Prologue

Kolhapur occupies a special position in the political, economic, social and cultural life of Maharashtra. The Princely State of Kolhapur formed a direct legacy of Chh. Shivaji (1627-80 A.D.). Right from its foundation in 1731 by Tararani (1675-1761 A.D.) till its merger in Indian Union in 1949, this State maintained its political independence. Chh. Shahu (1894-1922 A.D.) helped to carve out a special niche for Kolhapur in the social history of Maharashtra with his initiation and effective implementation of basic social reforms. This city also simultaneously registered substantial development in field of education and industry in the first half of 20th century. It remained a strong basin of PWP (Peasants and Workers Patry) in post independence.

This city kept pace with cultural developments. If it attracted pilgrims all over India, so it did wrestlers and artists.

Establishment of *Maharashtra Film Company* in 1917 by Babaurao Painter and the first film *Sairandhri* came as one more feather in the cap of Kolhapur. During 1920-60 this industry, with 30
film companies, 102 films, including the first color movie of India acquired its own identity on national level.

Film has strong impact and influence on Indians. The movie stars like Raj Kapoor, Devanand, Dilipkumar, Rajendrakumar, Madhubala became the idols. The political leadership was not far behind in exploiting the popularity of stars. Many of them such as Sunil Dutt, Dilip Kumar, Nargis, Vaijayantimala, Amitabh Bacchan not only worked for Indian National Congress but some of them such as Sunil Dutt, Nargis, Vaijayantimala, Amitabh Bacchan brought a glamour to the Parliament. More important, Anna Durai, M.G.Ramchandran, Karunanidhi, Jaylalita in South rose to the Chief Ministership of Tamilnadu.

Given the growing importance of film stars in politics some one in the academic field had to take the note of this trend. Why that some one couldn’t be this researcher? So this researcher turned to explore this novel theme.

There is a plenty of published literature on this theme which is mostly in form of autobiographies and biographies of eminent film
personalities such as Bhalji Pendharkar's *Sadha Manus*, V. Shantaram's *Shantarama*, Baburao Pendharkar's *Chitra ani Charitra*, Leela Pendharkar's *Mazi Jeevanyatra* etc. However, there is no independent work that explores the said theme at depth directly or indirectly.

The said theme is subdivided into the following six topics:

1) Political, Social, and Economic Background of Kolhapur.

2) Growth of film Industry: 1920-60.

3) Thematic composition of films.

4) Finance and Government Policy.

5) Women and Films; and Important film Personalities.

6) Epilogue

The first chapter briefly traces the political, social and economic background. According to majority of archeologists, Kolhapur is one of the ancient cities in India today. Satvahanas, Shilahars, Chalukyas ruled over this territory in ancient times. It formed the part of Bahamani and Maratha kingdom in Medieval period. However, emphasis is put on 20th century Kolhapur, Chh. Shahu and Chh. Rajaram, and post independence Kolhapur. Historical, religious and cultural background
of Kolhapur turned out to be one of the assets, which directly facilitated the rise of film industry. The beginning of era of film in general and that of particular in Kolhapur is traced in this chapter. For constructing this chapter the researcher made use of books such as *Kolhapur Darshan* edited by G.R. Bhide and P.L. Deshpande, *Vishwakarma* written by Suryakant Mandare, *Kalamaharshi Baburao Painter* written by G.R. Bhide and Baba Gajbar. The later one proved useful to verify the information given by Vijay Gajbar in his interview. For instance, he gave the information that Tanibai Kagalkar, a singer, provided capital to Baburao Painter for film production. This valuable information was confirmed in the said book. Unpublished research work by Dayanand Mane, Bakul Bhosale, I.H. Pathan who worked on ‘Development of Press’, ‘Rajaram College’ and ‘Industry of Kolhapur’ respectively proved very useful.

In the second chapter history of film industry in terms of the film companies established, their extension in distribution and exhibition agencies, the films produced by them is discussed in details, so as to form a complete idea about the persons, the professions, specializations, the changes occurred in those respect. While
developing this chapter a centenary volume of *Chitra Sharada* edited by Sudhir Phadke, *Chitra Sampada* edited by Vasant Sathe are extensively used. Valuable information is gleaned through newspapers such as *Satyawadi* and *Pudhari*. This researcher must mention a special issue of *Satyawadi- Dakshini Sansthan Visheshank* which proved very useful to know the contemporary responses and criticism of films from common man's eyes. More important, the information obtained through these files helped to countercheck and verify the biographical data and information obtained through tape-recorded interviews and questionnaires. For instance, V. Shantaram in his autobiography, *Shantarama*, claims to have produced India's first color movie *Sairandhri* in 1933. Now this piece of information can be verified and counterchecked in weekly *Satyawadi* dated 13/12/1933. In constructing this chapter interview with many film personalities such as Kiran Shantaram, Vasant shinde, Nanasaheb Yadav proved immensely useful. V. Shantraram's autobiography, *Shantarama*, Bhalji Pendharkar's autobiography, *Sadha Manus* also proved important.

The third chapter deals with the relevance of the theme of film to changing times. To what extent the cinema, the latest mode of
entertainment reflected the ground reality of life forms the main thrust of this chapter. It accounts for the rise and decline in trends in thematic compositions of the films. One of the serious limitations in this approach is the thematic division of the films into distinct categories such as mythological, historical and social categories of the movies. At times such division may appear very superficial and yet on close observation may make a kind of its own sense. This topic is constructed primarily relying upon the biography of Baburao Painter by G.R. Bhide and Baba Gajbar, volumes of Chitra Sharda and Chitra Sampada, Baburao Pendharkar’s autobiography – Chitra ani Charitra and interviews with film personalities such as Vasant Vankurdre, Subhash Bhurke.

The Chapter four discusses some basic aspects such as the finance, the censorship etc. which directly influenced the film industry. Information on financial dealings is rather difficult to come through any of the sources mentioned above. The newspapers’ files, the biographies do refer to financial aspects here and there, but again authenticity of that information could always be questioned. Often the practice of maintaining double accounts was followed. In spite of
scanty nature of information available, the researcher tried her best to reconstruct this part of the theme. This chapter, besides finance, also sheds light on the Government policies towards this latest mode of entertainment. Once again the *Satyawadi* files proved important. A passing reference in *Satyawadi* helped the researcher to procure the Cinematograph Act. Besides, other factors which adversely affected the normal shooting of the film thereby disturbing the schedules escalating the film and inflating the budgets are discussed in this chapter.

The fifth chapter unfolds two independent but interlinked aspects—Women and the film; and film personalities from social context. Given the male dominance of the society, it is rather difficult for women to grow on their own and have their own identity. The women who appeared on the screen had to face social derision and cynicism in the beginning though it dented with passage of time. This chapter discusses at length the circumstances they joined the film, the problems they faced, the tragedies they suffered, the material benefits they enjoyed, the limelight and the honor they shared etc. right from Anusayabai and Gulabbai, the first faces on the screen down to Baby
Shakuntala, Jayashree Gadkar. Almost all major women with their contribution to various aspects of films are highlighted here.

A review of the life and work of some of the well-known film personalities of Kolhapur who left indelible mark on the Marathi film industry is also included in this chapter. It briefs up the career and history of very few selected persons such as Painter Cousins, Pendharkar brothers, V. Shantaram, Leela Pendharkar, Zunzarrao Powar, Balasaheb Yadav, Master Vinayak, Dinkar Patil. In developing this chapter autobiographies and biographies such as *Mazi Jivanyatra* of Leelal Pendharkar, *Patlacha Por* of Dinkar Patil, *Chitra Ani Charitra* of Baburao Pendharkar, and *VishwaKarma* of Suryakant Mandare etc. and files of weekly *Rasrang* proved very useful. More importantly, much personal information could be gleaned through the interviews of film personalities such as Leela Pendharkar, Kiran Shantaram, Prabhakar Pendharkar, Bapu Vatave, Subhash Bhurke, Arjun Nalawade etc. Leela Pendharkar spoke touching about her re-entry in the film, *Chhatrapati Shivaji*. The personal anecdotes provided by them about themselves and about others are of immense help in understanding the human nature.
While researching on the theme the researcher faced the paucity and inadequacy of source material. To understand the theme, understanding the characters associated with it is must, otherwise such study tends to become just a dry, monotonous collection of data. This researcher used empirical methods, interviewed more than fifty persons associated with the film industry of Kolhapur. This researcher to do so made contact through newspapers by inserting a note to this effects in Pudhari on June 14, 2001, and in Sakal on April 19, 2001. Next, the interviews were sought with the important personalities such as Leela Penharkar, a wife of Bhalji Pehnkarkar; Prabhakar Pehnkarkar, son of Bhalji Pehnkarkar; Kiran Shantaram, son of V. Shantaram; Vasant Shinde - a cameraman, Appasaheb Jadhav- a recordist, Subhash Bhurke and Isak Mujawar – a film critic. Prof Lakshaman Deshpande, Head, Deptt. Of dramatics, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad and an actor of great repute, famous for his all time hit one act play Varad Nighalay Landonla, provided important and analytical information through questionarie. Bapu Vatve, the author of Ek Hoti Prabhatmagari; Anand Madgulkar, son of celebratec Marathi writer G.D. Madgukar; Vijay Gajbar - son of Bal Gajbar;
Arjun Nalawade – personal secretary of Bhalji Pendharkar also provided valuable information.

This researcher also reached to the public, the real patrons, through questionnaire to record their responses. The possible care was taken to represent maximum possible cross sections of the society, as their observations, impressions constitute very important original source that enriched the quality and relevance of this thesis. Out of two hundred questionnaires obtained, sixty were selected to be used exhaustively for analysis.

In order to know the reactions of the members of various castes, it was necessary to know their castes identity. Some of them felt odd in mentioning their castes. Some took it to be irrelevant, hence left this column vacant. This trend also needs to be taken into consideration while writing social history.

This researcher notes it down with satisfaction that efforts at oral source building have immensely helped link some of the vital aspects of film industry. For instance, the information about the rates of the film ticket in different times is very rare. Through the questionnaire a
clear-cut picture emerges. More importantly, it's only through the questionnaire one can understand the common man's choice of and preference to the new media of film and the theatre world. One of the aims behind this research work was to understand the role and impact of film on society in general and caste system in particular. The information elicited through questionnaires help to understand this phenomena. For instance, older generation of film goers expected the films to play a positive role in social arena and there by help the transformation of society while the younger one looks upon the films merrily as the source of entertainment. The sublime change in the attitude of the people towards the films speaks volumes for the rising complexities and tensions in modern society, which turned films into kind of escapist outlets.

This researcher preserved these responses in a bounded form for further utilization in future.

This researcher started on this theme with bit hesitation. Her friends, well wishers, colleagues would often question the relevance of it to History. However, her passion for the theme and her guide's
confidence in her cleared the confusion. Her hesitations soon disappeared altogether when she chanced upon a reference to the UGC recommendation for introduction of Film studies in syllabus (Rasrang, dt. 30.1.60). Further, an invitation to Shabana Azami as visiting Professor to American University convinced her of her being on the right track. More important, inclusion of Bollywood studies in England made it clear that this theme is not only extremely relevant but also very important to have attracted the academicians.

By the time of the completion of the research, this researcher is more convinced about the usefulness, utility and relevance of the theme to our times. The fact that India produces more films than any other country, so much so that she topped Global Cinema admissions in 1999 with 7,700 Million number of admissions sold, followed by USA with 1377 Million number of admissions and then with Spain on tenth position 120 Million number of admissions sold, can never be overlooked by any scholar in any discipline.

This thesis is an outcome of painstaking efforts of more than four years. While submitting the thesis, I take this opportunity to thank all
those who helped me in materializing this work. First of all wish to express my deep sense of gratitude to my research guide, Dr M.P. Patil for his invaluable guidance, constant encouragement at every stage of this work. His family members also deserve a special thanks for extending their help beyond call of courtesy.

For collection of source material I had to visit several institutes like National Film Archives, Pune; office of weekly Rasrang, Nashik; Film Censor Board, Mumbai; Akhil Bhartiya Chitrapat Mahamandal, Pudhari, Satyawadi, Kolhapur Chitrangari, Rajkamal Studio, Mumbai; and Dadasaheb Phalke Memorial, Nashik etc. The office bearers and staff members of these institutes extended invaluable help for my research. This thesis would never have been completed without interviews with eminent film personalities like late Leela Pendharkar, Kiran Shantaram, Bhalchandra Kulkarni, Vasant Shinde, late Anant Mane and many others whose references are scattered throughout the thesis. Vijay Gajbar and Ram Deshpande provided some rare photographs, documents and letters. Subhash Bhurke and Arjun Nalawade also provided me valuable information. I thank them all. My sincere are also due to all respondents who responded to my
questionnaire. My student friends from journalism department Alok Jatratkar and Sanjay Salokhe helped me a lot at the stage of submission. I am thankful to the Staff of Barr. Balasaheb Kardekar Libery, Shivaji University.

My sincere thanks are due to Prof A.R.Bhosale, Head of the Department, for his continuous encouragement and especially for granting me leave at the crucial time of submission. I am also thankful to Dr M.A.Lohar for the similar reason. Dr Nanda Parekar filled the questionnairie. I am thankful to non-teaching staff for extending helping hand as and when required.

Last but not the least, I wish to express my sincere gratitude towards my parents – Varsha and Ashok Gagarani, elder brother and sister-in-law – Bhushan and Sheetal Gagarani who tolerated my tantrums throughout this work. I wish to record my deep gratitude towards Dr Jagannath Patil, my husband, and my mother-in-law. Our little dream Master Srujan also deserves a mention.

Kolhapur Kavita Jagannath Patil