CHAPTER – I

Political, Social and Economic Background of Kolhapur

Film, the technological novelty of 20th century, ushered many far reaching changes in life. The first film was made in America in 1903 and within a decade and half the princely state of Kolhapur could produce its first motion-picture. It was possible because of individual initiative against socio-political and economic background of then Kolhapur. These aspects are briefly dealt with in this chapter.

History: Political and Social

Kolhapur, one of the district places of Maharashtra State, is located on the southern bank of the Panchganga river. Its geographical location is marked 16° 42' northern latitude and 74° 16' eastern longitudes that falls on the eastern side of Sahyadrian ranges. This city, situated at 1790 feet above mean sea level, is one of the ancient cities in India today.
Political and Social developments

Brahmpuri, the first settlement was established on the bank of his river around two thousand years ago. A number of dynasties ruled over Kolhapur. Krishnaraj of Satvahana Dynasty (3rd Century A.D.) was the first king to rule Kolhapur. Satvahanas were followed by Rashtrakutas (218-500 A.D. and 750-975 A.D.), Western Chalukyan (500-750 A.D.), Shilaharas (975-1210 A.D.) in ancient time. In medieval times it passed under the rules of Devgiri Yadavas (1210 -1313 A.D.) Bahamanis, Adilshahi and finally Marathas. Maharani Tarabai, daughter-in-law of Chh. Shivaji, who had fought a war of independence against Moghals between 1701 to 1707 A.D., established the Princely State of Kolhapur, in 1731 A.D. Panhala was the first capital. Later it was shifted to Kolhapur in 1788 A.D.

During the reign of Shivaji-III (1837-66 A.D.), political interference of the East India Company was on the rise. This State passed through the confusion and instability during three decades of post-Shivaji-III period till the arrival of Chh. Shahu.
Chh. Shahu (1894-1922 A.D.)

His reign is of much significance in the social history of modern Maharashtra. He made systematic efforts for attaining social equality through the elimination of untouchability, recruitment of Non-Brahmins in the State services, establishment of Vedic schools etc. His encouragement to Satyashodhak Samaj and Arya Samaj enriched the social life of Kolhapur. He promoted social reforms such as raising the marriageable age of the girls, legalization of widow remarriage, proved very effective. He encouraged cooperative activities in economic sphere. A textile mill was established and the construction of Radhanagari Dam was started in his period. The dam turned out to be a great boon for the peasantry. Primary education was made compulsory during his reign. He created a base for socio-economic development of Kolhapur.

It is to the credit of his son and successor Chh. Rajaram Maharaj (1922-40 A.D.) that the base was consolidated and expanded during his rule of two decades.

He extended his support to Non-Brahmin Movement and presided over the 'Non-Brahmin Conference' and 'All India Non-Brahmin Social Conference' held at Satara in 1922 and at Amravati.
in 1926 respectively. One of the major achievements of his reign was the establishment of separate High Court of three judges in 1931.9

This State witnessed intense political movement in 1930s. The visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Kolhapur in 1927 helped establish 'Karveer Congress Committee' under the presidentship of Mahavrav Bagal in 1932.10 The Freedom of Assembly and political concessions was its main demand. Because of Gandhi's policy of non-interference in the matters of Princely State, the Indian National Congress restrained itself from direct involvement in the State of Kolhapur.11 It was left to the local leadership to stage out the political movement. The movement got intensified towards the fag-end of the decade under the leadership of Praja Parishad established in 1939.12 The Government initially responded favourably by accepting certain demands such as freedom of speech and organization, but as it did not pacify the workers, the Government tried to nab the movement by declaring the organization 'illegal' on the 24 March, 1939.13
Post Rajaram Period (1940-49 A.D.)

The Princely State of Kolhapur, for the first time in this century, entered an unsettled political situation in 1940's following the death of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj on November 26, 1940 which led to the Regency Council with Mr. Surve, the Chief Administrator. But soon he was removed from the Chief Administratorship due to his growing unpopularity. Mr. Perry, an Englishman, replaced him as the Chief Administrator in 1941. Her Highness Tarabai, the widow of Chh. Rajaram Maharaj, became Regent in 1942 and all the rights of the Regency passed into the hands of Her Highness. With the consent of the Government, she adopted on November 18, 1943, an eleven year child from Chavarekar-Bhosale family. As the adopted child was an infant, the State administration was once again handed over to the Regency Council in 1943. Michael was appointed as the Prime Minister. The infant child died in 1946. So the Maharaja of Dewas was adopted as the Ruler of Kolhapur State in 1947. On India gaining her independence on August 15, 1947, the issue of merger dominated the political scene in the Princely State of Kolhapur.
The *Praja Parishad* Movement influenced the State in the ‘forties’. Establishment of a responsible political system was its main goal. However, its demand for representative legislative council was rejected. The ‘Quit India’ movement, that swept the state, new issues shot to forefront. The movement swept the state. The Government Treasury was looted. Some of the leaders of the *Praja Parishad* were arrested.\(^{17}\)

**Post-Independence Period**

On the verge of independence the merger of the State in the Indian Union became a focal issue. *Parishad Praja* split on that score. Ratnappa Kumbhar established a District Congress Committee in support of merger of Kolhapur State.\(^{18}\) The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948 created a tense situation in Kolhapur, Sangli and Miraj. Violent incidents took place, the Government of India dissolved the Bagal Ministry and appointed Capt. Nanjappa as the State Administrator. Justice Koyaji enquiry committee on post-assassination violence and riots in Kolhapur recommended the merger of Kolhapur. Thus, the Princely State of
Kolhapur merged into the Indian union on March 1, 1949 and Praja Parishad merged with the Indian National Congress Party.\textsuperscript{19}

**Kolhapur after Merger : (1949-60 A.D.)**

The political development of post-merger Kolhapur came to be dominated by the 'Peasants and Workers Party', known as Shekap (Shetkari Kamgar Paksha), under the leadership of Shankarrao More, Shankarrao Jedhe, etc. and 'National Congress Party' led by Ratnappa Kumbhar and Shankarrao Mane. The first General Elections for Parliament and Assembly were declared in 1952. PWP defeated its main rival, the Congress Party. Balwant Dhondi Barve, a PWP candidate, won the Assembly seat by defeating G.G.Jadhav (proprietor of Daily Pudhari) of Congress and Urmila Sabnis of Socialist Party. PWP did not contest for the Parliament. It supported an independent candidate, Balasaheb Khardekar, a famous educationist who won the Parliament seat by defeating Ratnappa Kumbhar of Congress and Vasantrao Bagal of Socialist Party. In the General Elections of 1957 too, the PWP retained both the seats - Bhausaheb Mahagaonkar and P.B.Salunkhe winning the Parliament and the Assembly seats, respectively.\textsuperscript{20} The Congress suffered a humiliating defeat in those elections by loosing 11 out of 12
Assembly seats. The results confirmed the growing popularity of PWP in the region.  

Major Political Events

A brief mention needs to be made of two major political movements the Kolhapur witnessed during the period of this study—the events, which characterize the post-independence history of Maharashtra.

The demand for Samyukta Maharashtra, i.e. the creation of Maharashtra, including the regions of Mumbai, Vidarbha, Hyderabad and Marathwada, dominated and deeply influenced the politics of Maharashtra in the early years of its formation. A movement spearheaded by Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti set up in 1950 spread widely and instantly and came to be supported by major political parties in Maharashtra. It gained further momentum with the reflection of the said demand by the State Reorganization Committee headed by Faizal Ali. Subsequently, Madhavrav Bagal took initiative in setting up an all-Party committee on the issue of Samyukta Maharashtra on the 1st May, 1954. Faizal Ali Commission's recommendation of a bilingual state, minus Kannada
speaking districts, in 1955 met with a second wave of strong protests from all over Maharashtra. The tragic death of 15 agitators in Police firing in Mumbai in November 1955 generated intense reaction. Kolhapur observed a hundred percent Bandh, more than 20 thousand agitating people joined a procession taken out in the city.\textsuperscript{23} Eventually as per the recommendations of the Reorganization Commission, Maharashtra was formed with Mumbai under the Central Government rule, which laid to another wave of protests all over Maharashtra from January 17\textsuperscript{th} to 19\textsuperscript{th}, 1956. A five-day curfew was declared as a result of death of a demonstrator in Police firing at Bindu Chowk in Kolhapur.\textsuperscript{24}

Kolhapur remained a strong basin of the \textit{Samyukta Maharashtra Movement} and as such, it attracted a number of prominent leaders. Jayprakash Narayan, during his visit to this city on the 24th November 1958, rejected the idea of bilingual state based on the separation of Maharashtra and Gujarat.\textsuperscript{25} The movement reached the conclusive stage, when Indira Gandhi (1919-84 A.D.), who later became the Prime Minister (from 1966-75, 1978-84) raised the issue in the Chandigarh session of Congress. A committee of nine members was appointed for the purpose. On the
basis of a favourable report of the committee, a bill moved on the 3rd March 1960 and passed in April 1960 in the Parliament, laid to the formation of the present-day Maharashtra on the 1st May 1960.²⁶

The citizens of Kolhapur made their own contribution to the liberation of Goa in 1961. Many people volunteered to participate in the freedom movement. Francis Menzes of Kolhapur was seriously injured in Police firing on the 16th August 1955. A bullet struck the left leg of Sheikh Sanaulla in the same firing. Under the presidency of Major Dadasaheb Nimbalkar, a God Vimochan Samiti was formed. It collected Rs.2,500/-, some clothes and blankets in a single day for the freedom fighters of Goa.²⁷

Educational Developments

Chh. Shahu's zealous promotion of the educational program aimed at social equality, justice and primary education for all; resulted into a substantial spread of education and educational network in this area. It saw the rise of boarding movement²⁷a as a part of spreading the education among various communities such as untouchables, Lingayats, Muslims, Jains, Kayastha Prabhus, etc.²⁸ He made primary education compulsory and free by passing an
ordinance in 1916. Knowing the importance of economic help, he provided grant-in-aid to the schools. As a result of his primary educational policy, Princely State of Kolhapur had about 559 schools in 1922, the number having risen from 310 in 1919.29

The growth of education continued throughout the reign of Chh. Rajaram. Sykes Law College was established in 1933 and Maharani Tarabai Teacher’s College in 1934. The number of schools increased from 559 in 1921-22 to 886 in 1940 and the strength of the students rose from 31,096 to 63,419 during this period. The rate of literacy stood at 13% in 1941.30

Barr. Khardekar, Prin.R.Desai and Shri. J.P. Naik, famous educationist and advisor to Education Minister of the State during the reign of Regency Council, made substantial contribution to primary, secondary and higher education. Primary education was transferred from Darbar to municipality in 1942. The State had 88,510 pupil and 1,299 educational institutions in 1944, the figure of literatures rose to 1,30,895 in 1951.31

One of the important developments in the post-independence period was the affiliation of all the colleges in Kolhapur to the
University of Poona in 1949. Kolhapur had three colleges in pre-independence period. A number of colleges were started in post-independence period. Barr. Khardekar and Prin. M.R. Desai opened Gopal Krishna Gokhale College in 1950. Vatsala Devi Desai junior College of Education was started in 1951 by Tararani Vidyamandir Society which was renamed as Tararani Vidyapeeth in 1953. The city had its first Commerce College in 1957 started by Ratnappa Kumbhar. V.T. Patil, a well-known educationist, started Kirti College to promote education amongst women. It was affiliated to the S.N.D.T. Women's University, Bombay.  

**Industrial Developments**

Foundation of Shahu Chhatrapati Mills, establishment of Shahupuri as a traders' colony, introduction of railway and commencement of the construction of Radhanagari dam constitute the milestones in the industrial growth of Kolhapur in the reign of Chh. Shahu. Continuation of these policies and establishment of the Kolhapur Sugar Mill under Chh. Rajaram laid the foundation of industrial Kolhapur.
A number of industries were established and developed during this period. Since 1845, Jaggery (Gur) of Kolhapur was being transported to Kathewad, Kachcha and Gujarat. For encouraging and expanding this trade, Chh. Shahu created Shahupuri Vyapari Peth in 1905. 'Shahupuri Merchant Association' was also set-up in 1927 to bring together farmers, merchants and agents. Jaggery of Kolhapur was exported to Japan, Malaya, Ceylon, South Africa, and Myanmar in 1956. The Government of Maharashtra encouraged jaggery trade by creating a Market Yard in 1958. Dr. Shamrao Shirgaonkar was responsible for the establishment of the Kolhapur Sugar Mill in 1932. In 1955-56 the production of sugarcane from the mill's own canefields was 32,895 tonnes and it had to purchase 86,559 tonnes from the open market. Jaggery and sugar production industry spread in the region of Kolhapur, which eventually helped to keep the balance of the region's economy.

Textile industry progressed with the encouragement and financial support of the State. Chh. Shahu founded 'Shahu Chhatrapati Mills' in 1906 as a joint stock company of Kolhapur Durbar and Private entrepreneurs. Beginning with spinning section in 1928, a weaving section was introduced later in the mill.
After 1935, its management was transferred to Messrs. James Finlay and Company. The mill had 319 looms and 15,998 spindles in 1947-48. The ownership of the mill was transferred to the Government of Bombay after the merger of Kolhapur State into the Indian Union. In 1956, the mill produced 54,24,029 yards of cloth. Up to 1956, coal was used as the fuel for generating steam-power. The introduction of electricity in 1957 raised mill's production capacity. The mill was declared as a commercial undertaking of the Government of Maharashtra in 1960.\(^{38}\)

Chh. Shahu laid the foundation of the engineering industry in Kolhapur. He invited Yamanaji Amble of Nipani to start an iron foundry and allotted him a cost-free plot of land. Amble started fabrication of sugarcane crushers, but in 1920, an unfortunate accident resulted in the shutting down of the first foundry of Kolhapur. Sakharam Yashwant Kulkarni, a mechanical engineer, founded the 'S. Yashwant and Company' in 1925. In his workshop, he manufactured agricultural pump sets, ploughs, etc. He also started an iron foundry in 1941.\(^{39}\) Unfortunately, the factory was burnt down in the riot erupted after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. Y.P. Powar designed a machine by which it became possible to
straighten the axle of a motor vehicle without heating it. He set up a small workshop, which was expanded in 1949 as 'Packo Private Limited'. The unit began manufacturing flourmills, diesel engines and opened separate departments of welding and foundry. During the second world war, there was a shortage of petroleum products. Mahadev Shelke, famous by his nickname Mahadba Mestry, succeeded in overcoming this problem by manufacturing coal gas plants. He also produced a new acid battery, which was useful for motor cars. In 1951, the Government of India stopped import of diesel engines, to encourage indigenous production. The industrialists started manufacturing the diesel engines.  

Silver and Gold industry was an important industry of Kolhapur. Royal patronage facilitated the rise of Hupari as a center of this industry. In 1950, there were 225 establishments that engaged 1,700 workers. In Kolhapur city itself, about 982 artisans were engaged as goldsmiths and silversmiths in 1951. Kolhapur is well-known for a gold ornament, known as Kolhapuri Saj.  

Kolhapur is also known for its leather industry of cottage variety. The industry comprises two sections, tanning and leatherware. Tanned leather was sold at Rs.10/- per Kg. in 1960.
Kolhapuri Chappal (footwear from Kolhapur) is a product of traditional handicraft and enjoys national and international repute and market. There were 61 leatherware producers in 1947 employing 285 persons. The figure rose to 3508 in 1960.42

Besides these major industries, several endeavors like edible oil extraction, chemical and pharmaceuticals production, snuff-making, soap industry, match-box industry and automobile workshops had flourished during the period of this study.43

Cultural Developments

Hailed as Dakshin Kashi, Kolhapur is a place of religious significance. Karveer, the old name of the city, is said to derived from the word Kuradhari. Karveer also means the city of Goddess Mahalakshmi, holding a Kur (a heavy weapon). Mahalaxmi temple is the main attraction for Hindu devotees. Built in Hemadpanthi style, the temple also has an architectural significance. Jyotiba temple is in the close vicinity. Caves of Pavandara, Jain Bastis, Muslim shrines like Babu Jamal Darga, Churches add to the religious significance of Kolhapur. Other historical sites in the city include Bhavani Mandap, Old Palace and New Palace. 44
Modes of entertainment like music, singing and drama were very popular in Kolhapur during this period. Royal patronage accelerated flourishing of music and drama tradition. Chh. Shahu extended patronage to several singers and artists during his tenure. Renowned singers like Alladian Khan (1855-1946 A.D.) and his brother Haider Khan (1861-1936 A.D.) from Jaipur joined the Royal Court of Kolhapur. Introduction of new ragas, tunes and melodious voice made the singing of Khan Brothers very popular. Manjikhan (1888-1930 A.D.) and Bhurajee Khan both sons of Alladian Khan were also good singers with melodious voice. Famous as Maharashtra Kokil (Cuckoo of Maharashtra), Shankarrao Sarnaik was a disciple of Alladian Khan. Govindrao Tembe (1888-1955 A.D.) was not only a very good musician, singer and harmonium player but also a versatile actor and dramatist. In 1919, Deval Club, an institute devoted to music and drama, was established by Govind alias Baba Deval. Prof. N.S. Phadke of Rajaram College formed a Music and Art Circle in 1932, which arranged the singing programs of Abdul Karim Khan, Hirabai Badodekar, Master Krishnarao, Gundopant Walawalkar, Jagannathbuwa Purohit, a well-known singer, joined Deval Club and organized various music and
singing programs of famous artists such as Bade Gulam Ali, Pandit Ravishankar, Pandit Kumar Gandharva and others. Nivrutibuva Sarnaik, Anandrao Limaye, Bhausaheb Tembe, Suhdakarbuwa Digrajkar, Gulabbai Kagalakar and many others carried forward this tradition of music.46

Madan Mohan Lohiya, the general manager of Kolhapur Sugar Mill, was a great connoisseur of art and became the founder of Jeevan Kalyan, a cultural institution, which provided golden opportunity for the lovers of art to listen to the singing voices of Begam Akhtar, Girija Devi, Master Krishnarao, Manik Varma and others. This institution also felicitated many senior artists, including Balgandharva.47

Vishnudas Bhave, the father of Marathi theatre, founded a drama company and presented his first play Sita Swayamwar, in 1843 at Sangli. The play used to open with holy songs dedicated to the presiding deities. The Sutradhar was present with his chorus of singers and musical accompanists throughout the play. Mythological plays of Vishnudas Bhave were so popular that almost all the classes of society turned to this new form of entertainment.48
During the period of 1843 to 1880, drama companies such as Ichalkaranjikar, Altekar Hindu Natak and Kolhapur Natak Mandali came forward with their plays. During the decade of 1880s, Rajaram College introduced dramas. Staged Ratanpal and Sashikala at the adoption ceremony of Chh. Shahu in 1894. Chh. Shahu patronized many drama companies. He encouraged Keshavrao Bhosale (1890-1921 A.D.), a famous singer and actor, who had begun his acting career at the age of four with Swadhshi Hitachintak Mandali. In 1908, he founded Lalit Kaladarsha Mandali that produced the plays of reputed play-wrighters as Kirloskar, Deval and Khadilkar. In 1914, he produced a romantic play, Rakshasi Mahatwakanksha written by Vaman Joshi, a disciple of Tilak. In this drama, Keshavrao played the female lead. In 1913, Narayan Rajhansa (1888-1968 A.D.), renamed as Balgandharva by Lokmanya Tilak, founded Gandharva Natak Mandali. Before establishing this company, he was working with Kirloskar Company. The title of Balgandharva mainly indicated the celebrated melody of his singing. Balgandharva and Keshavrao jointly performed, Manapman, a music drama in aid of Tilak's Swaraj fund. Samyukta Manapan received highest acclaim. Balgandharva and Bhosale together raised
the Marathi stage to the zenith of popularity and prosperity. Govindrao Tembe worked with Gandharva Natak Company and taught music to famous artists like Shankarrao Sarnaik, Balgandharva, etc., besides writing plays titled Siddha Sansar and Chitravanchana. Shivraj Sangeet Mandal was founded under the stewardship of Tembe in 1916. Yashwant Sangeet Mandal was formed by Shankarrao Sarnaik in 1919 and presented the plays such as Subhadra, Manapman, Layacha Lay, etc. Dramas were performed at the Old Palace, Laxmi Prasad theatre and Himmatbahadur Paga and Palace Theatre in Kolhapur. During 1922, Maharashtra Natya Mandal was also founded through which Bhalji Pendharkar's plays, including Rashtra Sansar, Kranti and Ajinkyatara were presented. Famous music director and singer Sudhir Phadke directed a play Vizleli Vat in 1939. Prof. N.S. Phadake wrote and presented several plays such as Sanjivan, Janki, Yugantar, Kale Gore, etc. Jayamala Shiledar started her career from Veshantar, a drama presented by Govindrao Tembe in 1942 and went on to become a famous singer-actress of musical drama in Maharashtra.
In 1944, artists and drama lovers came together and established *Karveer Natya Mandal* to present many popular dramas such as *Paisach Paisa, Andhalyanchi Shala,* and *Swayamwar.* It also organized a grand drama festival in 1949.

Even after the merger of Kolhapur continued to encourage many drama companies. Madanmohan Lohiya presented *Swayamwar* which he himself directed. Kolhapur District Drama Association was formed in 1959 and was inaugurated by Nashikrao Tirpude, the then Social Welfare Minister of Bombay State.52

**Powada (Ballads)**

*Powada*, a Ballad form, is a folk form of entertainment based on socio-political events. Also known as *Shahiri,* the *Shahir* is the one who presents it. It is made of several *Chouks* (stanzas).53 *Powada,* a very popular during the Peshawa period and was singled out by Chh. Shahu for his special patronage. The Royal Durbar would often arrange *Kalgi-tura* (it involved a light question-answer feature of much entertainment value) and felicitate the winners *Shahir.* Lahri Haider, *Shahir,* was was very famous for his *Powada, Zanshichi Rani.* His disciples, Shankar Kumbhar and Pirajirao Sarinaik were
famous as Shahir Tilak. The origin of this form of entertainment may be traced back to Saint Dnyaneshwar who used it in a sense of valour and as such Powada is usually associated with historical themes based on heroic deeds. It remained a popular mode of entertainment throughout the period of the study.

The famous Shahir M.N. Nanivadekar, G.D. Madgulakar are also linked with this city.

Tamasha

Tamasha, a word of Persian origin, meaning an exhibition or a rural drama, entered Urdu and Marathi languages by the end of the 17th century. Being a potpourri of dance and song, it emerged as a strong mode of entertainment in the 18th century. During Peshwa rule, the elements of story, drama and political happenings came to be involved in Tamasha. It comprises Gan (a prayer song offered to God Gajanana at the beginning), Gavlan (a small song glorifying Lord Krishna) and Vag (presentation of contemporary events through dialogues, dances and songs.). However, its main attraction is Lavani a scintillating dance. The first Marathi Tamasha Vag, Mohan Batav was presented in 1670 by Uma-Bapu, a Tamasha artist
hailing from Ped and Savlaj villages in Sangli district. Chh. Shahu used the Tamasha, a form of folk art, to spread the Satyashodhak philosophy through Tamasgir Bhau Fakkad. The period of this study marks certain sublime changes in Tamasha under the influence of movies.

**Kirtan and Bhajan**

Popular tradition of religious worship through story-telling and chanting of hymns have always been a mode of entertainment. *Kirtan* is a form of spontaneous poetry that came into vogue in the 18th century. Narayanrao Gogate (Phalatankar) was a popular Kirtankar during the period of this study. Like *Kirtan*, *Bhajan* is also related to the worship of God and its roots may be traced to time of Maharashtrian sages like Dnyaneshwar, Namdev and Tukaram.

**Dashawatar (Ten Incarnations of Vishnu)**

There is reference to this form in *Dasbodh* of Saint Ramdas, a philosopher saint of medieval Maharashtra. It is based on ten incarnations of God Vishnu. *Dashawatar*, a folk art, came to Maharashtra from Karnataka.
Bharuds and Gondhals

*Bharuds and Gondhals*, both of religious nature, were also the traditional avenues of entertainment. 61

Wrestling

Chh. Shahu, powerful wrestler himself, gave patronage to wrestling in a big way. His generous encouragement attracted reputed wrestlers to Kolhapur from all over India. *Khasbag*, a stadium built in Greco-Roman architectural style, speaks volumes about his fondness for this traditional martial art. 62 Wrestling bouts continued to be the main attraction for masses during the period of this study. Sadiq, a Pakistani wrestler, regularly participated in these bouts for almost twenty years. Ganpatrao Andalkar and Dadu Chougule, wrestlers from Kolhapur, won the national award, *Rustam A-Hind*. *Kolhapur Zilla Talim Sangh* was established in 1960. Maharashtra Wrestlers Conference was set up in 1954 out of the efforts of Yashwantrao Chavan, the then Chief Minister of Maharashtra, and his ministerial colleagues Balasaheb Hire, and Balasaheb Desai, to promote wrestling. 63
Arrival of Films

Against this background, an unknown but quite absorbing medium of mass entertainment emerged. It came to be known as 'film'.

Film is a direct product of technology, gift of the West and it brought about a revolution in the life-styles all over the world. The history of the film may be traced to the Peter Roget's 'principle of presistance of vision' formulated in 1824. Later on, Thomas Edison revolutionized the entertainment world with his inventions of gramophone and kinetoscope in 1887 and 1889 respectively. He patented peep-hole kinetoscope, and made the world's first moving picture *Of a man snizzling* in 1893. Lashem's invention of Pantepticon projector made it possible for many to watch the picture on the screen, whereas only one could watch it on kinetoscope. Next, in the year 1895, Lumier Brothers of France came up with cinematograph, which could both record and project moving images. They showed a short film *Lunch Hour at Lumier Factory* on the 28th December, 1895.

In the beginning, raw films were made from asbestos in France. However, an American movie titled *The Great Train...*
Robbery produced by Edwin S. Porter with the help of David Graphith, a technician, may be considered as the beginning of filmmaking. The movie was 244 meters in length, lasted 12 minutes and contained 14 scenes. Hence, it may be called the first full-length fiction film.65

Film in India

In India, exhibition of films began in 1896 at Bombay. On 7th July 1896, at Watson Hotel of Bombay, Lumier Brothers exhibited films An arrival of the Train, The Sea Bath, The Demolition, etc. and launched this new entertainment media in India.66

The history of film making in India may be traced to Pitale Brothers and Mahadev Patwardhan. They succeeded in showing the show of Shambrik Kharolica (Magic Lantern), the magic unfolding of popular scenes from the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata with the help of painted glass slides through magic lanterns against the background of songs and a running commentary.67

Harishchandra Bhatavadekar alias Savedada (1865-1958 A.D.), took up photography as career, when common Indians would regard photography as magic and witchcraft. For them being
photographed meant forgoing certain years from life. Savedada had tough time convincing the superstitious people that ‘photography is a modern form of art.’ He ordered a cine camera manufactured by Ralley Brothers of Brandfield to be imported, and then successfully shot the scene of a wrestling bout between Pundalikdada and Krishna Nhavi in 1898. To his further credit was the excellent shooting of the felicitation extended to Wrangler R.R. Paranjape on his return to India from Cambridge University in 1901. Savedada had planned a feature film on the life of Lord Krishna. But overwhelmed by the death of his younger brother, he abandoned those plans.68

B.N. Patankar of Bombay produced a film titled Savitri in 1912. In the same year, Dadasaheb Torane and Advocate Chitre jointly produced Pundalik. Interestingly enough, Johnson, a European photographer was the cameraman. However, given the poor technical standards, neither Patankar nor Torane-Chitre duo could get the credit as the producer of the first motion-picture of India.69

Bengalis also experimented with the new media as early as 1901, with Scenes from the Plays produced by Hiralal Sen in
partnership with Jyotish Sarkar. The same duo came up with *Bengal Partition Movement* in 1905. These efforts did contribute to mastering of the techniques of the new media. One Natraj Mudaliar also tried to make a movie in south.70

Dhundiraj alias Dadasaheb Govind Phalke (1870-1944 A.D.), inspired by the film *Jesus Christ*, dashed to London to learn the art and science of film making. On his return, the very next year 1913, he produced on an experimental basis, a one-minute film *Ropatyachi Vadh* (Growth of plant), the success of which made him come up with *Raja Harishchandra*, the first Indian film in real sense that was exhibited on April 24, 1913. No wonder, he came to be hailed as and has remained the 'Father of Indian Cinema'.71

The Princely State of Kolhapur did not lag behind in the new world of entertainment. Anandrao and Baburao Mestri, the cousins hailed as Painter Brothers because of their painting skills, took the initiative by setting up *Deccan Cinema*, a film exhibition theatre in partnership with one Vashikar in 1912. However, the partnership was soon to be dissolved for lack of investment capital. In 1914, Painter Brothers established Maharashtra Cinema in partnership with one Ruikar. They bought a damaged second hand movie
camera, as a new camera or even a second hand one was not within their reach. They not only repaired the damaged camera but also improvised it and successfully took the trial shots.72

Emboldened with the success, Anandrao wanted to devise a new movie camera. He met with an untimely death in 1916. His efforts, however, did not go waste. Baburao, his cousin, succeeded in making a movie camera and used it for shooting some swimming shots. Next, he successfully shot the 1918 Bombay Special Session of Congress.73

Baburao Painter, who established *Maharashtra Film Company* in 1917, turned the dream into a reality, finance was the major obstacle. However, Tanibai Kagalkar, a well-known singer, solved that problem by offering him Rs.10,000/-. Baburao Painter chose mythological theme *Seeta Swayamwar*. Given the deep influence of mythology on the Indian mind, the audience for his first venture was automatically ensured. But, due to social restrictions, he could not get female artists to act in his film.74 As he was very particular about female artists enacting female characters, he shelved his plan of producing *Seeta Swayamwar*. For his next project, again
a mythological theme, he chose the story of Sairandhri based on the tale of Kichak Vadh (Slaying of Kichak) which was completed in recorded time. Luckily, after considerable persuasion, Gulabbai and Anusayabai agreed to act in the film. It was exhibited in Aryan Theatre, Pune, on the 7th February 1920. Lokmanya Tilak, highly impressed, conferred the title of Cinema Kesari on Baburao Painter.75

Thus, the foundation of Kolhapur film industry was laid down by Baburao Painter's Sairandhri produced, by Maharashtra Film Company, in 1920. The cultural background of Kolhapur in general and Chh. Shahu's liberal patronage in particular were the key factors in sowing the seeds of film industry in this State.

References


16. Ibid., p. 84.

17. Dayanand Mane, op.cit., p. 49.

18. B.B. Bhosale, op.cit., p. 36.


22. Ibid., p. 42.


26. I.H. Pathan, op.cit., p. 27.


27a. The deserving students from poor families from rural areas couldn’t afford to take education in Kolhapur due to high cost of living. With a view to provide them accomodation in city a
first boarding house was established in 1896. In due course, separate boarding houses for non-Brahmin caste came to be established with emphasis on spread of education among them.

29. B.B. Bhosale, op.cit., p. 78.
30. Ibid., p. 55.
34. I.H. Pathan, op.cit., p. 142.
35. Ibid., pp. 145,146.
40. Ibid., p. 376.

42. I.H. Pathan *op.cit.*, pp. 217, 218.


44. Ibid., pp. 427-28.

45. Ibid., pp. 169-70.

46. Interview – Prabhakar Vartak.


49. Ibid., pp. 57,58.


52. Interview – Prabhakar Vartak.


55. A.S. Gadhave, op.cit., p. 41.
57. A.S. Gadhave, op.cit., P. 60.
63. Y.D. Magdum, op.cit., p. 269.


73. Ibid., p. 45.


75. G.R. Bhide and Baba Gajbar, op.cit., p. 54.