
5. Watan was treated as the last unit of the decentralized administration of Marathas. The watandar like Patil, Kulkarni, Deshpande, Deshmukh and Chaugule worked at the village level and decided the local issues on the spot and helped make the Maratha administration efficient and people oriented. This well-regulated watandari system brought in the administrative stability and enhanced the economic prosperity under the Marathas as mentioned by Jervis in his statistical survey of the Konkan.

Thus the watandari system was very important part and parcel of the Maratha administration. This was the system helped the Marathas to survive despite the many odds for a longer period.

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### **16.10 WATAN SYSTEM AND THE ADNYAPATRA**

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Ramchandrapant Amatya a well-known diplomat in Maratha administration discussed in detail about the watan system functioning during the period of Marathas. Amatya in his Adnyapatra says that hereditary right holders in village administration like Patil, Deshpande, Deshmukh and Kulkarni were called as watandars. Although, they were the last unit of the administration, they used to contribute much more independently to the Maratha administration, it means without them administration would not have run properly. Amatya further says that the watandars never used to be happy and satisfied with whatever watan or land they possessed. Neither they used to be loyal to the king forever nor they abstained from committing something less or more against each other or anyone. They often used to try to become stronger than others by acquiring new territory for themselves and after becoming stronger they used to seize the territory of other people by force. This act led them to commit depredation in the territory of other people and instability in the whole region. Consequently, they used to fortify their places of residences to avoid any loss to their property in case of attack by their enemies. In case of foreign attack, the watandars, who already acquired much wealth, used to buy peace from the invader in order to protect their watans. Amatya says that many a times, these watandars, during such emergencies tried to divulge some state secrets to the enemy and posed a danger to the whole kingdom. Ramchandrapant Amatya, therefore, warned the king about such watandars and suggested to undertake the following steps to avoid danger and control the watandars :-

1. Amatya suggests that the king that he should avoid the policy of any extreme end as withholding the watan of an in disciplined watandar or another hand he should not give any watandar inordinate freedom of action and movement by which the natural spirit of the watandars would manifest. The king, therefore, avoid two extreme ends in formulating the state policy.
2. In such situation, the king should follow the policy of conciliation and punishment. The king should see that the watandars, while exercising their duties, they should not increase their power over the people and get undue advantages. The king should not allow the watandars to enjoy the powers which were not included in their watan deeds.
3. The king should make them to obey all orders issued by the king and the central government at any cost and execute them properly and sincerely.
4. The king should not allow watandars to build strong houses and construct forts in their watan to avoid the watandars from reaping undue advantages.

5. In case of disobedient, overbearing and unrestrained watandars, Amatya, suggests that the king should entrust them with a difficult task, if they succeed in performing the task it would add to the king glory and strength and other than if they fail, the king should punish them and bring them under severe restrictions.

6. The king should never allow the watandars to quarrel among themselves. They should be motivated and encouraged to undertake various assignments of the government to benefit both the cultivators and the king. If they found transgressing traditional limits or provisions recorded in their watan deeds, such watandars should be put down with heavy hands.

7. Amatya further advises the king that he should recover regularly the tribute from his watandars and habituate them to be punctual in all matters. Amatya compares good, honest and disciplined watandars with marigold flowers, which emit fragrance and make the area pleasant. Thus, it is very imperative for the king that he should gather all his watandars of caliber and talent for longer and greater interest of his government.

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### **16.11 CAPTAIN GRANT AND WATANDARY SYSTEM**

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Captain Grant Duff a British political agent at Satara made some references about the watandary system prevailed during the period of Marathas. Captain Grant wrote a letter to Mountstuart Elphinstone. Governor Bombay Presidency on August 17, 1819 in which he mentions that Deshmukhs and Deshpandes under the Marathas called themselves as landlords whereas the Patils and Kulkarnis considered themselves as watandars on the basis of land or inam or watan granted to them by the king. All watans under the Marathas became hereditary, it was converted in to a system and therefore, it was called watandary system. No watandar or his successor wanted to sell it, however it was major or minor watan and whatever it caused. They felt proud in calling themselves as watandar and felt very much distressed when they were constrained to sell their watan either on their own or by the sanction of the government. In case of sale of a watan the claims the next kin and the nearest neighbor were considered, as well as the buyer was expected to pay Dehangpatty, an unpopular tax to the king at the time of the transfer of watan to him.

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### **16.12 EVOLUTION IN THE WATAN SYSTEM**

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The watandary system existed during the Maratha period was not originated in it but, it was the sum total of the various changes took place in it with the passage of time, means it was revolutionized and got shape with the change of time.

The watandary system was practiced in the medieval period before the advent of Chhatrapati Shivaji. He was a great king, creator and builder of civil institutions and a realistic ruler of Maharashtra. He, therefore, tried to introduce several changes in the watan system which was already prevailed in his territory since the medieval times. He came to know that cultivators under the period of previous rulers, used to respect the



watandars more than the king. Because, the watandars used to collect the revenue, deposit very small portion of the collected revenue in the Government treasury and keep the remaining revenue for them. The watandars were in immediate touch with the cultivators and used to collect much more revenue than actually assessed. This led them to be dominant, behave independently and develop the habit of defying the orders of king. Naturally, such watandars recruited their own army and constructed houses like forts for their own defense in any emergency.

Chhatrapati Shivaji undertook several measures which Ramchandrapant Amatya mentioned in his Adnyapatra in later period. Shivaji dismantled the fortifications of watandars, appointed his own people to various forts and reduced the powers of the watandars considerably and made them as ordinary people or cultivators in his kingdom. He confiscated their illegally amassed property and fixed all privileges and dues of watandars and other officials working at various levels like villages, parganas and prants. Although, Shivaji created new watans on various occasions, he took care of their growing influence over the cultivators and brought watandars under his strict control. Thus he proved himself a strict disciplinarian and an efficient administrator. Therefore, Ranade compared him with Napoleon Bonaparte. Shivaji started paying his soldiers in cash and offered cash rewards to those who rendered meritorious services to the state. This led to create his utmost control on watandars and ultimately on the administration. This was the reason that the Maratha Swaraj could survive through the titanic struggle with the forces of Aurangzeb for more than twenty seven years.

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### **16.13. WATAN SYSTEM AND THE MARATHA WAR OF INDEPENDENCE**

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In order to encourage various people to do their best to save the Maratha Swarajya from the onslaught of Aurangzeb, Chhatrapati Rajaram began to grant watans to Maratha Sardars, who had been rendering meritorious military services to the Swarajya. This policy of granting watans, brought into existence a group of young and daring watandars, who began to do everything for the security of the swarajya. But in the process of granting new watans, the cautious policy of Chhatrapati Shivaji was not observed consequently, that led to successively weakening of the Central Government. When the young and brave Sardars began to work independently under king Shahu, the central government weakened a step further. King Shahu had spent his formative years in the confinement of Mughal, he could not get any political and diplomatic education and training which was indispensable for running administration. Although Shahu was unable to get necessary education for a king, he proved himself a good judge of man. He selected the people of talent and capability for his administration like Balaji Vishwanath and others, who proved their talent and tallied their metal in the passage of time. That led to divide the power and responsibility into two blocks as *defacto* Peshwa and *dejure* king. The *defacto* Peshwa concentrated all powers in his hands and shifted his capital to Pune as administrative centre and hub of the Maratha Empire.

while the dejure king became nominal head of the Maratha empire and remained at Satara. During the period of Peshwa Bajirao II, several new watandars and Sardars came up who extended the boundaries of Maratha Empire to various corners of Hindustan, which further weakened the Central government and converted the Maratha Empire into Confederacy.

This led to internal bickering and committing the infamous Treaty of Vasai in December, 1802. Thus, the changes introduced in the watan system with the passage of time made the Central government of Marathas very weak and enhanced its downfall in 1818.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What are the different kinds of village land ?
2. What is the Khalisati and Inami land ?
3. What do you understand by religious grants or watans ?
4. What is meant by Agrahara watan?
5. Discuss in brief the Sanadi and Gav Nisbat watan land.
6. Why were Dudh-Bhat and Sadi-choli watans granted ?
7. Discuss the watans granted to Artisans.
8. Why was the watan created and confiscated?
9. Discuss sale, Purchase, Mortgage and Gift of watan.
10. What is meant by Mirasdars and Uparis?
11. What are the main duties and responsibilities of watandars?

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### 16.14 SUMMARY

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The land was known as watan under the Marathas. The people were ready to do any ordeal to possess and retain their land or watan. Land was used for dwelling, agricultural purposes and holding common cultural programmes. As a matter of fact, the king was the ultimate owner of the land in India and abroad till the medieval period. But for the purpose of cultivation, it was handed over to the cultivators, who gradually came to be known as the owner of the land occupied for tilling purposes. Thus, the terms like Khalisati land and inami land or watan land came into existence. Khalisati land means its revenue was deposited in the king's treasury and the revenue of inami or watan land was appropriated by the inamdars or watandars for themselves in lieu of cash payment.

There were several inams or watans granted for various purposes by the king as religious grants or watan. They were granted for temples, mosques, mathas, samadhis and varsasanas of various temples. The revenue of those watans or inams was used to defray the expenditure of these

monuments on various accounts. Agrahara watan was granted to Brahmins for the period of their study. There were a number of watans which were reduced to writing and a charter or sanad mentioning the nature of the watan was given, which was called sanadi watan. While other watans were oral which came to be known as ordinary watans. There were some other watans also as Duth-Bhat watan, sadi-choli watan and watans granted to Artisans in the villages. Creation of watan absolutely depended on the king and the village community. Naturally, they were the only confiscators of the watan. Generally, when the watan was given for performing specific duties and those duties were not performed, then the watan was confiscated. Hereditary watandar was allowed to either sale, purchase, mortgage or gift his watan. But while selling the watan the claim of next kin or successor was considered.

Watandar had to perform many duties by virtue of his office and undertake several responsibilities, as he was to undertake the policy of colonization for thrashing more production, collect land revenue, settle petty local disputes, organize festivals, public functions, religious ceremonies, public recreation and various games. The most important duty and responsibility of the watandar was to maintain law and order in his watan. The watan was very important for watandar as the watandar can build his political career, it was a source of livelihood, it was a sign of dignity and prestige, it was a matter of great honour, even Chhatrapati Shivaji preferred to be called himself as watandar. Balaji Awaji Pradhan preferred to retain his watan in his family when he was elevated to Ashta Pradhan Mandal by Chhatrapati Shivaji. Watan was the last unit of the administration under the Marathas, Ramchandrapant Amatya has discussed in detail about the watan system and watandars, their tendencies and their course of action in his Adnyapatra and advised the king to take stern action against domineering and recalcitrant watandars. Captain Grant Duff a British political agent at Satara wrote a letter to Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay and expressed his opinion about the status of watandar existing during the period of Marathas. Captain Grant said that the watandars tended to be dominant and trying to go against the ruler on petty reasons.

The watan system did not remain the same as was existed during the period of medieval age. There took place several changes in the watan system under the Marathas. Because, Chhatrapati Shivaji, the Maratha king and the founder of Hindupadpadshahi in India, did not accept the watan system of medieval period in toto. He modified it in the interest of common people and adopted several precautions as mentioned and suggested by Ramchandrapant Amatya in his Adnyapatra in later period. During the period of Maratha war of Independence against the Mughal, Chhatrapati Rajaram began to grant watans to young and daring Maratha Sardars, who helped the king and fought very courageously against the Mughal. This practice weakened the central Government considerably and brought into creation the Maratha Confederacy, which finally led to the decline of Maratha power in 1818.

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**16.15 QUESTIONS**

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1. Examine the nature of watandari system during the period Marathas.
2. Discuss the various types of watan or inami lands under the Marathas.
3. What you understand by watan system? What were the different duties and responsibilities of a watandar?
4. Assess the importance of watan system. What were the different changes introduced in watan system under the Marathas?

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**16.16 ADDITIONAL READINGS**

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1. Dr. Balkrishna, Shivaji the Great. vol. IV.
2. C.V. Vaidya, Shivaji the Founder of Marathi swaraj.
3. A.R. Kulkarni, Maharashtra in the age of Shivaji.
4. Mountstuart Elphinstone, A report on the Territories conquered from the Peshwa.



## ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT: INDUSTRY

### Unit Structure

- 17.0. Objectives.
- 17.1. Introduction.
- 17.2. General Features of Industry Under the Marathas
- 17.3. Major Industries Under the Marathas
- 17.4. Metal Industry.
- 17.5. Ship Building industry
- 17.6. Other Industries Under the Marathas
- 17.7. Summary
- 17.8. Unit End Questions.
- 17.9. Additional Readings.

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### 17.0 OBJECTIVES

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After the study of this unit the student will be able to

1. grasp the general features and characteristics of industry under the Marathas.
2. comprehend the industries which were under the control of Maratha Government.
3. know something about the cotton industries of Marathas.
4. explain the silk and woolen industries functioned under the Marathas.
5. understand the dyeing and colouring industries of Marathas.
6. Know the importance of the iron industry under the Marathas.
7. grasp the importance of Brass, copper, silver and gold industries of Marathas.
8. comprehend about the Ordnance factories of the Marathas.
9. explain the ship building industry, its raw material, artisans involved in it and the centers of the industry.

10. understand the other cottage and handicraft industries Like Wood work, Hornwork, and Ivory work under the Marathas.
11. know the leather, liquor, Paper and the industry of fishery.
12. comprehend about the Rope-making, Jaggery-making, Salt- making and oil manufacturing industries of Marathas.

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## 17.1 INTRODUCTION

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During the period of Marathas, there was no distinction between the rural and urban industries. They were mostly based on the caste system. The village artisans and servants were collectively known as balutedars who were twelve in number, as carpenter, blacksmith potter, leather worker, rope maker, barber, washerman, astrologer, Hindu temple keeper, village watchman, goldsmith and bard. In addition to these twelve balutedars, there was another category of village people who were known as alutedars, they were also twelve in number as lingayat priest, tailor, water-carrier, gardener drum-beater, vocalist, musicians, oil-pressers, betal-leaves seller, bearer of burdens, butcher and watchman other than the ones mentioned in the balutedars. Historian Fukazawa says that these alutedars were neither essential nor universal in the period of Marathas, even some of them were occasionally found in larger villages during this period. Along with alutedars artisans like weavers and dyers were also not seen in every village. Therefore, they were not included in either of categories. In the same way oil pressing was not ubiquitous in the kingdom. The villagers who did not have its own oil presser they would buy the oil at the nearby market. Thus, these artisans were involved in the industrial process of the Marathas.

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## 17.2 GENERAL FEATURES OF INDUSTRY UNDER THE MARATHAS

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These were several features and characteristics of the industry under the Marathas. Some of them were as under:-

**1. Handicrafts:-** This was one of the most important features of the industry and almost all industries were small scale industries and based on the products of agriculture. These characteristics only led the economy of this period to the self-sufficiency of the village life. The artisans and the cultivators depended on each other and exchanged each other the articles they produced. Parmanand presents along list of various artisans, who produced several articles of handicrafts and artifacts, which flourished the people under the Marathas.

**2. Village was the unit of Industrial organisation:-** The unit of the economy was the village and the main industry under the Marathas was the agriculture. The artisans of the village manufactured the articles, which were consumed locally, they generally never needed any market for their finished products. Therefore, the villages were often in search of such skilled artisans. The people of Kasba, where bigger market



was held weekly and industrial products were exchanged also searched out for artisans.

**3. Correlation between caste and occupation :-** During this period the occupation, depended on the caste. The people never went beyond the calling of their family. Naturally, the village artisans had very safe and secured place in the village community. The simplicity of the village life made themselves sufficient and self-contented with whatever they produced and manufactured in the village.

**4 Family as a training centre :-** Under the Marathas no new industries were and occupations were undertaken except traditional source of income of the family. Naturally, what parents followed the trade or occupation was continued by the children. Father taught the son what he did. Hence, the woman, children helped the family head in his trade or occupation.

**5 Demand and supply :-** During this period, there was no use of any electrical power or steam power in the process of production. Consequently, there was very limited production of industries or handicrafts. It became very easy to the artisans to balance between the demand and supply principle of the commerce.

**6. Constant Lifestyle (Fashion) :-** The next feature of the industry under the Marathas was that there was no constant change in the taste and liking of the people. The people in general were conservative and never accepted any new fashion suddenly. Thus, the fashion and type of the people remained constant.

**7. Migration of Artisans:-** under the Marathas there were no formal institutions for training the artisans. The artisans like Tagatis, Momins, Padmashalis, Khetris and Niralas, were in constant demand. These artisans were required for various industries and handicrafts mostly textile industry. The Maratha Government used to induce them to migrate and settle in their territories. The Marathas also helped them variously as 1. provided them with a place to live. 2. Extended state patronage 3. exempted them from house taxes 4. Paid them monthly salary and. 5. Advanced financial assistance.

**8 Government compensation to Merchants :-** Another important feature of the industry was that the government used to make up losses if any merchant, trader or artisan suffered due to fire, flood or any natural calamities. Vasudeo Joshi reports that the merchants from Kalyan received Rs. seven hundred as compensation for gutting his shop in fire from the Peshwas.

**9. State control over certain Industries ;-** In order to guard the interest of common man, to increase production of industries and check some unhealthy practices in industry, the Maratha Government mostly the Peshwas brought certain industries under the state control, which were as under :-

**10. Diamond Industry :-** a) The sanad of 1753-54 records that the Kamvisdar, the superintending officer of Peshwas had ordered to Govind Ballal, the Kamvisdar of Bundelkhand diamond mine to collect all diamonds costing more than two hundred and send them directly to the Peshwa.

1.b) The Peshwa Government appointed an officer at the chanderi diamond mine for supervision and who was paid Rs.one thousand two hundred annually.

**2. Salt Industry :-** The document of 1742 -43 refers to the instructions issued by the Peshwas to the salt manufacturers to increase the production of salt, enhance the quality of salt and not to raise the price of salt. In order to achieve the above objectives, the Peshwas announced the following:-

3.a) exempted the workers in salt manufacturing factory from house tax for three years . 3.9 .2. b) granted salt pass to Krishnaji Raghunath at Tarf Ghodbander 3,9.2. c) also granted salt farm at Turbhe to Shaik Daud Shaik Hasan of Thana on payment of certain khandis of salt to the Peshwa.

**11. Liquor Industry :-** The document of 1754 -55 says that the Peshwa Balaji Bajirao permitted Kolis and Bhandaries to open distilleries for manufacturing liquor from coconut and palm trees, on condition that they should neither sell it to workers nor supply it free of charge to Brahmins, Prabhus and Shenavis. He punished very sternly to the Kolis and Bhandaries who breached the above condition. S.N Sen says that behind this policy of the Pesh was there was his Hindu religion and the idea of maintaining morality among the people of the Maratha country.

**12. Tobacco :-** The Peshwas had monopoly of selling tobacco. The Government had issued licenses on condition that tobacco should be sold at fixed rate to none but the traders and merchants only.

**13. Mint :-** The Maratha Government issued licenses to private persons to start mint under their supervision like there were private mints at Nagothana, Mahuli, Nashik and so on. The Government punished the unlicensed mint holders and the persons minting debased coins.

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### **17.3. MAJOR INDUSTRIES UNDER THE MARATHAS**

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Although, there were no large scale industries as in modern era, whatever industries were there they can be classified as under:-

#### **1. Textile Industry**

a). Cotton :- Weaving skill was one of the basic supports of this textile industry and became one of the popular industries in itself under the Marathas. The weaving skill reached to the flourishing stage in India in ancient time itself and it led to develop cottage industry during the period of Marathas. Solapur, one of the important cities in the Maratha

country became a centre for weaving and textile industry. Solapur being close to Hyderabad, the Capital city of Nizam, it was easy to invite artisans like Momins, Khetris, Lingayat, Koshtis and Niralas from the territory of Nizam to be involved in the weaving and spinning industry at Solapur.

The next important factor required for this industry was raw cotton, which was produced in and around Solapur. The raw cotton was separated from its seeds and the lint was converted into manageable planks, which were used for spinning, the lint was turned into yarn and finally it was put, in a specific mechanism, and the process of weaving was carried out. Thus, this industry gave cotton to the people. But there is no detail statistical account available. It cannot be said with some degree of certainty that the artisans were paid on the basis of day, month or they were paid on the basis of numbers which they produced. Even, there is no idea about the number of artisans working in this industry,

But it is said that the cotton manufactured here came to be known as dhotis and saris, which were of better-quality cotton than the cotton manufactured at Chandwad and Nagpur the other industrial centres of the Marathas.

Another centre of textile industry was Poona, which was the capital of the Peshwas. Although hand loom industry was housed in Poona, that did not give good quality of cloth to people in the city. The cloth manufactured at Poona was very coarse and it had no demand from the people of the Court of Peshwa. Naturally, the officials and ministers of the court of Peshwa ordered their cloths from prominent other centers of the Marathas.

**b) Silk :-** This was one more industry functioned under the Marathas. It is said that Raghuji Naik encouraged and declared facilities to the Artisans from Gujarat, who were very skilled in this industry to settle in and around Nasik. Naturally, Yeola in Nasik became popular for this industry and created its monopoly in Silk industry in the period of Marathas. It is said that there was no silk weaving was under taken in Poona in the eighteenth century but due to the Peshwas, Poona became a thriving silk industry centre. As Raghuji Naik in Nashik, Angres encouraged the silk weavers to settle down at Chaul and provided them with several facilities. Naturally, Chaul became another important centre for silk industry. The next centre of silk industry was Paithan, in the area of Aurangabad. Paithani a very precious and attractive sari was named after the manufacturing place Paithan. Some people also called the same piece of cloth as Pitambari, which was a fascination of each woman during that period. One more silk industry centre came to prominence which was known Jalanpur or Jalana. But Jalanpur was not so popular as Paithan. Although, raw material for this industry was available in the area of Karnataka, it was also imported from Bengal, China and Persia. Then Mumbai was under the British it was a developed trading and industrial centre in the eighteenth century. Cotton, silk, dyeing and other processes of the textile industry were carried out in Mumbai under the leadership of Mukadam.

**c) Woollen:-** In addition to cotton and silk industries, there was one more very popular industry existed, which came to be Known as woollen industry. Satara, Shirwal, Indapur, Haveli, Dabhol, Chiplun, Karde and Junnar were centres of this industry. The raw material for this industry was furr or raw woollen. This was made available from sheep. The sheep-rearing had been the occupation of shepherds, who were in multitude in and around the centres mentioned above. The most important product of this industry was blanket popularly known as kamble in the local language.

Shepherds were involved in the weaving of blanket of woollen. They converted furr into soft bundles after shuffling and reshuffling it properly to enable to spin in yarn. The wool yarn was soaked in tamarind water and dried in the open air. After it was dried for some time, it was combed thoroughly. This process was repeated for two to three times and laid on a particular mechanism for the purpose of weaving a blanket. They required three logs of wood as 1. yava, a wood about three feet long, having diameter of six inches and with angular ends. 2. Otkula, a wood of one inch diameter and as long as the yava. 3. Niri, the third ken size wood covering yarn used to move from one side to another and helped to weave the blanket properly. The action of these logs of wood repeated in a particular succession and the blanket was woven. This blanket was a very useful and very durable piece of cloth used to wear it. This blanket was often compared with a shawl from Kashmir. Although this blanket was coarse in comparison with the shawl, it lasted long than the shawl.

**d) Dyeing or colouring :-** With cotton, silk and woollen industries, one more very important industry has been functioning in the capital city of Peshwa. A record of 1765-66 mentions that the dyeing industry in Poona was much more developed than any other industry in the capital. Shetya was the head of all dyers, he purchased all required materials from various neighbouring kingdoms and foreign countries. Shetya, was only empowered to fix the price and deal with the buyers of coloured cloths. However, there is no detail account available about the dyeing units, artisans working in the unit, their payment, price, and the material required for the dyeing industry, there is a reference in Rajyavyavaharkosh about the leather dyeing units, which were existed at every village. Thus, these were the different industries in textile under the Marathas.

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## 17. 4. METAL INDUSTRY

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This industry also functioned very well under the Marathas. For the convenience of the study the metal industry can be divided into the following categories of industry. 1. Iron Industry 2. Brass and Copper Industry 3. Gold and Silver Industry 4. Ordnance Factories. These industries are discussed as under :-

**1. Iron Industry :-** This was the most important industry during the period of Marathas. This industry was very much useful in various aspects of life. The implements and appliances of iron were used in each house for routine work, they were also needed in the agricultural processes and

in the warfare. They were as swords, daggers and lancers. The iron ore mines were found in the Kalaghat and Vajreshwari hills. The foundries for purification of iron and manufacturing appliances for domestic and also for export were located at various places. Indalwai in Nizamabad district of today's Andhra state was one of them. Moreland says that in 1660 the Dutch merchants on Coromandel were in a great need of pig iron, iron bands, iron bars and cannon balls. They wanted these weapons from the Marathas. Shivdon was one more gun manufacturing factory of Marathas indicated the high technical skill of export quality weapons.

In addition to these weapons, the use of iron in daily life was immense. There were some small articles like nails, horse and bullock shoes to be fitted to them. There were certain other articles needed to prepare saddles for horses and bullocks and buffaloes. Blacksmiths and ironsmiths were the artisans involved in this industry. These artisans needed a large anvil, some hammers, and a furnace to get all these tools prepared. These artisans used to charge twelve annas per horse or bullock for their shoes, that were used in warfare for various activities.

**2. Brass and Copper Industry :-** Under the Marathas this industry also flourished. The artisans involved in this industry were Tambat or coppersmith, who were invited to settle down at each and every village. Because they were the people who used to manufacture utensil and vessels required in daily life. Mostly, the people from rich class or sardars used to buy the utensils made of brass and copper. Prof. Gadgil in his socio-economic survey of Poona says that in addition to utensils, the people under the Marathas used to make small and show pieces of brass and copper like clippings and bangles. Even the Peshwas ordered their officers to trace coppersmiths in the neighboring countries and induce them to settle down in Poona, manufacture the utensils more to meet the growing demands of all economically well off people. Among the important centres of this industry Kalyan was a very popular centre for brass work.

A document of 1771-72 indicates that the artisans like Tambats and coppersmiths were also engaged in the manufacture of cannon balls of artillery needed in the war. One of such factories was in Poona. It seems that the coppersmiths were not in sufficient number in Poona, therefore once they were engaged in the factory, they were paid considerably good payment. In order to retain them the Peshwas granted them inami villages. The raw material for the industry of brass and copper was brought from Mumbai, which was under the British control.

### **3. Gold and Silver Industry :-**

Although, this industry was in existence at each village, it became an urban industry under the Peshwas. Parasnis and Vad say that a goldsmith family working at a village near Sangamner in the middle of the eighteenth century moved to Poona because the joint family of the goldsmith could earn only Rs. 50 to Rs. 200 a year, which was hardly

enough to manage the family. Thus, this industry became popular under the Peshwas but became an urban industry and met the demand of rich people. Gadgil says that in the first half of the eighteenth century when the Marathas achieved Zenith of power, urban industries in the western Deccan further developed in ornaments of gold and silver of most repute. Poona the de facto capital of the Marathas appeared to have been a predominantly consuming city. This city had several industries in the middle of the eighteenth century except for the karkhanas established by the Government. He further says that the industry for making thread of gold and silver was established in 1766-67 in Poona under the patronage of the Peshwas and declined the industry of gold and silver with downfall of the Marathas.

A document of 1771-72 says artisans known as goldsmiths were hereditarily and proficient manufacturers of ornaments and gives a long list of articles made of gold and silver as well as available in Poona. Among such popular products pendants, chains, chest ornaments, nose rings, rubies, wristlets, mangalsutras, bracelets and all ornaments of woman were important.

Bhave says that skilled goldsmiths were engaged in the work of embroidered ornaments which symbolized the prosperity of Peshwas and development of the industry.

In addition to ornaments of gold and silver, there were artisans who made idols and images of gods and goddesses of gold and silver to be installed in various temples. Anandibai, the wife of Raghobadada had the idols of Parvati, Ganpati, Sharda and other gods made of gold and silver and kept in her temple constructed in the palace of Anandvalli. Despite the idols of gods and goddesses, there are some references regarding the show pieces made of gold and silver and displayed to project glory of the family. This was done mostly by the rich people in Poona and other important towns. Among such show pieces images like peacock, tiger and various birds were noteworthy. The making of various idols and show pieces and ornaments led to develop the skill of artisans, who were invited from various corners and popular places to Poona and expanded the industry.

Due to the development of this industry, the Peshwas levied taxes on every goldsmith and silversmith. Bhave says that each shop of goldsmith or silversmith was charged Rs. 3 as tax per annum. The record of Khasgiwale and Vaidya and Tulsibagwale gives us a long list of ornaments and articles made of gold and silver in Poona during this period. Chafekar in his book 'Peshvayanchya Savalit' mentions that several ornaments of gold and silver with diamond were made during this period in Poona. Among them garlands of diamond, diamond pendants, bracelets of pearls, medals, red rubies, Panch rubies, nose rings and amulets were very popular among the people. The Peshwas invited the artisans who were proficient in the manufacture of such ornaments from the territories of Nizam, Bangalore, Mysore, Delhi and Agra.



**4. Ordnance Factories:-** Moreland says that the most remarkable form of industry under the Marathas was the Karkhanas. which the Marathas had established at their capital to manufacture and store arms and ammunition, robes, furniture, and ornaments. Although the Karkhanas did not always represent the general industrial development of the country but they certainly indicated the technical skills and organizational sophistication of the Maratha period.

It is said that the Marathas were dependent on the Europeans for war ammunitions up to the first decade of the eighteenth century. There are several evidences that Chhatrapati Shahu had contacted the British Governor of Mumbai for arms and ammunitions. Some other records show the Kanhoji Angre had written a letter to William Aislable, the Governor of Mumbai for supplying with some arms, ammunitions, gun powder and shots. Capton William Gordon, English envoy visited Maratha foundry at Poona in 1739 says that Peshwa Bajirao I founded the foundry for manufacturing arms and ammunition, which was the result of his own ambition of converting the Maratha raj into empire. In the course of creating the Maratha empire, hostilities had increased to the maximum height with the enemies and there was no sufficient supply of war ammunitions from the Europeans. Naturally, this situation led Bajirao to establish the above foundry at Poona, which proved very useful to the Marathas. In 1769, Peshwa Madhavrao established one more factory in Poona itself.

In addition to Poona, there were Several other centres where factories for manufacturing guns, bombshells and cannon balls were produced they were Ambegaon, Junnar, Nagothana, Kalyan and Purandhar. Bhave says that the factory established by Madhavrao was larger than other factories and employed more than one hundred and fifty workers in it. Although, there is no detail account available about their payment, but it is mentioned that the female slaves who were employed there were paid one rupee each for their overtime work Thevenot and Caveri say that during the eighteenth century, the Marathas had employed all forced labourers of artisans of different kinds in their factories of arms and ammunitions. Among these forced labourers, there were some coppersmiths also, who were paid variously as some were paid monthly wages and some other were granted inam villages to motivate the artisans to work hard with optimum skill and dexterity.

Moreover, factories producing guns and rockets also were established. Bagalkot and Jainabad were the important gun factories. Tin, pewter, iron and Babul wood required as raw material was acquired from the vicinity while iron was indented from Mumbai. In the same way rocket factory was established and run under the supervision of Bala Khanderao at Nasik. This factory produced around three hundred rockets per month and caused around Rs. five each. The size and shape of the rocket was like a tube of iron of eight to ten inches long and of two inches in diameter. There are several references that the Marathas used rockets of this factory in various wars. Despite working of several factories under Marathas at different places but they could not meet the requirements of

the Marathas and they were forced to import war ammunitions from the European Companies. A document of 1764-65 mentions that the Maratha Government under Madhavrao I had ordered the British in Mumbai to send thirty thousand cannonballs to be used in the war.

Thus, the ordnance factories of Marathas were set up and functioned with the help of slaves and forced labourers at various places, which reveal the skill and the technique of the Marathas in this field.

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## 17.5 SHIP-BUILDING INDUSTRY

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This was one of the biggest urban industries functioning under the Marathas. In the seventeenth century, in the eastern Deccan, places like Narasapur and Masulipatanam became very popular centres of shipbuilding. Because, the raw materials like timber, iron and other necessary items were found in abundant number there. The Hindus, Muslims and Portuguese people used these centres to build their ships, which were large as well as durable and could carry the weight of six hundred tons each. In the same way, in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Kalyan and Bhiwandi were the most popular ship building centres in the western Deccan. These centres came to prominence due to the availability of raw material in and around of those centres. Chhatrapati Shivaji encouraged this industry to a great extent in order to build up his naval and mercantile fleet. S.N. Sen says that Shivaji had around four hundred ships of various types. They were organised into two squadrons of two hundred vessels. Chhatrapati Shivaji also had a very strong mercantile fleet that plied between his various ports to the Malabar coast then to the far-off coastal towns of Arabia. S. N. Sen further says that it is not very much clear whether the trade between these centres was carried out by the Marathas or simply Chhatrapati Shivaji had leased out his ships and boats to traders. Although, no detail information regarding the organisation of this industry is available, the tradition of ship-building of Marathas was carried into the subsequent century.

Agaskar says that in addition to Kalyan and Bhivandi the other centres of ship building also were there as Thana, Alibag, Vijaydurg, Suvarnadurg, and Malvan. Artisans like Kolis, carpenters and several selves were employed to build ships and boats. Mahadev, one of the ships built at the shipyard of Suvarnadurg was a popular warship of Marathas. In order to enhance this industry, the Peshwa Government extended several facilities to the ship-owners as exemption from octroi when the ship was loaded with household commodities and forced free service to the Government. Naturally, this led to flourish the industry under the Marathas.

Apte says that during the period of Marathas, the families of Parsis and Wadias were known as master shipbuilders, who used to build ships for the Mercantile Marine and Indian Navy as well as for the East India Company on the models of European countries. Among the ships built by them were Bunkinghampshire, Seal and Castle were well known, Potdar says that along with the Parsi families of Mumbai, there were Parsis from

Surat, who also built several boats which were light, pliant and quick in movement mostly used for coastal traffic. Thus, this industry was also flourished under the Marathas.

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## 17. 6. OTHER INDUSTRIES UNDER THE MARATHAS

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There were several handicrafts and cottage industries functioned during the Marathas. Among such industries woodwork, Horn work, ivory work, leather and saddle, making industry, rope making, pottery, Jaggery, oil-mill, building industry, fishery, salt making, Liquor and paper making industries were well known industries. These industries are explained as under:-

**1. Wood work:-** This handicraft was in great demand in this period. The woodwork included furniture, carts, carriages, palanquins and chariot of various stories. This industry developed due to nobles, and feudal lords, who needed the woodwork mentioned above and constructed wooden palaces which had different types of wooden designs and carving on the sides and doors. Among the popular wood carved palaces and mansions Shanivarwada, spacious houses like Shinde, Holkar, Ghorpade and Hingne's mansion were well known. The raw material like timber and teak woods brought from Savalya Ghat, Kalyan, Bhiwandi and the jungle of Jawhar.

**2. Horn work :-** The hornwork of different kinds like card trays, inkstands, snuffboxes, cups, idols, bulbs, deer, cobras, combs, chains and variety of animals were very popular among the wealthy people. Carpenters used to do this work from the bison's horn imported from Malbar. There were several popular centres for this work which were Malvan, Rajapur Vijaydurg, working since centuries together.

**3. Ivory work :-** Another handicraft developed into an industry was the ivory work. The fashion to use the ivory comb led to Audutrao Dhandhar Palkar to establish a factory at Poona. The popularity of this ivory work also pressurized Abaji Ava, a carpenter to open one more factory in Poona itself - during the period of Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao. The raw material for this industry constituted ivory, which was imported from Mumbai. But there is no detail account available regarding the total number of artisans working in the industry and the remuneration paid them.

**4 . Leather Industry:-** This was one of the handicrafts, spread throughout the Maratha country. Shoemakers and cobblers, traditional artisans were involved in this handicraft. They prepared shoes, saddles, leather buckets and several other articles required by cultivators in the process of agriculture. It is said that with cobblers, Jingers also entered in this handicraft, which became an industry due to crushing demand of saddles in wars. Chafekar says that due to the popularity of this industry the Government began to tax the industry.

**5. Rope making :-** Rope making was one of the supplementary works to agriculture. One of the village community groups involved in this industry. This group prepared several items required for agriculture, war and specially in cavalry to tie or rein horses , bullocks and all tamed animals . The raw material required for this industry was jute and fibres recovered from the flax tree and ghaypat as well as coirs of coconuts. When the demand for various articles like ropes increased, the handicraft was converted into industry with the development of a particular technique of rope making. The Maratha Government also taxed this industry as other industries.

**6 Jaggery making :-** This was one of the rural industries based on the agricultural product sugarcane as its raw material . The area popular for sugarcane production was all western ghat of today's western Maharashtra as Sangli, Kolhapur, Satara , Poona , Solapur and Ahmednagar. Jaggery making had been a seasonal industry, worked with a crusher of sugarcane. Sugarcane juice after boiling in an open large pan was solidified into lumps of several sizes and shapes, known as jaggery. Government taxed this industry and received the tax in kind means jaggery .

**7 Oil Mill :-** Oil mill had been one of the basic cottage industries , which was popularly known as Telghana in the local language. The people involved in this factory came to be known as Telis or oilmen. Groundnut, sesame , gingili, flax coconut , sunflower, cottonseeds, and castor seeds were crushed for converting them into oil of various types and category. Oil mill had been a wooden cylindrical mechanism run with the energy of a bullock as sugarcane crusher. This oil mill also had been spread throughout the kingdom and was charged Rs. five to seven as tax to each unit per annum by the Government. Solapur, Barsi, Junnar and Poona were popular for oil mill productions.

**8 Fishery :-** This had been one of the oldest sources of survival for coastal people. Ports like Kalyan, Bhivandi, Desai, Salsette, Bassein, Roha, Ashti, Pen, Panvel and Nagothane were centres of fishery. Fishermen popularly known as Kolis were involved in this industry. They after the monsoon used to go in deep sea, for fishing in their boats of various types, they carried with them dugouts, plank -built boat, machwa, nets and used old and crude method for fishing. Although, the industry was seasonal, the Government imposed taxes as other industries.

**9. Salt making :-** This was the next most oldest industry prevailed under the Marathas and catered one of the basic needs of people . The ports on the seashore like Nagothane, Kalwe, Bassein, Turbe, Ghodbundar, Thana, Rajapur, Pen, Panvel, Haveli, Dabhol, Chiplun and several other places were the centres of salt manufacture. The process of salt -manufacturing has been very simple and natural. The people engaged in this process came to be known as Kolis and Agaris, used to prepare a salt pan on the sea shore in order to flow in the sea water during the time of high tide, dried the water in the pan to reduce it to salt and collected it as and when it was feasible.

The Government had levied taxes as one of the sources of income. In order to get much income and tax the Government leased out several salt pans to private individuals as salt farm at Mauje Bhoidar in Ghodbunder had been granted to a person from Thane on the condition of payment of seven hundred khandies of salt per annum. To enhance the production of salt to increase its export, the Peshwa Government had announced several concessions to the salt manufacturers as low tax, exemption from the tax as well as no tax on its transport in the internal market.

**10. Liquor industry (Brewery) :-** Although, this has been very old industry in the country, the Marathas restricted brewing liquor to license holder only. Sarkar says this policy of the Peshwas was influenced by their religious tenets and no any other reason was responsible for the same. The Bhandaris and Kolis were the people permitted to distil liquor for their consumption as well as to the use of Christians, armed forces and European people.

Sugar candy, mauva, coconut and palm trees were used as raw material for brewing liquor. Although, the Marathas taxed this industry as Re. one each coconut tree per annum, could not collect considerable taxes due to limited production and consumption of liquor.

**11. Paper Industry :-** This was one more industry functioning under the Marathas. Junnar and Daulatabad were the important centres of paper manufacturing industry in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But the Junnar paper factory was shifted to Poona for the convenience of transport and functioning of the factory. Even then the Maratha paper industry could not withstand the competition posed by the European paper industries. Thus, the Maratha period had these and many other handicrafts, cottage and small scale industries.

#### **Check your Progress :-**

1. Enumerate the characteristics of industries under the Marathas.
2. Examine briefly the handicrafts and cottage industries prevailed during the period of Marathas.
3. Assess the cotton industry working under the Marathas.
4. Bring out the important centres of the silk and woollen industries during the period of Marathas.
5. Discuss briefly the iron industry and its importance under the Marathas.
6. What were the factors that led to develop the Brass, Copper, Silver and Gold industries under the Peshwa Government?
7. Give a brief account of Ordnance factories of the Marathas.
8. Describe the shipbuilding industry during the period of Marathas.

9. Give an account of Leather, Jaggery, Oil mill and Fishing industries under the Marathas.
10. Analyse the contribution of salt industry, liquor industry and paper industries to the economic development of Marathas .

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## 17.7. SUMMARY

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There were several features of industry under the Marathas as Maratha industries were handicraft and cottage industries , village was the unit of industrial organisation , it maintained the co-relation between caste and occupation , family was the training centre for those industries , balance between demand and supply was maintained , there was no fluctuation and change in the fashion and design of either cloth or jewellery, Migration of artisans took place, because there were no sufficient artisans available locally . Government paid compensation to merchants and traders for their losses sustained in fire or flood, Government kept control on several industries as diamond industry at Thasare , Bundelkhand and , Chanderi. It also had strict control on salt industry as well as to encourage the production of this industry, some concessions were sanctioned. They were as exemption to workers in house taxes, free passes to transport salt and granted salt manufactories to people like Sheik Daud, Sheik Hasan of Thane. The next industry under the strict superintendence of the Government was liquor industry, Tobacco industry, and the Mint.

There were some major industries under the Marathas as Textile industry, Metal industry and Ship- building industry. For the convenience of study the textile industry was divided into cotton, silk, woolen and dyeing industries. Cotton industry was very popular in and around Solapur area because the raw material required for this industry was available there. Moreover, artisans were easily imported from the territory of Nizam. There were other centres of this industry as Nagpur, Paithan and Poona. The industry of silk was very popular at Chaul and Yeola in Nasik. Raghuji Naik encouraged the silk industry at Nasik, while Angre boosted the same industry at Chaul. The third unit of textile industry was woolen, which was very popular in today's western Maharashtra like Sangli, Satara, Shirval, Indapur and Junnar because the felt or fur or wool the raw material was available there in abundant quantity. The last unit was dyeing industry which developed in Poona only. Because raw material and sale of coloured cloths took place on large scale in Poona.

The next major industry was the metal industry in which Iron, Copper & Brass, Silver and Gold and Ordnance factory were important units. Iron industry was the basic industry needed at each village, warfare and in agricultural process it was working as a cottage industry. Brass and copper industry also flourished because utensils and vessels of Brass were being used. Even copper was utilised in the manufacture of bombs and rockets to be used in warfare. Silver and Gold industry developed due to Peshwa only because the royal families, nobels, sardars and rich



people encouraged this industry. Various articles, show pieces, gods, goddess and jewellery were made of silver and gold. Artisans from various places were imported for this industry. Ordnance factories were very important because they manufactured arms and ammunition to be used in the war. The Marathas were to import arms and gun powder, cannon ball and shots from the European companies but these companies never used to send them on time to the Marathas. This led Bajirao I and Madhavrao I to establish ordnance factories at Poona, Ambegaon, Kalyan, Nagothana and Nasik, where rocket factory functioned round the clock and produced 270 rockets a month.

The next and very important industry was ship-building which required teak wood. Kalyan, Bhiwandi, Shahapur area had thick jungle of the same wood. Therefore, the centres like Rajapur, Nagothane, Kalyan, Mumbai developed to a large extent and ships of world rank were built there. Apart from these industries, there were several other industries functioning under the Marathas as Wood work, Horn work, Ivory work, Leather industry, rope making industry, Jaggery making, Fishery, salt making, Liquor industry and paper industry. Thus, the Maratha period had these and other industries under them.

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## 17. 8. QUESTIONS

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1. Assess the general features and characteristics of industries under the Marathas.
2. Give an account of textile industry during the period of Marathas
3. What were the different metal industries existing during the period of Marathas? What role did the ordnance factories play in the warfare during the period of Marathas ?
4. Write a detailed note on the ship-building industry under the Marathas.
5. Analyse the role of handicrafts and cottage industries in the life under the Marathas.

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## 17.9. ADDITIONAL READINGS

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1. Bhave , Peshwekalin Maharashtra.
2. Chafekar , Peshwaichya Sawalit
3. Agaskar, Early History of the Bombay Docks and Ship-building, Potdar commemoration volume .
4. Apte, History of Maratha Navy and Merchantship.



## TRADE AND COMMERCE

### Unit Structure

- 18.0. Objectives.
- 18.1. Introduction.
- 18.2. Commodities of trade.
- 18.3. Markets.
- 18.4. Transport and communication .
- 18.5. Means of transport and communication.
- 18.6. Security of trade and commerce.
- 18.7. Water route transport and communication.
- 18.8. Problems in trade and commerce.
- 18.9. Passport.
- 18.10. Ghatmarga transport and communication.
- 18.11 Summary.
- 18.12 Questions.
- 18.13 Additional Readings.

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### 18.0. OBJECTIVES:

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After the completion of this unit the student will be able to

1. explain the commodities of trade and commerce during the period of Marathas.
2. understand markets, Sete- Mahajan and development of Markets under the Marathas.
3. Know the security measures of markets or Peths under the Marathas.
4. grasp the highways used for transport and communication under the Marathas.
5. comprehend the means and modes of transport and communication.
6. understand security measures of trade & commerce.

7. explain the water routes of trade and commerce.
8. know the problems in Trade and commerce under the Marathas.
9. grasp the idea of passport and license for transport and communication.
10. comprehend the Ghatmarg transport and communication.

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## 18.1. INTRODUCTION

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Trade involves the sale, transfer and exchange of goods and services. It covers buying and selling activities of goods. Trade means the voluntary exchange of goods and services, the exchange may take place between two parties or it may happen among more than two parties. During the Maratha period trade was simple, it was in the form of barter system i.e. exchange of goods for goods and services only. Naturally, trade during the Marathas was not so complicated as today. Trading activities have been carried out from the time immemorial for the satisfaction of human wants. These activities under the Marathas were not profit making activities, but considered as socio-economic activities, which helped the people to survive and substitute in a better way. The Marathas had the home trade, wholesale trade, retail trade, foreign trade, import trade, export trade, and aid-to-trade. Aid-to-trade means the auxiliary activities which made trade easy and possible without these activities national or international trade would have not been possible and could have been local trade only.

Commerce during the period of Marathas dealt with distribution part of trade i.e. the movement of goods from the place of production to the place of consumption and removed all difficulties or hindrances in the movement of the goods. These hindrances were as the hindrance of person, means buyer, because the principle of demand and supply was balanced, the hindrance of finance was not in existence because either village community or Government financed it, the hindrance of place, time and risk also did not exist because protection was extended by the Government. Thus, the commerce under the Marathas as Evelyn Thomas says dealt with buying and selling of goods, the exchange of commodities and the distribution of finished products. The trade and commerce under the Marathas can be studied with the help of the following points.

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## 18.2. COMMODITIES OF TRADE

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Although, there were several articles which were sold and purchased, some of the most important were as under :-

**1. Foodgrains :-** The foodgrains produced, sold and consumed were wheat, mung, peas, til, nachna, maize, vama, paddy, gram, masur, beans, arhar, pulses and rice of different varieties. Despite this the British, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Muslims and the Persian merchants brought different kinds of foodgrains to various trading centres during this period, which were sold and purchased here.

**2. Fruits and other Edibles:-** Among the fruits consumed the most were watermelons, coconuts, jack- fruits, sugarcane, lemon, plantains, mangoes, almonds, vegetables, cashewnuts, betel-nuts, betel- leaves, milk, fish and butter. They were regularly brought to trading centres and sold there.

**3. Spices:-** In the spices nutmeg, asafetida, cloves, vermillion, gallnut, mace, red lead, garlic, onion, walnut, ambergis, pepper, saffron, camphor, cardamom, turmeric, mercury, jaggery, sugar- candy, molasses, ginger, red pepper, sandal, gopichandan, scented oils, honey, ghee and coconuts were there. They were brought to the centres for sale and purchase.

**4. Clothes & cloth pieces:-** The cloth pieces brought to markets were of cotton, silk and woolen. Among such pieces of them were shawls, chints, pasodi, blankets, godhadi, dhotis, sarees, tafta, chinatafta, sela, kocki, mahaban, mungipaten, musadar, patar, Mahamudi, muslin, kad, pitambar, sakhalad, coarse cloth, purtakali and ghati. The contemporary records show that the above cloth pieces were brought from Telangana, Malbar, Vidarbha, Gujarat, Bengal, Ayodhya and Mysore.

**5. Animals:-** with the above articles, there were some animals brought and sold in the market. They were horses, bullocks, buffaloes and sheep.

**6. Miscellaneous Articles:-** Among this category the commodities of trade were small boats, shoes, combs, winnowing fans, wooden boxes, jute, soaps, carts, cots, lanterns, plates, ropes, lead and copper.

**7. Slaves:-** During this period slaves as male and female were brought to various centres of trade and commerce. Despite, these commodities, there were several other articles in trade.

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### 18.3. MARKETS

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There were markets in villages as well as in towns, commodities from within and outside were brought to such markets. The articles the East India Company brought to market were cloth rashes, broad-cloth, scarlet, seedlack, sticklack, quick-silver, tin , guns . gun powder, iron , lead, copper, course cloth. The Portuguese Company supplied fine cloth while the Dutch Company supplied copper, which was purified in Japan and shifted to India. Naturally, commodities brought from outside were other than foodgrain. The local and the neighbouring people brought their foodgrain to the market, exchanged them with the available and needed commodities. It is said that there used to be some permanent shops which used to deal with commodities from outside, whereas locals mostly brought their foodgrains in which items like butter, betelnuts and leaves, fruits, vegetables, coconuts , meat and several other commodities were there . The merchants from outside halted there for one night and moved to another place for the same purpose. This was known as the weekly market, which supplied the commodities needed in daily life. The Patil was to look after the village market.

**1. Shete-Mahajan :-** In addition to the weekly market in each village , there was a market at kasba which was bigger and used to be of many shops than the village market . Generally, at kasba , shops were of wine dealers , tailors , weavers , cloth merchants, cobblers or shoemakers, vegetable dealers and oil pressers . As Patil was responsible for weekly market Sete was responsible for the maintenance and development of the peth and kasba market. The State Government paid Shete for their responsibilities and services rendered towards the development of the market. Shete had to induce the dealers to develop the market . He was empowered to recover some nominal fees from the shopkeepers, exercised some powers of police and magistrate , attended the meetings of the village council and advise them in any matter concerning development of the village , kasba and peth . Shete was a mirasdar of the peth, He had house in the peth , managed the peth , kept upto date record of the market and helped Ghatpandes in their work of collection of octroi.

**2. Development of Market :-** under the Marathas the development and expansion of Peth or Market mostly depended on the Government . The Maratha rulers very carefully and considering all aspects developed new areas by establishing new peths or markets. For example, in 1657, Jijabai, the mother of Chhatrapati Shivaji issued a sanad to establish a peth in her name at Pasan.

The officer, who received the sanad, was to enjoy all rights and powers of the market as Kotwalki, Pansarkhi, Bidwaipan, Mahajanpan and Shetepan, which were explained in detail in the Sanad. During the period of Marathas, Peth at Audh and powers enjoyed by the Sete over there treated as role model. The Government, therefore issued orders to the concerned officials to grant all perquisites to the Shetes of new Jijapur peth , Malkapur peth , Paraspura peth , and Vithapura peth which were enjoyed by the Sete of Audh and extend them all sort of cooperation and security as and when they sought. The net result of such order was that maximum traders and shop holders and artisans rushed to those peths and developed them within a short span of time . As a matter of fact, the Sete used to keep the record of the peth , in which the names and nature of the shops were recorded . New shops, merchants and artisans often increased the list of the market . But Sete made a distinction between new shops and old shops, mirashi shops and upari shops or the professionals and artisans .

**3 . Security of Market or Peth :-** The development and spread of market or peth depended upon the security of the area or the place where the market or peth was located. There occurred warfares frequently and no area was ultimately safe. This fact discouraged the shopholders and traders to develop a particular area the optimum because that attracted enemies and their attacks . Keeping this situation in mind, every official tried to reassure the traders and merchants for the safety of their shop, commodities and lives . In connection with kasba at Sirala, Chandrarao More of Jawali had announced that if any merchant or trader at Sirala lost even their piece of hemp , he would compensate them with a chain of

gold and silver -double in number. Ramchadrant Amatya notes that Chhatrapati Shivaji was well aware about all odds . He was the king of vision, he wanted to develop markets in his dominion. In order to achieve those goals , he formed his commercial policy in such away that he granted concessions , exemptions to merchants, traders and artisans as well as maintained law and order in his kingdom. Naturally, markets were developed and prosperity reigned in his kingdom. Amatya further says that Chhatrapati Shivaji treated all merchants as the ornaments of his kingdom and the glory of the king . The goods and commodities which were not produced and available , they were brought from outside by merchants and the kingdom was enriched. The merchants and the traders used to help the king in the hours of difficulty, the capital was made available and calamities were averted many times. Shivaji, therefore, tried to motivate the merchants and artisans to settle down in his dominion. He never disregarded,disrespected and punished them severely but protected them for the benefit of development of market and prosperity of his kingdom .

Chhatrapati Shivaji was well aware about the intention of all European Companies trading with his kingdom. In order to foil their objectives of territorial expansion and proselytization. Shivaji instructed his officials and the people that the contact of Europeans and the Arab merchants should be confined to trade and commerce only. They should neither be given any place in interior part to settle down, nor be allowed to sea forts and important well as secret places in the kingdom. If at all, it is necessary, the place for factory of Europeans can be given at low-lying area or it should be within the range and control from the neighboring town or locality to reach it in the time of eventuality to avoid any danger . Thus, the king had taken up such several precautions while developing trade and commerce under him.

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## 18.4. TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

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It was carried out by several routes and means under the Marathas. There were major two routes as 1. Land route 2. water route. The Marathas connected Poona through several land routes for transport and communication. Among them some of the important land routes known as highways were used for long transport and communication. They were as under:-

**1. Poona to Agra :-** The first highway that was connected with several important centres as Aurangabad, Ajanta, Burhanpur Sironj, Narvar , Gwalior and Dabalpur . This route proved profitable in trade and commerce and prospered the Marathas kingdom.

**2 Mumbai to Panvel :-** The second highway came to prominence under the Marathas was Mumbai to Panvel . This road had important centres as Kalyan, Badlapur , Dahiwadi and Talegaon. This was the most secured and safe route for trade and commerce



3. **Poona and Shrirangapattam:-** The third highway between Poona and Shrirangapattam was the longest route under the Marathas. The important places for trade and commerce on this highway were Pandharpur, Vijapur, Jat, Galgale, Bagalkot, Anaji, Harihar, Chitradurgashire and Nammangal.

4. **Poona to Bhaganagar:-** was the fourth highway, had other places of importance between Poona and Bhaganagar were Supe, Baramati, Tuljapur Udgir, Bhalki, Bidar and Golconda.

5. **Poona to Konkan :-** The fifth highway from Poona to Konkan was through several passes, because, Konkan area had many uphill and mountains, one of the important and difficult passes was the Borghat pass. Despite, these highways, there were some short routes used for internal transport and communication, they were as:-

6. **Poona to Nasik:-** This road connected to the important and popular places like Bhogpur Peth, Khed, Chakan, Bosari, and Bramapuri, between Poona and Nasik.

7. **Poona to Kolhapur:-** Kolhapur had been a popular place for its market as well as a religious centre. Naturally, the route established linkage with Walwe, Pusevali and Nhavi and increased the affluency of the Marathas.

8. **Poona to Pandharpur:-** The important route brought in contact the trading centres like Mandve, Theur, Patas, Sangwi and Akluj.

9. **Poona to Satara:-** This was the road brought in touch with Saswad, the place where the Peshwas lived before they shifted to Shanivarwada, Poona. The other places were Jejuri, Dahigao and Mahuti.

10. **Poona to Aurangabad:-** The places brought in net on this route were Koregaon, Ranjangaon, Ghodnadi, Jatagaon, Ahmednagar, and Kayegaontake. This route proved very useful for transporting foodgrains and other commodities of cash and commerce.

11. **Poona to Nagpur :-** route covered Aurangabad, Dahadi, Jafrabad, Balapur, and Alajpur.

12. **Poona to Dharur:-** This route lays through the centres like Theur, Walvi, Adalgaon, Bhosegaon, Singavi, Dhanora, Barsi, Pangaon, Pedgaon, Beed and Kage. This road connected major parts of today's Marathwada with the de facto capital city of the Marathas.

13. There were some other routes as Kalyan to Aurangabad, which connected Kalyan, Murbad, Umbarpada, Taloli pass, Malsaj, Pimpalgaon and Junner. The next was from Junnar to Ahmednagar

14 Poona was connected to Solapur also, where cotton weaving and spinning industry had flourished. Uralikanchan, Belsar, Jejuri, Pandharpur, Banhoolgaon and Singoli were other important places on this route. Poona was connected to Surat and Gujrat also.

Despite these highways and routes connecting Poona, Satara and Kolhapur there were some other passes which were used as roads for transport and communication. These passes were mostly in Konkan area of the kingdom. These passes were like Borghat pass, Kesari pass, Diva pass and Karjat pass. Moreover, the various campaigns of Peshwas formed new routes through different territories as Peshwas campaign to Mysore created a totally different route through Gadag, nagmangal and Krishna river. Bhave says that in 1735, Radhabai went on pilgrimage of Mathura while Saraswatibai, the wife of Gopalrao Patwardhan went to Kashi from Miraj, had adopted different routes to Kashi.

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## 18.5. MEANS OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

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The period of Marathas was not so advanced as today in the vehicular transport. It had some basic traditional means of transport as 1. Bullocks 2. Buffaloes 3. Camels 4. Elephants 5. Palanquins and 6 Bullock carts. These animals were supplied by some professionals, who were Lamans, Banjaras, Naiks and Chavans. It is said that these communities used to maintain thousands of such animals. Pamaji Naik, Govind Naik and Bhuke brothers of Chavan community owned fifteen thousands of bullocks, which were used to transport goods and luggage from one place to another.

Despite these animals, carts driven by them, used to shift the goods from one place to various other places. Chafekar says that no carts were useful in some parts of the kingdom, because they were hilly areas and there were no good roads suitable to ply carts. Naturally, animals like bullocks, horses and buffaloes were used to transport goods and luggage. Bhave says that the Peshwas provided several carts to Govind Patwardhan to shift his household luggage from Miraj to Mangalvedhe. It means carts were the important means for transport while chariot was used to carry the noble people from place to place. In addition to these means palanquin and elephants were used by royal people for their own travel. Bhave further says that Peshwa Mahadevrao used to travel on elephant from Poona to Wai as and when it was required as well as he also went from Poona to Nasik on elephant to see his ailing mother over there.

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## 18.6. SECURITY OF TRADE AND COMMERCE

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The Maratha Government had taken care of trade and commerce in transition. The Government paid attention towards repair of roads regularly.

1. S.N. Sen says that in 1783-84 the Maratha Government had ordered the Mamlatdar Shivner to repair the Shivner -Malsej road regularly. In the same way the zakat Kamvisdar of the same Pargana was informed to provide sufficient funds and keep close watch on the trade practices in Malsej pass.

2. Bhave says that in order to make trade safe and protected, the Peshwa Nanasahab ordered to plant trees on both sides of highway.
3. The next facility which was created for security of trade and commerce was the construction of Dharamshalas for resting and halting at the difficult roads and the passes. There were several open wells constructed along the roads for the convenience of traders and merchants.
4. The Maratha Government also provided coolies with their carts to help traders on the road. Such coolies were paid two annas each and each bullock was paid four annas if it was used for trade and commerce.
5. Dr. Hove says that the Marathas opened chaukies on important highways and kept guards to protect traders from untoward incidents. It should not be construed that the trade on highways was unsafe. But as a precautionary measure the guards were posted there.

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### **18.7. WATER ROUTE TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION**

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During this period water routes proved very useful for transport and communication. Hove says that ferry boats were used for crossing big rivers in Konkan region because rivers like Nagothana, Pen, Bankot and Mahim were very big and there were no other means to cross them. These boats could carry around 100 to 123 people in one trip. The traders and merchants used river routes for internal trade and sea routes for external trade i.e. import and export of their goods. They had trade contacts with Persian ports like Bassara, Muscat and Ormuz, all important trading centres of Europe, China, Cape of Good Hope, Madagascar, Coromandel isles Mozambique and ports on the Eastern Africa. The Marathas also used their ports or centres like Surat Broach, Ahmood, Jambulsar, Belapur, Kalyan, Nagothana, Rajapur, Alibag, and Bassein for trade and commerce.

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### **18.8. PROBLEMS IN TRADE AND COMMERCE**

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The trade whether it was through land route or water route was not always safe. There were several factors which disrupted the trade and commerce and led to damage and loss to the traders irretrievably. Among such factors raids, wars, piracy and robbery were carried out by enemies. In 1763-64 Nizam had attacked Poona, looted Junnar, Ambalapur, and Hate and destructed the trade and commerce totally. In 1759-60, Kolis in and around Kalyan looted traders in that area. Although, the Government assured the traders about the safety and security but they traders could not recover the loss caused for many years. The next factor was a warfare. The Marathas had to fight with the British because of their imperialistic tendencies and causing losses to the trade of Marathas deliberately. These wars came to be known as the Anglo-Maratha wars which were fought in 1. 1774-75, 2. 1778-79, 3. 1780-81. The Marathas sustained much loss in their trade and commerce. Among the pirates Arabs and Portuguese were very dangerous and pirated the Maratha trade in the deep waters of the Arabian sea. Hamilton has given a

detailed description of piracy in the waters of Bassein, Warai, Shirgaon, Thane, Kolaba, Vijaydurg, Khanderi and Malvan. He further says that although, the Marathas stationed their navy in the waters, the Arabs and European pirates based at Malvan, maintained ships of one hundred fifty tons and carried out piracy without notice to Maratha navy at Malvan port. In the same way the robbers on the land routes used to rob traders and merchants. The trade robbery at Damrule, Burhanpur and Aurangabad were very dreaded and incurred much loss to the trade and commerce of the Marathas.

Carre, a French traveller, who travelled India and came to Deccan between 1672 and 1674 says that journey either by sea route or land route had several dangers and difficulties. The sea journey had the constant fear of Malbar pirates while land route journey was haunted by raids of Siddi and other coastal princes. Tavernier another European traveler says that one who wanted to travel through the Konkan area should take along twenty to thirty armed men with bows and arrows who could pace with the carriers of his palanquin or cart or chariot. factory records say that the ways and passes unsafe and dangerous because the thieves and inland Rajas plundered the merchants and travellers. Thevenot, one more foreign traveller says that he always hired two peons while in travel, who were well equipped with swords, dagger, bow, musket and lance. Careri another traveller also opined that there was no safe travel in some parts of India. The East India Company officials used to hire some soldiers to protect their persons and property in the travel.

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## **18.9. PASSPORT**

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License, permit or passport had been a source of income during this period. Although, the idea of license brought to India by the Portuguese, it was used and practiced by almost all rulers during this period. License was purchased by travellers as a permission to enter the territories for various purposes and generally sought the warranty of his security. Abbe Carre mentions that when he travelled in Deccan and Konkan region, he had purchased such passport from the officials of the king at upper Cheul. He travelled throughout the kingdom of Chhatrapati Shivaji without any danger and apprehension. Abbe Carre travelled through almost all ports and forts, he remembers his contact with the Maratha officials at Cheul, Rajapur, Kalvan and Sangameshwar very well.

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## **18.10. GHATMARGA TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION**

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In addition to land route and sea route, Ghat route was used for transport and communication, The western part of the Maratha kingdom or Maharashtra occupied by the ranges of Sahyadri mountain came to be known as the western Ghats. These Sahyadri ranges formed the western border of the Deccan and are around one thousand miles in length. It also gave birth to several important passes. These passes came to be known as 1. Thal pass 2. Pimpri pass 3. Bhore or Khandala pass 4. Par

pass 5. Amba pass 6. Phonda pass 7. Amboli pass and 8. Nana pass. These passes made transport and communication easier between Junnar and Konkan, Mumbai and Poona, Ratnagiri and Kolhapur, and between Poona and Thana.

Along with these passes, there were several pathways which had chaukis at each pathway and ghat. These chaukis were assigned the duties of supervision on the trade and commerce through the passes and collect cess or octroi from the traders. Ghatpande was the hereditary officer in charge appointed by the king at each ghat for maintenance and patrolling the trade and commerce through the ghat. The Ghatpande was assisted by his subordinate officers as Patki, Dangi, Pansare, Modvi and Metkari in various responsibilities at the chauki. Apart from these officials, there were several security guards, who were known as Gujaras. These guards escorted the traders and merchants from one ghat to another and they were allowed to charge some nominal fees from one to twelve rukas depending on the goods transported by the traders and merchants. These guards were to submit the account of the charges or fees they collected to ghatpande every month after deducting their scheduled charges for themselves. Otherwise, the Government issued the warning and punished them subsequently. Despite this arrangement at the ghat chauki, the king appointed a special officer to check whether the traders and merchants were treated properly by ghatpande or his officials and facilitate the smooth collection of tolls through the ghats and pathways. Chhatrapati Shivaji encouraged trade in his kingdom, he encouraged the trade of the East India Company as per his level best.

However, Factory Records say that the traders in 1663-65 under the Marathas were in confused state of mind. This was due to the fact that Shivaji had challenged the Adilshahi and Mughal powers in the country. Shivaji's Afzal Khan episode not only gave a death blow to the Adilshahi power in the Deccan but also raised the prestige of Shivaji in the eyes of the traders and merchants. Shivaji in another incident had humbled Shahista Khan totally in 1663. Bernier, an European traveller says that these two incidents generated prestige of the Maratha ruler.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS :-**

1. Describe the commodities in trade during the period of Marathas.
2. Explain the important markets under the Marathas.
3. What measures did the Marathas undertake for the safety and security of the Markets or Peths ?
4. Explain the major highways used to carry the trade and commerce under the Marathas.
5. What were the major means and modes of transport and communication ?

6. What were the measures the Marathas used for security of trade in transition?
7. Explain the problems in water route Transport and Communication.
8. Explain passport as a safety measure in the transport and communication.
9. Discuss the Ghatmarg transport and communication under the Marathas.

## 18. 11. SUMMARY

Trade involves the sale, transfer and exchange of goods. It covers buying and selling activities of good. Trade means the voluntary exchange of goods and services. The exchange of goods may take place between two or more than two parties. Under the Marathas , the trade was very simple ,it was carried out in the form of barter system i. e. exchange of goods for goods only. They were not profit making but socio-economic activities , helped live in a better way . Under the Marathas trade of various types was carried out. Commerce during the period dealt with movement of goods from its place of production to the place of consumption, without any major risk.

There were a number of articles traded or exchanged for articles only. They were food grains, fruits, edibles, spices, clothes and cloth pieces, animals, miscellaneous articles and slaves. These commodities were sold or purchased in the markets of Villages as well as towns. Every village had weekly market, in which not the above commodities from within the Kingdom but also foreign articles were brought and sold. Sete- Mahajan was the official appointed by the Government to look after the Law and order of the market or Peth. He in return was empowered to recover some sanctioned fees from the traders and merchants. He also collected octroi from the traders assembled there. There was the responsibility of the Government to develop one of the places as market or Peth. Shivaji had developed a market at Pasan in the name of his mother Jijabai It was seen that whether the place was secure or came in the range of attack of the enemy, i.e. the security of the place was given the first priority while developing the market.

During this period, there were several highways for transport and communication. They were 1. Poona to Agra, 2. Panvel to Mumbai through Kalyan 3. Poona to Shrirangapattam 4. Poona to Baganagar 5. Poona to Konkan 6. Poona to Nasik 7. Poona to Kolhapur 8. Poona to Satara. 9. Poona to Aurangabad 10. Poona to Nagpur 11. Poona to Dharur 12. Kalyan to Aurangabad 13. Poona to Solapur.

Along with these highways, there were some routes connected important towns for internal trade and commerce. It is said that Radhabai's pilgrimage to Mathura and Saraswatibai's pilgrimage to Kashi created



new routes for trade and commerce. During this period means of transportation were bullocks, buffaloes, camels, elephants, palanquins, bullock carts and Labourers. The Marathas had taken several precautions for safety and security of trade and commerce. As Land routes there were water-routes also. Almost all ports in Konkan had linked each other for the purpose of trade and commerce. They were Kalyan, Nagothana, Rajapur, Alibag and Bassein. The Marathas had considerable dangers in the trade of land routes as well as water routes, as attacks, robbery and piracy which occurred daily. In the same way wars like Anglo-Maratha wars created several problems in the trade and commerce.

Under the Marathas, idea of passport also was executed. The rulers sold passes or licenses to enter their territory either for trade or travel. Mostly, the foreign travellers of England, France, Dutch, Portugal used them extensively. There was a trade through Ghatmarg. Because Sahyadri ranges spread through the western part of the Maratha Kingdom, which a numerable passes connected Deccan and Konkan area. Ghatpandes were appointed by the Marathas to look after the chowkies established to supervise the trade through Ghatmarg. He was also authorised to recover some toll for protection and escorting the traders through the Ghats. Thus, the Marathas had trade and Commerce under them.

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### 18.12. QUESTIONS

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1. Examine the articles of trade and commerce during the period of Marathas.
2. Give an account of markets under the Marathas.
3. Assess the Transport and Communication system during the period of Marathas.
4. Discuss the water route transport and communication under the Marathas.
5. Explain the major problems in trade and commerce during the period of Marathas.

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### 18.13. ADDITIONAL READINGS

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1. Dr. Hove, Tours for Scientific and Economic Research made in Kathewar, Gujarath and Koknan.
2. C.V. Aitchision, A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads.
3. Alaskar S.V., Angrekalin Patravayavahar.
4. Springer's History of the Marathas, translation by Prof. R.N. Chapekar.



## CURRENCY AND BANKING

### Unit Structure

- 19.0. Objectives.
- 19.1. Introduction.
- 19.2. Mints under the Marathas.
- 19.3. Banking.
- 19.4. State Loan.
- 19.5. Varat.
- 19.6. Summary.
- 19.7. Unit End Questions.
- 19.8. Additional Readings.

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### 19.0. OBJECTIVES

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After the completion of this unit the student will be able to

1. Comprehend the various sources of currency and Banking under the Marathas.
2. Understand the classification of currency during the period of Marathas.
3. Grasp the various gold coins Gambar, mohor, hons and putlis prevailed during that period.
4. Know the various kinds of hons and pagodas minted at different places.
5. Explain the classification of silver coins Like Rupee, Lari and Taka.
6. Comprehend various rupees minted at various places.
7. Grasp the copper currency like Shivrai, Chhatrapati, paisa, Ruka, Tiruka, duval, byal and other coins.
8. Understand the banking system and the mechanism of issuing and accepting loan to the debtors.
9. Know something about the state loan under the Marathas.
10. Explain the idea and use of varat or Hundi during the period of Marathas.
11. Understand something about mints under the Marathas.

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### 19.1. INTRODUCTION

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During the period of Marathas, the currency not only the Maratha rulers but also the other rulers as the Mughal, Bijapur, Golkonda, Portuguese,

English, the erstwhile Vijayanagar empire, and Persia was in circulation. Among such currency the important coins like Sivrai, Fanam, Cakram, Padshahi-hon, Nishani hon, laris, Rupees, Asrafi, Takas, Chhatrapati or Sivrai, Sajgani, Tiruka, Ruka, Paisa, Dam, Adka, caval, Jital, Duval, Pal and Byal were used in transaction. Even cowries were also treated as currency for small dealings. Almost all these coins were not minted under the Marathas but they were in circulation. Minting coins was not the responsibility of the Government. It was the responsibility of individual, who had secured the license for minting them. Even the individual or the private person i.e. the license holder was responsible for the metallic content in the coin and its deformity or abrasion.

The coins which were deformed or worn off were exchanged for new coins, The market value of the currency or coins depended on the metallic content of the coin. It is said that the old coin of the same weight and metallic content usually used to fetch lower value than the new coin. There were several factors responsible for variation as under:-

1. Tavernier in his travel account says that the difference in old and the new coins was not due to variation in weight, fineness or outer look of the coin but it was due to the ulterior intension of the banker, who usually paid a great sum to the king in order to oblige him. This sum, the banker recovered from the common people at the time of exchanging coins. Even Dr. Joshi confirms this fact in his book, the coins current in the kingdom of Golkonda.

2. There is a different justification in the fifth volume of the June, 1943's Journal of Numismatics Society of India that the bankers of that period were very superstitious. They thought that some misfortune would befall if the old coins were melted regularly. They, therefore, kept this artificial difference in the value of the old and the coins which ranged from fourteen to seventy percent.

3. The third reason given was that, the Shroff and Potdar were responsible for this variation because they were examiners of coins appointed by the government. They only advised the bankers and merchants to receive currency from the people. The Shroffs and Potdars received fees for the same. Naturally, bankers kept variation in the value of old & new coins.

3. Classification of Currency:- Abbot states that during the Maratha period the principle of one mint one coin was not maintained. There were several mints, granted to the individuals on the basis of license and several other conditions. Naturally, there was no central mint to supervise the process of minting coins. Although, there was diversity in the number of coins but there was unity in the design of the coins. Hence, for the convenience of study, The currency of the Maratha period can be classified as under:-

1. Gold coins or currency 2. Silver coins or currency 3. Copper coins or currency.

**1. Gold Coins or Currency:-** The Factory Records, Travellers Accounts, Contemporary Records and Sabhasad Bakhar, give a variety of Gold currency or coins, which were in circulation during that period. On the basis of the above records, the gold coins can be divided into the following categories 1. Gambar 2. Mohor 3. Putli

4. Hons. They are delt in detail as under:-

**1.1. Gambar:-** Although, it was difficult to differentiate all the gold coins from one another. There was variation in their weight and metallic content as well as they were struck at various places by various private mints and there was no uniform rule to mint them. The private mint holders were sanctioned licenses on the condition that they should pay the state Government certain coins as negotiated in their license. Abbot says that license was granted to the private persons to mint coins according to the rules prescribed by the Government, even then variation occurred and the difficulty cropped up in the identification of coins. S. N. Sen says that Gambar was a gold coin bigger in size than all other gold coins. It was also called Gubbur and was worth to Rs. 3-12-6. Gambar was mostly enjoyed wide circulation in south India. Except this, there is no detail account available of Gambar currency.

**1.2. Mohor:-** This was another gold coin and a piece of bullion in circulation. In 1663, the value of this coin was around Rs.13. There not and Careri say that Mohor was a gold rupee and was not commonly used in trade and commerce because it was used mainly for making presents to the king and other honourable persons. Bhave says that there were saveran Mohors in circulation as Ahmedabadi, Puneri, Aurangabadi, Shetshahi, Talegavi, Burhanpuri, Ahmad Shahi, Surati, Banarsikura, Jyahanbadi, Machhli Bunder, Delhi, Patani and Lahori. Chapekar says that in addition to the above Mohors, there are Mohors mentioned in the records of Tulshibagwale, Khasgiwale, Chiplunkar and Vaidya as, Panchemje, Ganjikot, Vajrajogani, Laturi, Ajmeri and Darshani. Some of these mohors were named after the place where they were minted. Bhave further says that mohors differed in size and value from Rs Thirteen to fifteen. Generally, the standard mohor was one tola in weight whereas the mohor minted at Dharwar mint was of three fourth tola because the government desired so and wanted to amass gold for other coins.

**1.3. Hon:-** This was one more gold coin in the circulation. Hon is the corruption of Honnu, a Kannada word for temple. Sabhasad says that there were several hons during the period of Marathas as Sangari, Sivrai, Padsai, Devrai, Achyutrai, Ramchandrara, Satlami, Ibrahimi, Nishani, Tipaki, Guti, Dharwari, Kaveripak, Candavari,

Vingurali, Vellori, Advani, Devanhali, Venkatrai, Trisuli, Bildhari, Ulphakari, Jadmal, Tadpatri, Afraji, Bivaluri, Pavanaiki, Gold bars, Fanam and Cakram. Sivrai, Achutrai and Devrai, the Vijaynagar rulers, struck these hons in their names as per the prevailing customs of that period. Bhave says that hons like Kaveripak, Sangari, Guti, Dharwari,

Advani, Chanvari, Veluri, Ramnathpuri, Hydrabadi, Harpanhati, Vyankatapati, Durgi, Sawanpuri, Nagarpatani and Tadpatri were named after the town or place where they were minted. Bhave further says that most of the hons were minted in the Southern part of India and they were perhaps the coins of the Dravidian people. There were some other hons like Nishani hons which were neither named after the ruler nor after the place where they were minted.

Manucci says that pagoda was a gold coin and was the European version of hon. It was equivalent to drachm Greek coin in weight and size. It was small, circular and stamped a deity on one side. Tavernier says that pagoda coin was a small thick piece of gold, the English and the Dutch struck it with the permission of the king. The Journal of Numismatics society says that pagoda coin was originally Hindu coin, which was called Varaha from the picture engraved on it. The Chalukyas and the Vijayanagar rulers struck the coin in the commemoration of ten incarnations of god Vishnu. It is said that some of the south Indian hons had the image of temple incised on them, which led the Europeans to call it pagoda. The value of these hons varied considerably between Rs. three and Rupees four. Sabhasad says that the gold coin Shivrai hon was associated with the name of Chhatrapati Shivaji, who had around four lakhs Shivrai hons in his exchequer or treasury. Dr. D. V. Kale, G.H. Khare and Chinchwad Monastery confirm that a gold coin bearing Shri Raja Siva on one side and Chhatrapati on the other side was in circulation of seventeenth century Maharashtra.

Dr. Fryer says that gold coin like Sangri, Joulky, Asmeloh, Tipki and Ibrahim were found in the coast at towns of West India and Persia. The Journal of Numismatics of India mentions that Padshahi and Muhammadshahi hons were struck by the Bijapur ruler Muhammadshah in his name and they were in transaction before the Deccan Campaign of Aurangzeb. G. H. Khare says that Padshahi and Muhammadshahi hons were equal in weight as well as around equal to Alamgiri rupees four. G. H. Khare further refers to Nishani, Katerai and Hukeri hons. Nishani hon was minted at Vengurla mint, which was closed due to the campaign of Aurangzeb after the death of Chhatrapati Shivaji. But after sometime the Sardeshmukh extended protection to the licensee and the mint began to function as earlier. Katerai and Hukeri were minted in the Mysore state. Katerai had the figure of trident on it and therefore was called Trishul Hon-while Hukeri hon was minted at Hukeri a taluka of Belgam district, Mysore state.

The exchange value of hons varied as its numbers and because of its intrinsic metallic content and its minting at various places. Manucci gives its exchange value to Rs. three caveri raised it to Rs. four, Guarda and Thevenot say that hon was equivalent to Rs. five whereas English factors converted the exchange value of Sangri and Tipki pagodas or hons into Shillings and pence. In short, the exchange value of hons differed between two and half rupees and three and three fourth rupees.

There were two more gold coins, which are referred in several records and historians are not unanimous on the exchange value of them. Such coins were Famam and Cakrams Abbe Carre valued fanom to three pence, whereas Dr. Fryer equated it to one and one fourth rupee. S. N. Joshi says that Fanam and Cakram were in circulation in 1695 while Rajyavyavaharakosh categorized it as a silver coin. The Journal of Numismatics of India says that, although the currency could bear the legend Chhatrapati in absence of any evidence it cannot be said that Chhatrapati Shivaji minted the Fanam and Cakrams. They could be minted either by Chhatrapati Sambhaji or Rajaram. Thus, these and many other gold coins were in force during the period of Marathas.

**1.4. Putli Currency:-** There was one more gold coin current under the Marathas, which came to be known as Putali. It was usually used as ornament by ladies in wealthy families and it valued around silver rupees four. The Journal of Numismatics Society of India says that Putali, a gold coin was in force in 1764-65, it valued only Rs Seventeen. But this currency did not remain in circulation for along time. G.H. Khare says that during the period of Peshwas, there was a gold coin incised Shri Ganpati on one side and Shri Pantpradhan on the other side and valued around thirty three grains. Thus, these currencies in gold used for transaction under the Marathas.

**2. Silver Currency:-** As gold currency, there was also a silver currency under the Marathas. Among them, Shahajahani, Alamgiri, Abbasi, Muhamudi and many other coins were in transaction. It is said that current coins came to be known as Calni whereas the old, debased and worn-out coins come to be know as Khazana. The Calni coins were rated more than the Khazana coins. Khazana means a treasure, old coins being worn out and reduced its metallic content in some proportion, therefore they were supposed to be taken out of circulation and deposited in the treasury. This fact led to these debased and old coins to be called Kazana. The transaction value or the exchange value between the Calni and Khazana was as one hundred Calnis were equal to one hundred Khazana, twelve takas and twenty five dams.

**Classification of Silver currency:-** Although, there were several Silver coins, they can be categorized as follow for the convenience of the study:-  
1. Rupees 2. Laris 3. Takas.

**2.1. Rupees: -** Generally, the Silver rupee was minted in the Northern part of India whereas the gold coin was struck in the southern part of the country. The rupee was a big and heavy coin, which weighed around one tola or one hundred eighty grains. The Muslim rulers used to strike this currency on the eve of each Hijra or Julus, the calendar years of those rulers. On each issue of the new rupee, it was rated one paisa more than the old rupee, this could be due to the constant use and abrasion of the old coin. Some of the rupees stricken by various rulers at various places on various occasions were as under:-



**2.1.a. Asrafi Rupee:-** Sabhasad says that Asrafi or Asarfadi was originally a gold coin, but the Portuguese adopted it and converted it into silver coin as well as began to mint it at Goa. Naturally, the Marathas began to strike it in silver. Its exchange value was as one Asarfadi was equivalent to 1.4 xerafins, the Portuguese coins minted at Goa.

**2.1.b. Abasi Rupee:-** This was a Persian coin, it was struck by the Persian king, Shah Abbas II and used in trade and commerce. It was found in abundant quantity in trading centers of Western India like Surat, Mumbai and Konkan area. Dr. Fryer and other foreign travellers confirmed its existence in circulation as well as they valued this rupee between sixteen and eighteen pence!

**2.1.c. Mahmudi Rupee:-** This was one more silver coin, which was struck by Mahamud Shah, the sultan of Gujrat. Dr. Fryer says that a coin called Mahmudi was also current in Persia. The English factory records of 1659 say that the exchange value of one thousand sangri pagodas was equivalent to seven thousand eight hundred twenty five Mahmudi rupees. It is said that the English factors converted the pagodas first into rupee at the rate of three and half rupees per pagoda and then they calculated in rupees at the rate of two and one fourth Mahmudi per rupee. Thus, this rupee was in existence in Persia and Gujrat at the same time.

In addition to these Chapekar has given a long list of silver coins as Rahimatpuri, Malkapuri, Chandwadi, Mirji, Arkat, Chinchwadi, Hukeri, Bagalkot, Gajapuri, Talegawi, Surati, Bharochi, Panhali, Chatarsingi, Nilkanthi, Saroli, Bahuti, Arkot, Gunjikot, Daulatabadi, Belapuri, Barodi, Bhatwadi, Itawa, Bawadi, Panoli, Ankushi, Ekbanduki, Trishuli, Farashi, Nagtura, Panchmel, Mite, Potechal, Basseinchal, Kalyanchal, Wasikka, Ballisikka, Kashisika, Srisikka, Shahusikka, Delhisikka, Atiche, Bhunde, Alamgiri, Malharshali, Pethechalani, Bajarchalani, Kokanchalani, Sarkarchalini, Danechalini, punechalini and Hapischalini. Out of these coins Rahimatpuri, Malkapuri, Belapuri, Daulatabadi, Chandanwadi, Bagatkoti and Surati were named after the places where they were minted whereas Farshi, Tura and Trishuli were named after the pictures engraved on them. Although, there was variation in weight, type, style and purity of the metallic content in coins, the government tried to adjust and compensate at the time of exchange of coins, The Peshwas' had issued instruction in this regard for the benefit of people.

**2.2. Lari currency: -** This was another silver currency made of silver wire, like a hairpin of ladies. It was made of a thick silver wire and its length was upto three inches, it was double in the middle and flattened to be stamped on it. Its weight was around seventy two grains but the size and length differed from lari to lari. Originally, this was a Persian coin was named after the province Lar, which located at the head of the Persian Gulf and was a very popular trading centre for centuries together. Naturally, the Persian merchants and traders brought it to India. Due to its viability, the Indian people approved and accepted it, hence, the rulers of Bijapur began to mint it and consequently, Lari came into transaction in the Kokan area. Mandelson says that the

great demand of Lari in the Konkan region led the Bijapur Sultan to mint it at various places; Mandelson further says that the exchange value of lari with pagoda was as one pagoda was equivalent to Ten Dabhol laris. Dr. Fryer gave the exchange value of the same lari at Rajapur of one pagoda to around ten and half laris after the gap of thirty five years.

Different kinds of laris:- Sabhasad, factory records, contemporary documents, the Portuguese and the Mughal documents confirm that Lari was in circulation under the Marathas. Hence, there were many kinds of laris, which can be categorised as under:- 1. Basra lari 2. Dabholi Lari 3. Cauli Lari 4. Hurmuzi Lari. These names of the laris suggest that they were named after the places or towns where they were minted. Dr. Balkrishna says that Chhatrapati Shivaji minted the Caul and Dabholi Laris when he conquered Dabhol in 1661 and Caul in 1670. Dr. Balkrishna further says that there was one more lari came to be known as Sirni Lari. But it seems that Sirni was a certain Fee, that was paid by a person willingly to the government, when he won his case in the long standing dispute.

**2.3. Taka currency:-** One more silver coin known as taka was in circulation under the Marathas. There were some confusions about this coin as one school of thought says that Taka was merely a money of account whereas the second school of thought says that it was a copper coin; even the Rajyavyavahara Kosh called Taka as Khurda mean a copper coin. But the available evidences says that Taka was a silver coin because its exchange value proved it as one gold hon was equivalent to twelve Takas where as one Taka was equivalent to forty-eight rukas, the smallest copper coins. The third evidence says that the exchange value of Taka varied in relation to one hon from ten and half to thirteen Takas. Naturally, Taka was a silver coin current under the Marathas. Moreover, all coins of the Mughals and the European companies were in circulation during this period.

**3.3. Copper currency:-** During the period of Marathas copper coins also were in circulation. Among them the coins like Shivrai or Chhatrapati, Sajgani, Tiruka, Paisa, Ruka, Dam, Adka, Jital, Budgrooks and cowris were more familiar to the people. Abbot says that all copper coins were of certain denominations. The metal required for striking these coins was supplied by the East India Company, and he himself assessed such twenty five thousand copper coins and found them minted as per the prescribed norms of the government.

Different kinds of copper currency:- These coins were numerous, they differed from each other in size and weight slightly, due to their minting at various places by various rulers. Even then for the convenience of study, the copper coins can be categorised as 1. Paisa. 2. Shivrai or Chhatrapati 3. Ruka.

**3.3.1. Paisa:-** The copper coin paisa minted under Chhatrapati Shivaji bore the legend Sri Raja Siva on one side and Chhatrapati on other side. Abbot says that these copper coins had some pictures

incised on them as Sun, arrow, flower, sword, Moon, leaves of Bel tree, planets and the signs of Zodiac. These coins varied in weight as one fourth tola, three fourth tola and the other one tola of copper. Generally, paisa weighed one tola of copper, even this was minted by Muslim and the Mughal rulers. Dr. Fryer says paisa was a copper coin, was in circulation among the poor people and the exchange value in relation to Mahmudi a silver rupee varied from twelve to twenty-four paisa. Thevenot observed the exchange value as one rupee equated to fifty five paisa, Tavernier says it was forty six to fifty six paisa to a rupee, whereas Carre says one rupee was equivalent to fifty four paisa.

**3.3.2. Sivrai or Chhatrapati:-** The title of the coin suggests that this coin was minted during the period of Chhatrapati Shivaji and was circulated in the kingdom. The weight of this copper coin was around three fourth tola. But Ranade says that there was no coin minted below Sivrai of ten masas under the Marathas. They used cowries for smaller transactions. As a matter of fact, there are several evidences that they prove that there were many smaller coins like ruka, adka, Duval, caval and bugrook in the circulation under the Marathas. Some other evidences show that the exchange value of one Shivrai was to six rukas.

**3.3.3. Ruka:-** This was one more copper coin current under the Marathas. Ruka weighed around one fourth tola. The exchange value of Ruka with Taka, a silver coin was around forty-eight rukas. It is said that under the Marathas land was expressed in Takas and Rukas as three Ruka camber land, six ruka Sindia's land and three ruka cashew nut garden. In short, Ruka was a coin generally used in the transaction of Marathas. Thus, these and many other even smaller copper coins and cowries also were current during the period of Marathas.

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## 19.2 MINTS UNDER THE MARATHAS

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The Marathas had issued license to private person or individuals to mint currency as per the directions, norms and conditions of the government. The norms were as to maintain the purity of the metallic content, pay certain amount to the government and not to mint the coins which were not allowed to mint or contracted to somebody else.

Bhave says that the mints licensed and working during the period of Marathas were at 1. Poona, 2. Chinchwad 3. Talegaon 4. Bassein 5. Nagothana 6. Chandwad 7. Nasik 8. Daulatabad 9. Rahimatpur 10. Dharwad 11. Satara and 12. Panhala. A document of 1766 says Pandurang Murar, a goldsmith was granted a license to mint coins on the condition on that he should pay the government six coins per thousand coins and one mohor per thousand mohors minted. The Journal of Numismatic of India says that the fees of six coins was raised to seven later, the seventh coin was to be paid to the manager, who was looking after the functioning of the mint. A document of 1748-49 refers to the license granted to Prahlad Shet Kasar of fort Mahuli to mint Shivrai coin of ten masas each. In the same way, Balaji Bapuji of Kasba Nagothana was granted license to mint a coin of ten masas each and he was warned

that he would be punished in case he failed to observe the norms fixed by the government.

It is said that king Shahu had ordered to open mints at Satara and Panhala. the Peshwa Bajirao granted permission to Savarkars to open a mint at Bassein in 1739. A document of 1790 says that the government ordered to Dulabhai Govindji Sheth, the owner of one of the mints to convert the mohor into the hons of Ekeri sikka. The mohor was received to the Peshwa from Tipu Sultan and it was damaged in some proportion. In the same way the Peshwa had ordered to close down the mints at Dharwar and Chandwad because those mints had issued the counterfeit coins. Thus, the mints under the Marathas began to function as per the norms fixed by the government.

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### 19.3. BANKING

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The main functions of the bank today have been 1. Accepting deposits and 2. Advancing loan to customer in a systematic way. But such banks were not there. The work, of todays bank is, was done by some indigenous bankers, or sahuks who came to be known as Sete Mahajan, Deskulkarni, Deshpande and Deshmukh. The bank mechanism, which is working today, that, was not so. But the work of bank was carried on with the same rules and regulations of medieval age.

**1. Loan Agreement:-** The agreement for loan accepted by the parties was called variously as karjarokha, karja Khatba, Kharjakhat and Karjapatra. In this document, the following details used to be entered:-

- 1.1. The name of the creditor i.e. Dhanko.
- 1.2. The name of the debtor i.e. Rinko
- 1.3. Principal or the Loan amount.
- 1.4. The rate of interest agreed.

It was fixed for the month if the loan was secured against some pledge the rate was fifteen percent and sixty percent if it was unsecured loan. The rate of interest was less to the Brahmin than the other category people. The interest was charged in rupees if the loan was in rupees, it was in kind if the loan was in kind and the interest was in hon if loan was in hons. It is said that the position of debtor, whether he was solvent was assessed. While charging the interest, the nature of loan was also considered. The longer the period, the higher the rate of interest as a Deshmukh took a loan at four percent to fight for his Patilki watan, while another Deshmukh borrowed sixteen hundred rupees at five percent per month for five years. In some cases Mirasi rights were given in lieu of interest on the loan the person had borrowed, this is the case of a Kulkarni, who had borrowed one hundred fifty hons for the period of six years on the condition of paying twenty five hons every year and he assigned his half Kulkarni watan to the creditor. Thus, the rate of interest depended on many factors and varied case to case.

**1.5. The purpose of loan.** The loan was taken to serve many purposes as 1. Meeting the expenses of litigations of watan, 2. Maintenance during the period of distress, famine, droughts and other calamities 3. To pay ransom to the attacker as Siddi Khan or any invader. It is said that, there is no reference regarding the commercial loan.

**1.6. The period for which the loan was taken,** i.e. duration or the period of loan depended on the nature of loan. The minimum period was at least a month and maximum up to ten years or more than that. If the loan was taken for agricultural purpose the debtor was to repay it with the interest on the new year day and when the loan was taken for litigation, the period was any number of years agreed by both the parties.

**1.7. Penalties,** If the loan amount was not returned within the stipulated time. There were a number of penalties, which were very severe as 1. The debtor was forced to pay the double amount of his loan 2. The payment of loan was considered as a moral responsibility of the debtor otherwise believed that it incurred sin in the future of the debtor. 3. The failure of repayment of loan was equated to heinous sins like killing a cow, murdering a Brahmin from Varanasi and having illicit relations with his own mother.

**1.8. Sureties:-**Many a times the loan was given not to the debtor directly but through the surety. In such cases the names of sureties should be entered in to the agreement of loan, which depended loan to loan.

**1.9. Signatures of witnesses:-**It is said that there was no Karjapatra or loan agreement was complete unless it had autographs of witnesses. The number of witnesses depended on the nature of loan agreement and the property involved in the loan agreement. Generally, witnesses from two to nine were needed, for ordinary loan agreement like Patil, Pande or Kulkarni or any persons from the village acted as witnesses. If watan or Miras was involved in the loan agreement then the concern persons like Deshmukh, Desh kulkarni, Sete, Mahajan and several others were needed to be witnesses for the deed.

**1.10.** The last entry in the Karjapatra was that the debtor was to specify whether he has taken the loan on his own for his work and not under duress or force of somebody. Thus, the loan agreement was complete and had legal standing to such agreement in the court.

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## 19.4 STATE LOAN

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There is no evidence except one as well as sufficient information that the government advanced any loan to the people for promoting agriculture or helping artisans and professionals in the kingdom. The only evidence regarding the loan to farmers is that a circular, which Chhatrapati Shivaji had issued in the name of Prabhavati Subhedar in the Konkan region that, the king had plans to advance loans to the farmers without charging any interest. The loan came to be known as taqai loan and was to be used for purchasing equipment and maintenance during the period of distress. It is said that the king had ordered the officers not to

recover and additional amount in the form of interest but only the principal amount and that also with easy installments. There are several stray references regarding the state loan to the people on low rate of interest and some time without interest it was advanced. It is said that there is no sufficient evidence regarding the security provided by the government to the creditor or Dhanko and debtor or Runko in the procedural matters.

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### 19.5. VARAT

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This was one of the functions of bank under the Marathas. Varat was an order issued by the king to various treasuries for payment. Sabhasad Bakhar says that Chhatrapati Shivaji used to pay his officials like Sarnobats, Majumdars, Karkuns and other employees at various places by way of varat, which was ordered to the local treasuries. Sabhasad further says that Chhatrapati Shivaji had purchased some goods from Samuel Austin, a British factor and paid him through varat. Shivaji granted him a varat on the treasuries in Kalyan and Bhiwandi for his payment. It is also observed that the money or payment received through the varat was always delayed by one or two years. The person or party accepting the varat was fully aware about the modality of this payment. Even he used to charge for this procedural matters. Whenever the Marathas issued varats on the English factors were often paid through the silver currency, which the people or the officials treated as uncertain money. Even then the idea of varat or hundi proved useful and began to be used increasingly, which brought up a new class, came to be known as brokers. This class encouraged the business of varat or hundies, which they used differently as Joghundi, Lahanehundi, Dhanijoghundi and Shahjoghundi. Chapekar says that these hundies were used by rich people and the sardars or nobles.

Bhave says that hundies or varat was paid to the person as per his convenience. The bankers or the treasuries who honoured and paid the amount to the varat or hundi holder charged interest ranging from two to five percent. Some of the varats were not charged any interest due to the consideration of the position of the person holding it. Prof. Chapekar says that the varat or hundi business flourished considerably during the period of Peshwas, had the rule of Peshwas lasted little longer, the city of Poona would have been popular more than London for the business of varat or hundi.

#### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:-

1. What are the various sources of information currency and Banking of Marathas?
2. Explain in brief the classification of currency under the Marathas.
3. What were the different gold coins prevalent during the period of Marathas?



4. Assess the various kinds of hons and pagodas circulated as currency under the Marathas.
5. Analyse the classifications of silver currency during the period of Marathas.
6. Bring out different rupees minted at various places under the Marathas.
7. What were the different copper coins under the Marathas?
8. Explain the working of mints during this period.
9. How was the banking system during this period? what work did the bankers undertake?
10. Give an account of state loans advanced during this period.
11. Explain the functionality of varat or Hundi under the Marathas.

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## 19.6. SUMMARY

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During the Maratha rule , along with the Maratha currency , the currency of all other rulers like the Mughals , Bijapur , Golkonda , Portuguese , English , Persian & the Vijayanagar was in circulation . Among the currency, the coins like Shivrai , Fanam , Cakram, Padshahi , Nishani , Hons , Rupees , Laris , Ruka , Tiruka and even Kowris were noteworthy . Almost all these coins were not minted under the Marathas. They were minted at various places and centres , therefore some of them could bear the names of places where they were minted. Some of them were minted in the name of rulers and some could bear the name of the picture incised on them. It is said that when the worn out coin was replaced by a new coin, then the old had lesser value than the new coin . Some foreigner attached some blind faith or superstition that some misfortune would fall if the old coins melted into new. But the reality was that the exchangers like Shroff and Potdars were to pay some substantial amount to the king annually. The same was recovered from the people by keeping little difference in the old and the new coins of same denomination and same weight.

The currency of that period was classified into Gold , Silver and Copper coins .The Gold coins were again divided as Gambar, Mohor, Hon and Putli. S.N. Sen says that Gambar was a gold coin called Gubur. Mohor was widely accepted and used to be presented to the men of honour as gift. Among the mohors, Ahmedabadi, Puneri, Aurangabadi, Talegavi, Burhanpuri, Ahmadshahi and Surati were very popular. The Vaidya records, Tulshibagwale and Khasgivale have long lists of mohor current under the Marathas. Hon was a gold coin, it was a corruption of the Kanada word honu means temple. Sabhasad also has a long list of hons in circulation under the Marathas. Putli was one more gold coin, which was generally used as ornament by ladies in villages and towns a like.

Among the silver coins, Rupee, Lari and Taka were widely circulated and transacted by the people under the Marathas.

Sabhasad mentions Asrafi, Abbasi and Mahmudi rupees also were in circulation. The next silver coin was lari, named after the Lar province of Persia. Naturally, this coin was basically from Persia and it was brought to India by traders and merchants. When it was accepted by Indians, the ruler of Bijapur began to mint it. Taka was also a silver coin, some people confused it with a copper coin Khurda. But it was a silver coin and minted at various places.

Along with the gold and silver coins, there were a number of copper coins in the circulation. Among them paisa, sivrai, Chhatrapati, ruka, tiruka, duvai, bayal and caval were in the transaction during this period. This was the currency of common people, because the gold and silver was beyond their capacity and most of them had even not seen those coins. The mints minting those coins were located at Poona, Chinchwad, Chandwad, Talegaon, Bassein, Nagothana, Dharwar, Satara, Nasik, Daulatabad and Panhala. Banks under the Marathas were not there in modern sense, there were only sahukar or money lenders who were known as bankers, the main and major work they performed was accepting deposits and advancing loans on the agreement, which was called as karjapatra or loan agreement. The loan was accepted and granted to any individual on certain conditions, which were noted down in the loan agreement. There is no evidence of commercial loan except few incidents. The Government granted loan to cultivators for agricultural development. The bankers had practiced the varat or hundi system, with order of the king on treasury for payment of his employees and high ranking officials.

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## 19.7. QUESTIONS

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1. Give an account of currency prevalent under the Marathas.
2. Assess the gold currency in circulation during the period of the Marathas.
3. Explain the silver and copper coins minted during the period of Marathas.
4. Examine the banking system working under the Marathas. How far was the varat system useful for the payments of officials?

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## 19.8. ADDITIONAL READINGS

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1. Hodiwala, Historical studies in Mughal Numismatics.
2. Maity S.K., The Economic life of Northern India.
3. Dewell K.K. and Varma, Introductory Economics and Elementary Theories.
4. Kulkarni G.T., Banking in the Eighteenth Century.



## ART AND ARCHITECTURE

### Unit Structure

- 20.0 Objectives
- 20.1 Introduction
- 20.2 Maratha Art
- 20.3 Maratha Sculpture
- 20.4 Maratha Architecture
- 20.5 Summary
- 20.6 Questions
- 20. Additional Readings

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### 20.0 OBJECTIVES

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After the completion of this unit the student will able to

1. Perceive the factors that made the Maratha art and Architecture regional or provincial only.
2. Comprehend the idea of Maratha art.
3. Understand the Maratha frescoes.
4. Explain the various roll paintings and patrika.
5. Know the Maratha Sculpture
6. Grasp the wood carvings existing during the period of Marathas.

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### 20.1. INTRODUCTION

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In Hinduism idol or effigy worship has been an integral part of religion. There are a number of beautiful temples and idols spread over the country. These temples have exquisite sculptures carved on their spires and have extremely nice and colourful wall paintings. Among such paintings, the artisan of Shaiva, Vaishnava, Jain and Buddhists have shown specific skill and characteristics in their rendition of art and architecture. The temples at Rameshwar, Kumbhakonam, Tanjore and Madurai are the imposing and awe-inspiring art of Dravidian people. But such exquisite pieces of art are not seen in Maharashtra. Although, Maharashtra had come under the rule of popular dynasties in art and architecture like Chalukyas and the Rastrakutas but their capital cities

were outside of Maharashtra, they ruled Maharashtra from Badami and Kalyani respectively which belonged to Karnataka. There were the dynasties which were from this land and ruled Maharashtra were Shilaharas and the Yadavas. The Shilaharas constructed several temples but very few are intact now whereas the Yadvas of Deogiri could not rule Maharashtra for a long time. The land of Maharashtra is known for its Sahyadri ranges and the beautiful caves carved in various parts of that mountain. The caves at Karley, Bhajye, Kanheri, Ajanta, Verul and Nasik are very popular and world renowned sculptures. Although, the Marathas had their distinctive style of painting and construction of beautiful mansions which cannot be compared with the Mughals in the north. Their temples, forts and mansion became and remained regional and provincial in scope and style for which several factors were responsible as under: -

The Royal period was the formative period of the Maratha rule. It was not possible to expect much more in the field of art and architecture from them. Even then the significant contribution was made in the construction of forts of military architecture. However, the untimely death of Chhatrapati Shivaji, the founder of Maratha Raj, followed the series of wars with the Mughals came to be known as the Maratha war of independence in which the very existence of Maratha kingdom came into danger. Naturally, there was no much time for any art and architecture.

The Peshwas followed the policy of expansion, which lasted for forty years from 1720 to 1761. The setbacks like the third battle of Panipat led the Marathas towards its downward slide, which gave the Marathas no time for exquisite art and architecture.

The economic position of the Marathas was not as strong as the Mughals in the north. The land in Maharashtra is not as fertile as the Gangetic basin. Naturally, it did not allow them to spend much more on art and architecture.

During the period of Peshwas the incessant wars for territorial expansion negated the economic gains accrued from the annexation. The economic gains from the territories other than Maharashtra were uncertain, that led Peshwas to borrow large amounts from bankers to pay regular administrative expenses and to finance various wars.

Although, there was some collection from the conquered rulers but it was very marginal, that was absorbed by major feudatory agents and did not reach to the Government. On the other hand, Maharashtra never used to produce a large surplus as was done by the Vijayanagar or the Mughal Empire. Naturally, the Marathas could not spend much amount on the art and architecture.

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## **20.2 MARATHA ART**

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During the period of Marathas, a distinct style of painting as an art was developed. There were several painters, who excelled in various aspects of that painting. There were rich people as Sardars and officials of

Peshwas, who became patrons of such paintings and painters in the eighteenth-century Poona. This was the direct consequence of the expansion of Maratha territories in the country. During this period, a number of frescos and mural painting appeared on the wall of mansions and wadas of rich people in Poona and Satara. It became a matter of status to have painted walls of their buildings with various episodes of Puranic and epic ages. The Peshwas had employed popular painters Like Ragho, Tanaji and Anuprao for mural painting on the wall of Shanvar wada, which was constructed by Bajirao I. Mahadevrao I completed the remaining construction of the Wada and employed Mankoji and Shivram popular painters of the period on Rs thirty for one and half month to paint variously the Shamvarwada. In 1765, Peshwa Raghunathrao had constructed a wada at Anandwalli and instructed Nana Fadnis to Send Mankoji for decoration of his wada.

Apart from the actual painting administrated by the various painters, the Peshwas also acquired several master pieces of paintings from different parts of India. Among them the thirty-six Ragmalas, which were brought by Mahadevrao I in 1764, a copy of an illustrated Bhagwat brought by Nana Phadnis from Jaipur and the gift pieces given by the English were exquisite pieces of art forms. When Charles Malet was the English resident at the Court of Poona, he employed James Wells and Daniel the popular English artists to do some outstanding painting on the wall of Shanvarwada. They also trained some local painters in the painting of nature in various moods and majesty. Among Local painters who were trained were Gangaram Tambat, Dhanaji and Bapu Chitary. They became excellent artists of the Peshwa period. The Sardars Like Khasgiwale, Raste, Tulgibagwale and Vaidya used their services to do various paintings on walls of their wadas. The paintings which James Wells had done in Poona were outstanding. In one of the paintings Nana Fadnis, Mahadji Shinde and Mahadevrao II were sitting together. In the second painting Mahadevrao II and Nana Fadnis were shown as discussing important matters of the government of Marathas.

**1. Maratha Frescoes:** - This type of painting was done on the walls and inner part of the roof of the building. The frescoes and wall painting being very popular, were done on the religious occasions like Dasara, Diwali, Upanayana or marriage ceremony by the expert and renowned painters or artists. Generally, the subjects or events depicted in these wall paintings were religious and taken from mythological literature like, 1. Dashavatara i.e. the ten incarnations of lord Vishnu, was the most popular during this period. Chhatrapati Shahu's palace at Satara and Raste's wada at Wai were painted with this painting beautifully and became the attraction of all the people in the kingdom. 2. Ganpati was also a favourite object of paintings on the walls of main halls and drawing rooms of each building in Poona. 3. Rampanchayat, among the paintings of gods and goddess, Rampanchayat was painted with much priority. In this painting Rama, Sita, Laxman, hanuman, Shankar, Parvati, Lord Vishnu and Laxmi were shown sitting in the panchayat. 4. The Jain temple at Jamod; had a painting depicting the whole life of Mahavira. In the same was the temple at Bijargaon had some another painting but was not so popular as Jamod

temple. 5. There were several wall paintings based on the events of epics like Draupadi Swayamvara, Sita Swayamvara. 6. The wadas at Wai, Nipani, Chandwad, Talegao and Dabhade had wall paintings of all events based on various puranas. 7. It is said that in several wall painting the subject handled in Ajanta and Ellora cave paintings have also been kept in mind and efforts were made to establish the linkage with that tradition. 8. The wall paintings or Maratha frescoes were done in white, red, Green and Blue colours with suitable combinations suiting to the buildings or wadas as well as with the objects. It appears that while painting various subjects the care was taken about the attire of male and female which was shown typically Maratha in style, as nine-yard-long sarees, dhotis and turbans. The physical features of the objects depicted resembled with that of the statures of Marathas. Thus, the wall paintings or frescoes developed during this period was practiced in various parts of the kingdom.

**2. Roll Paintings and Patrika:** - This painting was done on paper roll which was about ten to twelve feet long. Generally, it was the horoscope along with the Zodiacal signs and other objects of religious importance. The roll painting of Peshwa Balaji Bajirao is available today with the Bharat Itihas Sanshodhan Mandal, Poona. The Patrica painting one more popular form can be discussed as under:-

**3. Sankrant pat Patrika:** - This painting was done on a two square feet size paper. In the upper part of the paper the picture of Ganpati was painted along the pictures of goddess Sankranti and her favourite Vehicle. The Lower part of the paper was used for figures of other gods and goddesses, which were painted in red, high blue and yellow colours. This painting was very popular during the period of Marathas. The Bharat Itihas Sanshodhar Mandal, Poona has several Sankranti pat patrika paintings.

**Pithoripat Painting:-** It was used for performing puja. This painting is named after the ritual, pithori, which was performed on the new Moon Day of the month of Shravan. There is a mystical story in the ritual performed on the day. It is based on the story of Vasudev and Dewaki, in which Sixty-four yoginis were worshiped by married women. As per the story it is said that a woman lost her seven children soon after their birth of each of them and secured them back after performing the puja of sixty-four yoginis. The ritual symbolizes yoginis as protectors of young children from their untimely death. The artist related this story with the death of seven children of Vasudev and Dewaki of the popular epic Mahabharata. The artist also went on painting other events in the life of Lord Krishna. Although, the story used was from Mahabharata, the colours and attires painted in the Pithori painting were suited to the Maratha culture and tradition.

**4. Illustrated Manuscripts:** - During this period, the printing press was not used to create Literature. The Literature available was hand written, which was preserved in various Mathas, Monasteries of the Ramdasi, Mahanubhavi and Nath Sects. Under the Peshwas, the rich



Sadars began to enrich their private collections with hand-written books, which were illustrated by beautiful pictures of personalities from puranas and mythologies. Among such illustrated hand written books Pundalik and Vitttal Mahatmes, Shivililamrit, Dyaneshwari and Sankranti were very popular. These illustrated manuscripts being related to religion became a popular form of the Maratha art and displayed the Maratha culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

**5. Miniature Paintings:** -As illustrated manuscripts developed as a form of painting, the another form of painting came up in this period was miniature painting. In this painting, the different themes like Ragmala based on ragas of Hindustani classical music. This painting was done on a rectangular paper, on the top of the paper the name of the raga was written and the below of the name every facet of the raga was illustrated very beautifully with figures of God and goddesses. The next theme of the miniature painting was the Talmala, which was depicted as ragamala painting. It is said that a Dutch painter painted miniature paintings on Shivaji as well as Bajirao I, depicting them riding horses and leading their campaigns. Although, with decline of the Marathas, the miniature paintings were disappeared, some of the important pieces are still in the custody of the Bharat Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal, Poona.

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### 20.3 . MARATHA SCULPTURE

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The land of Maharashtra has the oldest sculptures like Karley and Bhajye caves which belonged to the second century B.C. and bore the influence of Shalivan and Buddhist sculptures. The cave sculptures carved at Ajanta belonged to the fifth century B. C. where as king Krishna II of Rastrakuta dynasty got carved the cave sculptures at Ellora. These sculptures are considered the finest specimen of sculptures in the country. Although no cave sculptures were carved during the reigns of the Shilahara and yadava kings, they got constructed a number of Hemadpanti style temples througho ut their kingdoms. The Muslims, who ruled India later were iconoclasts and did not spare any such temples in the state, which led to discontinue the tradition of constructing the Hemadpanti temples. The sculpture as an art developed in the state particularly with the development of temples in which idols of different gods were installed. The free-standing sculptures are seen rarely in the country except the pillar capitals of Ashoka and the Yaksha Yakshini of the Shunga period. Maharashtra also followed the same type of free-standing sculptures under the period of Marathas. It was sculptured under Shivaji Yadwada, near Dhawad, Karnataka. It was carved in a big rock of 3x2-1/2 feet depicting Shivaji as negotiating with Malamma, the queen of Belavadi and the widow of Ishwar Prabhu. This sculpture is divided into two parts, in the upperpart Shivaji is shown riding horse while in the lower part depicted Shivaji and Malamma's meeting with Shivaji's foot soldiers as well as his favourite dog. In 1677-78, when Shivaji was on his Karnataka expedition, he visited Belavadi, which was thirty miles away from Belgaum. Belavadi then was under Ishwar Prabhu, who was no more, his widow Malamma clashed with Shivaji's foot soldiers and

impressed him with her bravery. Naturally, this sculpture commemorated meeting of Chhatrapati Shivaji with Malamma. Dr. Mate says that almost all Hemadpati temples of Yadavas were renovated under the period of Shivaji in order to bring out a new sculpture of Maratha style. One of such renovated temples under Shivaji was at Shingnapur which came to be known as Shambhu Mahadev temple. Dr. Mate further says that although it was renovated under Shivaji, its top was built in Peshwa period. The Maratha sculpture can be divided into three periods as 1. 1650 to 1720 the period from Shivaji to Balaji Vishwanath in which the Maratha sculpture got no encouragement. 2. 1720 to 1740 the period of Bajirao I. 3. 1740 to 1761 the period of Nana Saheb. During the periods of Bajirao and Nana Saheb, the rapid expansion of Maratha power took place which brought them into close contacts with various parts and various temples that encouraged them to construct various temples. Thus, the Marathas developed their own sculpture during this period that can be studied as under: -

**Bhuleshwar temple at Yavat:-** Brahmendra Swami the spiritual guru of Bajirao I renovated this temple in Poona district and created a distinct Maratha sculpture in the field of ornaments, dress, decorations and the design of the spire of the temple.

**Vateshwar temple of Saswad:-** This temple was built during the period of Peshwa, bore several battle scenes of the period. Although, the stones sculpted are worn out, they give certain ideas of the Maratha sculpture.

Temples constructed by Ahilyabai Holkar have developed the Maratha sculpture. The entrances of those temples are sculptured with the figures of Maratha soldiers and Sardars. Along with this figure of elephants, monkeys, peacocks and floral as well as geometrical designs also are carved prominently.

**Siddheshwar temple at Toke:-** This temple in Ahmednagar district has a sculpture of two elephants fighting with each other. In the other scene, Peshwa Madhavrao I is shown sitting in his court or Darbar and consulting with his advisory. In the third scene on the outer wall the Draupadi swayamvar is sculpted with much skill and dexterity. Naturally, it is an important example of Maratha sculpture.

**Rock Memorials:** This is one more important form of the Maratha sculpture, came to be known as 'virgala'. It was constructed in the memory of brave soldiers, who laid their lives in various battle fields. It was carved on a rock of 3x4 feet at the village of the respective soldier. This rock memorial is divided into three parts as 1. the Lower part depicted the fallen hero in action. 2. The middle part depicted his journey to heaven and 3. The third scene depicted the fallen hero worshipping gods in the heaven. Thus, These scenes predominantly depicted in the Maratha style and Maratha sculpture.

**Wood Carvings: -** This is one more important form of Maratha art and architecture found developed during the period of expansion of the

Maratha rule. Such art develops when peace and prosperity reigns the regime, but the Marathas never had such peaceful regime except few years. Although, this wood carving developed under the Marathas and were scenes on the walls of different mansions and temples but those scenes could not stand the onslaughts of enemies, fire and nature. There are some constructions which display such exquisite wood carving art but they are in dilapidated status or in total crumbling position. Thus, the Maratha Sculpture developed in various parts of the Kingdom.

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## 20.4 MARATHA ARCHITECTURE

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There are several kinds of architectural traditions in Maharashtra. The first architectural tradition started by the Buddhist in second century B.C. at Karley and Bhaje caves near Poona. The second tradition in architecture of Maharashtra started by Rashtrakutas at Ajanta and Ellora caves in the fifth century B.C. The Chalukyas, the Shilaharas and Yadavas added much more to the existing architectural tradition by adopting Nagar or Bhumji type of architecture. This blended with the local conditions of Maharashtra and developed it into the popular Hemadpanthi style of architecture which came to be known as the Maratha architecture. It can be studied with reference to 1. Forts 2. Wadas 3. Gadhis and 4. Temples.

These architectural monuments of Marathas are either destroyed by fire or the ravages of time. The palaces Like Ajinkya Tara at Satara and Shaniwarwada at Poona are the most prominent but they are in dilapidated conditions. Although, they are in the most neglected status, certainly give some idea of their style, design and the manner of their construction. During the period of Shivaji, several new forts were constructed as well as old forts were repaired while under the Peshwa's new wadas and mansions were built and the towns like Toke were established. The Maratha architecture can be studied with the help of following points: -

**1. Maratha Forts:-** Chhatrapati Shivaji's name has been associated with almost all forts of Maharashtra. He gained them by various ways and measures as some by deliberate bribes whereas others by well-planned attacks. He constructed several forts on various and important hills strategically. Naturally, all these forts became the best examples of military architecture of Marathas. These forts proved the best means of protecting the Maratha Kingdom as said by Ramchandra Pant Amatya in his Adnyapatra. He further says that a kingdom without forts is like a person without soul. The forts constitute the strength of army and the wealth of the Kingdom. Without forts, the people in the Kingdom are left at the mercy of the invader. Fort is the place where the king can enjoy a sound sleep; hence, the king should undertake construction as well as repair of forts by himself. The fort should have a strong stone wall, which is known as rampart. Inside the wall there should be a trench or moat with full water to interrupt the entry of enemy and there should only on suspension bridge for the entry of selected people. Even there were other several methods to restrict the entry in the fort as very narrow and difficult steps, underground staircases, tunnels and trap doors. These

methods were used to make the entry totally inaccessible and keep all provisions, people, military and the king safety and secure. Although, almost all the forts of Marathas are in a dilapidated condition, their architectural remains show that the engineers who constructed them were well aware of the principles of military engineering. Thus, the Maratha architecture is very exhibited by the forts of Chhatrapati Shivaji.

**2. Gadhis:-**These were the structures constructed for residential purposes with the provision of defensive outworks. These structures were constructed on the upland in order to live with all civil amenities without any external interruptions. Such constructions were mainly undertaken during the medieval period, when there was no political stability in the country. Gadhis were compared with the manorial houses of the medieval English people. Although, Gadhis were like forts but they were very smaller and weaker than the forts. During the period of Marathas Gadhis became the places of various intrigues, romance and mysterious glamour. There were a number of Gadhis constructed during the latter half of the eighteenth century, which were generally square or rectangular in size. As a matter of fact, all gadhis depended in size and shape on the wealth, importance of the person constructing and occupying them. These gadhis were provided by a rampart of stone wall, which was generally five to seven feet wide. The rampart was provided with parapets which served as watch towers. There used to be several quarters for servants from within the rampart. It is said that the care was taken to store adequate arms, ammunition provisions and water to be used in any emergency or expected to stand a siege for some time. Thus, the gadhis formed a part of Maratha architecture.

**3. Wadas:-**Among the buildings, the Peshwas built during their rule, the residential mansions were the most popular structures, which came to be known as wadas. Their own residential building was popularly called as Shanvarwada, which was the most impressive structure in Poona. Bajirao, I constructed this wada in 1730 and was occupied formally in 1731. Since then, it became the center of politics and culture of the Maratha empire till its last in 1818.

Shanvarwada was initially two storied constructions but it was raised to seven stories in the reigns of latter Peshwas. It was the only tallest building from the top of its people use to see the spire of the distant Alandi temple. This wada had five main gates as 1. Ganesh gate 2. Delhi gate 3. Mastani gate 4. Khadki gate and 5. Jambul gate. It had four fortified walls, out of them two were two hundred yards long, twenty feet high and the others were one hundred fifty yards long and twenty feet high. There were twenty bastions of stone and bricks, four at each corner and five in the center of the rampart. These bastions were manned with two hundred seventy-five armed guards. There were several Diwankhanas or big halls such as 1. Ganpati hall 2. Dance hall 3. Ivory hall 4. Hall of mirror 5. Hall of Bjirao 6. hall of Naranrao. In addition to these halls, there were several small rooms around which were assigned to each member of the ruling family. There were some other rooms assigned and occupied by various departments like 1. Treasury. 2. Pantry. 3. records. 4.

Library. 5. Armoury and 6. Medicine. The several gardens beautified it whereas numerous fountains made it the most elegant. It is said that in 1755, Nanasaheb constructed the Darbar hall on the eve of Ganpati celebration, hence it was called Ganpati hall. Due to the establishment of marble idol of Ganpati at a corner, it became a place of many state gathering as well as meeting place with dignitaries from foreign countries. This was the hall which had seen several days of ups and down and several diplomacies materializing. Unfortunately, this wada could not last long because it gutted into fire in February, 1827.

In addition to Shanvarwada, there were several other wadas constructed during this period. In 1803 Bajirao II constructed a two story wada at Vishrambag. He also constructed two more buildings as one was a five story building in Shukrawar Peth whereas another structure was at Hirabag where Bajirao used to entertain his English guest. Despite, these structures the wadas of Raste, Haripant Phadke, Nana Phadnis, Naik-Joshi, Mehendale, Tulsibagwale, Biniwale, Gaikwad, Shinde and Holkar were very rich and impressive mansions of Poona and had added to the glory of the Maratha architecture.

**4. Temples:-** This was one more form of architecture developed during the period of Marathas. Among the temples constructed in and around Poona, the outstanding temples were only four. as 1. Parvati temple. 2. Tulsibag temple. 3. Belbag temple and 4. Omkareshwar temple. These temples were constructed as per the principles of Maratha architecture, which was the blending of Yadava and Nagar style of architecture. The Maratha style of temple architecture was a very simple plan of constructing a structure in which a square sanctum was linked by a rectangular portico. The facade of the portico had couple of pillars with beautiful arches. There was a big assembly hall, open on all sides. The temple structure had a beautiful pattern ceiling, hung multi coloured glass chandeliers with candle holders which gave the impression that the whole structure is made of glasses. The spire of the temple also was an important feature of the Maratha architecture, which was again blended with the south Indian models. There was a dipa-malas, a tapering pillar constructed with several suitable brackets which were used to climb the pillar to light the lamp put on the top of the same pillar. This was constructed in order to light the whole area of the temple.

Generally, the temple was decorated with various stories of Puranas, epics and the battles fought by the Marathas. The pillars, walls and spire had sculptured images gods and goddesses, saints, soldiers and were painted brightly in suitable colours like red, green and yellow. Temples usually had a wall around it, to be secure enough to pilgrims visiting them. There used to be garden within the outside wall of every temple, which usually added to the beauty of the temple. Thus, this architectural form also developed during the period of Marathas.



1. Account for the Maratha art and architecture to be called the provincial art and architecture.

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## **20.5 SUMMARY**

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In Hinduism, idol worship has been an integral part of religion. There are several beautiful temples with large idols installed in spread throughout the country. The artisans of Shaiva, Vishnu, Buddhists and Jain ideology have shown specific skill and characteristics in their rendition of art and architecture. The temples at Rameshwar, Madurai, Tanjore and Kumbhakonam are the imposing and inspiring art and architecture of Dravidian people. But such exquisite pieces of art and architecture are not seen in Maharashtra. Although, Maharashtra had come under the rule of popular dynasties like the Chalukyas and Rastrakutas but their capital cities were outside of Maharashtra. These dynasties ruled Maharashtra from Badami and Kalyani respectively. There were the dynasties ruled Maharashtra were from Maharashtra only, who developed the art and architecture of constructing temples, which popularly came to be known as Hemadpanthi temples. Maharashtra is known for Sahyadri ranges and the beautiful caves carved in those ranges. Although, the Marathas have their distinctive style of art and architecture, that cannot be compared with the Mughals. Their temples, forts, mansions and other structures remained regional in scope and style for which several factors were responsible as:- The Marathas had no surplus production, they had no fertile land, they were forced to fight with formidable enemies often and other several reasons were there. It does not mean that they did not develop their art and architecture. Among the art they had wall paintings in which several painters like Gangaram Tambat, Dhanaji and Bapu Chitari were very popular. Not this much the Maratha sardars like Raste, Tulshibagwale, Vaidya and Khasgiwale used the services of James wells and Daniel the popular English painters. The Marathas were specialized in frescoes, in which various themes from Indian mythology like Dashavatara of Vishnu were painted on the walls on the eve of festivals like Deewali, Dassera or marriage. Along this the subjects like Ganpati, Rampanchayat, and other gods and goddesses were painted. The Maratha frescoes were seen on the walls of Jamod temple and wadas at various places, paintings in Ajanta and Ellora caves, which were done in red, blue and yellow colours.

The Marathas also were very popular in patrika or roll paintings. Among them the Sankrantipat painting, the pithoripat painting, illustrated manuscripts, and miniature paintings were very popular. In Sankrantipat patrika the pictures of Ganesha, goddess Sankranti with other gods and goddesses were painted. In pithoripat, a story resembling to the death of seven children one after another of Vasudev and Dewaki was painted whereas in illustrated manuscripts hand written books like Shivilamrit, Dnyaneshwari, Pundlik and Vittal Mahatmya were decorated and painted beautifully. In the miniature painting Ragamala and Talamala of various stages were painted on walls of wadas, palaces and temples: In



the same way, the Maratha sculpture was also popularly shown on the walls of temples. The most popular was the sculpture at Yadwada near Dharwad, Karnataka, in which the pictures of Shivaji, Queen Malamma of Belavadi and soldiers of Chhatrapati Shivaji were sculpted very beautifully. In addition to this sculptures on the temples of Bhuleshwar at Yavat, Vateshwar temple at Saswad, temples constructed by Ahilyabai Holkar, Shidheshwar temple at Toke are known as the master pieces in the sculptures. Rock memorials and wood carvings also were under taken under the Marathas. In the field of architecture, the Marathas had their own architecture developed in the form of forts, gadhis, wadas and temples. Ramchandrapant Amatya stressed on the importance of fort as soul of the Kingdom. Shivaji constructed as well as repaired several forts and developed a new and distinct Maratha architecture. Under the Peshwas, gadhis, wadas and temples were constructed at several places. Among them Shanwarwada was the exquisite piece of the Maratha architecture. In addition to this wada, Vishrambag wada, wada at Hirabag, Raste, Haripant Phadke, Nana Phadnis, Naik-Joshi, Mehendale, Biniwale, Gaikwad, Shinde and Holkar had their own wadas with peculiar features of the Maratha architecture. In the same way, temples were constructed as per the Maratha style of architecture. Among such temples, the Parvati temple, Tulsibag temple, Belbag temple and the Omkareshwar temple were the master pieces of the Maratha architecture.

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## 20.6. QUESTIONS

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1. Discuss the Maratha art , wall paintings , frescoes and various roll paintings. Why was the Maratha art remained regional in scope and style ?
2. Give a brief account of the Maratha sculpture.
3. Examine the Maratha architecture with the help of forts constructed by Chhatrapati Shivaji.
4. Write a detailed note on the Maratha forts, wadas , gadhis and temple architecture

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## 20.7. ADDITIONAL READINGS

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1. Mate M. S. , Maratha Architecture
2. Gokhale B.G. , Poona in the Eighteenth Century
3. Kulkarni A. R. and Khare G.H. ,(ed) Marathyancha Itihas , vol .II (Marathi)
4. Bhawe V. K. , Peshwekalin Maharastra (Marathi)

