CHAPTER I

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH DESIGN
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Introduction

I

Conceptual Framework (A) Social Change

1. Towards the understanding of certain terms (B) Social Reforms, (c) Revivalism and Reforms, (D) Revolution and Reforms, (E) Social Movement and Social Reform Movement.


3. Agencies of Social Reforms.

4. Social Reforms and Politics.

II

Historical Background

1. Pre-British Society in Maharashtra -
   (a) Social (b) Economy (c) Political.

2. Tradition of Social Reforms of Maharashtra.

III

Research Design and Methodology

1. Objectives of the study.

2. Survey of Literature

3. Methodology.


5. Relevance of the Study.
CHAPTER I

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction:

The 19th century is very important in the history and politics of India in general and Maharashtra in particular from number of stand points. The end of Peshwa rule coupled with establishment and consolidation of British power in Maharashtra had far reaching effects on social, political, economic and educational life in this region. Apart from political stability through well-organised administrative system, rule of law and the judicial system the British rulers introduced new ideas and thinking through system of western education.

As a result of western education a new kind of awakening about the situation was created among newly educated class of the people. Rational thinking about these problems began. The western educated elite class began to propagate new ideas and began to influence the outlook of the people through their speeches, writings, and activities, individually as well as collectively through organized groups and newly established organizations and institutions.
British created sense of modernity through western education, communication and commercial development. This also had its impact on the process of thinking of the people. The spirit of inquiry and the rational thinking were the hall-marks of the new western educational system. Many of those who underwent through this system began to analyse the conditions of the people under the British rule, the age-old traditions and the customs and their relevance to the new situation and felt the need to reform this situation. This was the beginning of social reform movement in Maharashtra.

19th century was a creative age in human history. It was a century of "hopes" with reference to Indian situation. This gave rise to a new kind of political and social consciousness. The learned men continued their activities not only in the sphere of social reforms, but in the politics also. Before actually going through the historical background of the social reforms movements in 19th century Maharashtra, it is necessary to explain certain terms often used in the context of the social reforms activities.

I Conceptual Framework:

1) Towards the Understanding of Certain Terms-
(A) Social Change:

Many a times the terms social change, social reforms and social movement are used without much discrimination.
Change is a characteristic feature of human society. Social values, customs, traditions and social structure have always undergone changes from time to time. Social change includes both the change, in social behaviour as well as change in social structure.

Social change is a process of "discernable significant alternation in the structure and functioning of a particular social system". It also signifies "alteration of social structure, including consequences and manifestation of such structure embodied in norms, values, culture, product and symbols". It means social change is concerned with the situational changes.

The change in the external conditions brings change in the material culture of that society, which in term stimulates changes in non-material culture as well. The human efforts to control the external conditions set the process of social change. Hence social change is considered as a by-product of human efforts. Thus, social change is associated with change in culture of that society. In this context the term social change is quite broader, in its scope which signifies changes in the form or any alteration in material as well as non-material factors leading towards, bringing change in internal and external, disposition of any society in a particular period, as a result of the influences of varied kind.
There is a close link between the social change and social problems which society faces at a given time. Social problems are the result of the "inability of the established society to fulfill the needs and demands of the individuals". It is further stated that all problems have consequences for both individuals as well as the society of which they are a part.

Therefore, it can be stated that any problem concerning individuals in the society in turn becomes social problem of the collectivity and the efforts on the part of individuals to tackle those problems, bring social change in that society.

(B) Social Reforms-

Social change and social reforms are closely related to each other. The word "reform" suggests some changes in the arrangements of social pattern, changes in the social values and changes in the attitudes and outlook of the people towards the existing arrangements of the society. It also suggests a desire among the people to overcome the defects by eradicating old traditions and customs and to bring change in time-honoured structure of the society in the light of new situation. It also aims at making "the social conditions of the present society better than the earlier society".
Social reforms though propagated by a handful of few forward looking educated elites in the beginning, influence the masses ultimately. "They are not meant for liberal few", said M.G. Ranade. Social reforms aim essentially at a change of the basic values of the society and the attitudes of the people.

(C) Revivalism and Reforms:

Many a times the process of social change is viewed from revivalist approach and this revivalism is confused with social reforms.

Revival is a process of reviving or renewing the old traditions, customs, beliefs which were forgotten by the people over a period of time. It is a process of making people conscious and aware of the past traditions and customs, mainly in the religious field but it also includes past history of the region remembering the heroes and persons of proven ability who led the society.

Revivalism assumes past as glorious. The only solution to the current problems viz. - socio-religious or political in character lies in revival of the past. It aims at reestablishing the condition prevailing in the past. But in the Indian context of 19th century revivalism was concerned mainly with reviving the past traditions and customs of Hinduism.
A group of Hindu leaders appealed the people to revive Vedic religion in its real form. They desired to revive Vedic traditions. They were of the view that social evils prevalent in that period were the result of ignoring the real Vedic Hindu culture, which did not preach casteism, child-marriages, ban on women's education or even the custom of Sati.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Mrs. Annie Beasant, Swami Vivekanand and other reformers were the revivalists. "Go back to Vedas" or "appeal to past" were the slogans of revivalists. They were keenly interested in bringing about reforms in the society within the frame-work of Vedic culture. Their main thrust was on religious reforms. Their approach to social reforms was indirect. They thought that establishment of old Vedic culture, with full force of its real traditions, will succeed in removing the existing defects in the society.

In the revivalistic approach, observes Shankar Ghosh, "reform was not altogether discouraged. But reform under this scheme was presented as a return to the freer and simpler life of India of the Vedic age. It was the strategy of indirect approach".

There was another group of intellectuals like M.G. Ranade, R.C. Bhandarkar, Justice K.T. Telang who were advocating the reforms in the society by direct methods and not via religious reforms as the revivalists thought. According to these reformers social reforms can be made
by legislation. Here they envisaged the role of state in bringing social reforms and expected government to act in response to people's changing aspirations and outlook.

New western education brought the new generation of educated people in contact with new ideas and concepts like equality and liberty. The process of rational thinking about the prevailing state of affairs in that period brought to their notice the basic causes responsible for this social backwardness.

The revivalists became active as a reaction to the work of Christian Missionaries in India. The missionaries continuously attacked Hinduism and always criticised the social evils in Hindu society. The revivalists did not like this attitude. They not only refuted the attack on Hinduism, but they tried their best to present Hinduism in proper perspective. Thus, revivalists contributed in the process of social reforms in the 19th century.

The social reform movement which was undertaken during 19th century by reformists and revivalists had some common ground. Both the groups were against the existing social evils and wanted to eradicate them. Secondly both were nationalist in their outlook. However, they differed in their methods of bringing reforms in the society. As
A.R. Desai puts it, "both movements were inspired with a national ideal, both were national in content, but religious in form".

(D) Revolution and Reforms:

Sometimes the term social reform is confused with the term revolution. In the most common sense "revolution is an attempt to make a radical change in the system of government. It also means any fundamentally new development in the economy, culture or social fabric, that is in practically any field of human endeavour". Most of the times revolution is - accompanied by violence and bloodshed. It implies drastic and sudden change brought in effect by using methods like armed conflicts, suppression of opponents and many authoritarian methods.

The basic difference between Revolutionary movement and Reformist movement is that, revolutionary movement intends to uproot the existing system itself, whereas reformist movement intends to correct the existing social system.

It is further observed that "revolution is associated with radical change in the totality of social and cultural system and associated with violence. It is also characterised by class conflict". In short revolution is broader phenomenon signifying total transformation of society
- towards well set goal with drastic methods. Whereas the process of reforms is slow, aiming at the change in the society in peaceful manner by creating awareness of the need of such change among the people. It emphasises mobilization of the people through consensus and not conflict. In this sense the reform movements are essentially the movements of social evolution.

(E) Social Movement and Social Reform Movement:

Social movement - whether reformist, revivalist, or revolutionary in character - is an important instrument of social change. All these varieties of social movements have some common features, but that does not mean that every social movement is essentially a reformist movement. Social movement is a broader term which indicates concerted efforts of the people through their voluntary associations to bring about a change in society. This change can be positive or negative, progressive or regressive.

M.S.A. Rao has mentioned the following points as important features of social movements. (i) Collective action to create an interest and awakening in a sufficiently large number of people (ii) ideology (iii) formal or informal organizations and leadership (iv) social change either partial or total and (v) continuity and direction.
In the light of the above mentioned features the social reform movement can be considered as social movement, as it consists of collective actions, organizations, leadership and definite aims and objectives etc.

Social movements differ from each other on the basis of the methods they employ i.e. peaceful, violent etc.; their aims and objectives with regard to a change to be effected i.e. revivalists quoists, or reformists and the time duration i.e. short lived or temporary, protracted over a large period of time. These variations depend upon the nature of problems, their intensity, response of the people and speed of creating awareness among them about the changes to be achieved. Hence while studying any social reform movement one has to take into consideration these factors.

2) Methods of Social Reforms:

During the late 19th century the question of social reforms and its methods was widely debated. One group led by M.G. Ranade, B.M. Malbari, K.T. Telang and others supported the view that social reforms could be initiated with legislation and with the initiative of the British government. However, other group supported by B.G. Tilak and others did not like the idea of foreign intervention
in domestic matter like social reforms.

The state is not merely a political and administrative body. But it is also a means of promoting all round development and welfare of its citizens. The national social conference was the supporter of social reforms by state interference. The conference constantly requested the government to take initiative in all kinds of reforms. The conference even passed a resolution requesting government to raise the marriage age of girls to 12 years through legislation.

B.G.Tilak, on the contrary, put forward the view that the "education" and not "legislation", is powerful means in bringing about social reforms. Educated people can understand the damage done by evil practices and they can create public opinion against such practices. B.G.Tilak thought that reforms implemented gradually through education will be more effective and permanent than those brought about by the force of law.

D.F.Wacha, a social reformer, also said that legislative remedies had proved worse than the disease. He was of the opinion that state interference should be minimum.

The controversy mentioned above indicate the difference in approach of different leaders on the problems of social reforms.
M.G. Ranade pointed out five methods of social reforms as under:

(1) Method of tradition;
(2) Appealing to the conscience of the people.
(3) To enforce reforms by means of penalties.
(4) Method of rebellion and
(5) Judiciary.

The method of tradition is based on the revival of old Vedic texts. Dr. R.G. Bhandarkar and Swami Dayanand Saraswati have justified this method on the grounds of democracy and equality. Dr. Radhakrishnan has also pointed out that method of religious reform is essentially a democratic.

The second method depends upon the changing the minds of the people in favour of reforms. This method has been suggested and practically used by the reformers like Balshastri Jambhekar, Ranade, Lokhitwadi, Agarkar. B.G. Tilak was also in favour of this method.

In third method, Ranade suggested was that of imposition of penalties by the caste organization or by the state. However, it does not appear to be practical and effective. Had the caste Panchayats been active in preventing many evil-customs, all evils would have disappeared.

Revolution is also accepted as one of the methods of
social reforms. But it does not remain effective in the long-run because in any revolutionary movement the emotions are stranger than reason. Hence, effects of such rebellion is short-lived.

In addition to the methods mentioned above, it is pointed out that judiciary plays its part through judge made laws in encouraging social reforms. In 1886 in a case Mr Justice Wood passed a verdict which stated that, the parents cannot marry their daughter and thrust a husband on her without her consent. This implies that right to choose the husband by a women was supported by the court. This shows that sometimes judicial verdicts help social reform movement.

Apart from the methods discussed above, Mr. K.T.Telang has mentioned some more methods as under:-

i) Method of least resistance or trouble. This method tries to implement social reforms without creating difficulties for the reformers and for the society at large.

ii) Another way of implementing reforms is to create a separate class of the like-minded persons who are in favour of reforms. But even if such class is created in practice actual implementation of reforms is not easy.

iii) Third method is to circulate a written document stating
various reforms and requesting the individuals to sign the circular as a pledge.

iv) Another method of effecting social reforms is to persuade priests class, (i.e. Shastris and Pandits) in favour of social reforms. This method tries to convince the orthodox class to adapt rational outlook and to interpret the religious scriptures with reference to changing context. However, in case of social reforms in 19th century the experience was that, the obstinate priest class did not show willingness to accept reforms. Therefore, the method could not become effective.

Religion is the way of life. It has to be elastic so as to welcome reforms which are consistent with the changing time. But unfortunately Hindu priest could not change their attitude in the face of changing social, economic, political conditions. Had they accepted somewhat liberal view, many of the social evils prevalent in Hindu society would have disappeared and social reforms movement would have got momentum.

In this reference, Mr. Lokahitwadi (G.H.Deshmukh) 18 suggested a possible solution. He suggested that the priest could be made progressive, liberal and pro-reformists by offering them handsome "Dakshina" (i.e. gifts). If they
were tempted with more Dakshina they might have supported the social reform movement.

In short, various methods were suggested during this period to implement social reforms. However, every method has its own merits and de-merits. Mr. Telang suggested that "any individual might use and follow any method which appeared best to him".

3) Agencies of Social Reforms:

Social reform is a movement which is undertaken by (i) Individuals (ii) Associations and (iii) Government.

Normally any reform movement starts with an individual who feels the necessity of reforms and desires to implement them in his personal life. Thereafter he explains his view point to propagate through writings, speeches, or discussions to others. If he succeeds in impressing the people and activate them to consider the points he has made, a group of like-minded people can be formed. This formation is useful in giving momentum to the movement. In the course of time this group of like-minded people forms organization for systematic and concerted efforts to bring the reforms in practice. Establishment of Brahma Samaj in 1828, in Bengal, by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, or Prarthana Samaj by Justice M.G. Ranade in Maharashtra are some of the examples of this kind. Thus, social reforms movement is institutionalized.
These organizations activate the process of social reforms by creating awareness in the society. Creation of favourable attitude among the people towards the desired change creates pressure of public opinion in favour of such reforms.

This pressure of public opinion created by activities of these organisations compells the government to take lead in this field.

In case of social reforms in 19th century Maharashtra the British government came into picture at much later stage. The reformers and their organizations created atmosphere favourable for reforms. As a result the British Government passed legislations to bring changes in the society from time to time. Thus legislation became one of the important means of social reforms. In this context it is pointed out that, "legislation removes obstacles that stand in the ways and creates the aids and helps to good life". Prevention of Sati, Widow re-marriage act, Age of Consent Bill are some of the examples.

Thus, social reform movement which had its beginning in the early 19th century, initiated by the individuals, developed into a public movement and got active support of the British government.

4) Social Reforms and Politics:
Though apparently seems to be different, social and political activities are closely related with each other. Almost all the social problems in general are related to politics. It is difficult to have a line of demarcation between political life and social life. It is difficult to say where social aspect of the problem ends and political aspect begins.

The human life being a complex phenomenon. Various aspects of human life viz: social, religious, economic, ethical and political aspects of life - are interlinked. Naturally the happenings and events in one field of activity influence other aspects as well. If such integrated view of human life is taken, the corollary follows that the change in social - environment influences the political life and vice-a-versa.

In a modern society the scope of governmental activity in human life is increasing and as a result of it politics has become a dominant phenomena to be reckoned with. The concept of Welfare State has widened the scope of state activity. The welfarism aims at improving the conditions of the people and the state undertakes this responsibility by using powers vested in it.

Political change is normally all pervading and it brings about the changes in social and administrative set-up of a society. In this context, it is observed that,
"the different administrative methods of British affected the social structure and social institution of the whole country". Therefore, the reform movement clearly "perceived the interrelation of religious, social and political reform progress". One cannot forget such interrelationship of social reforms and politics. M.G. Ranade observes, "... there is no question which is purely political any more than social or economical".

In this way, social aspect and political aspect of the society are the two sides of same coin. One cannot solve social problems by neglecting its political dimension. "In the sphere of the social welfare", observes Justice K.T. Telang "we cannot differentiate political problems and social problems as independent or separate. With the passage of time the - problems which appear social in nature assume political dimension. For example, education is the powerful means of achieving social reforms, also becomes an instrument of political consciousness among the masses in course of time".

A.N. Mukherji also admitted this inter-relationship between social and political life.

The term 'politics' is related to the business or activity of the state. In the context of social reforms it is observed that when social changes take place as a
result of the legislation or orders of the government, they became a matter of political consideration, because the legislation has a political value. In this sense the movements for social reforms have political implications. Hence to understand the social reforms one has to consider politics involved in it.

One cannot ignore "politics" while studying any social problem. Any analysis of social problems without considering its political ramifications will be incomplete. J.D.B. Miller observes that, "we cannot properly separate political analysis from an economic and social analysis. The difference of economic and social conditions express themselves finally in political movement of various kind".

Thus, the whole discussion proves how politics and social reform are connected with each other. Robert Dahl described 'politics' as unavoidable facts of human existence. Dahl further mentioned, "we are politicians and we play 'politics' every day".

In the last quarter of the 19th century Maharashtra there was a great controversy over the problem, "whether social reforms should precede political reforms". Though the demand for political independence became visible for the first time in 1857, it gathered momentum with the establishment of Indian National Congress in 1885.
The initial purpose of the Indian National Congress was social as well as political. Mr. Hume, in his reply to Auckland Colvin, mentioned the real aim and object of the Congress. Some of the founder leaders of the Congress remarked that the national movement (i.e. Congress) should not be exclusively political but, that, side by side social and economic.

To discuss social rather than political matters was the original intention of Dr. Hume behind the formation of Congress.

After 1886 there was not discussion among the leaders of the Congress about the question of priority to be given to social reforms or political freedom. As a result of this discussion the Congress got itself divided into two groups (a) one was giving priority to social reforms and (b) another was giving priority to political freedom. They were known as moderates and extremists - respectively. The politics of social reforms took shape as a result of continuous conflict between these two rival groups.

Moderates gave priority to social reforms, whereas extremists to political freedom. When the leadership of the Congress passed into the hands of B.G.Tilak the political atmosphere became more intense.

Some moderate reformers like M.G.Ranade, Justice K.T. Telang, Sir Narayan Chandawarkar were in favour of social
reforms and used their contacts with British government, to bring reforms in the society. They were of the opinion that social and political reforms should go hand in hand. Narendranath Sen a social reformer, supported and justified this view in his address, in 4th National Social Conference held at Calcutta in 1890, he observed that, 
"... political reforms means nothing unless it is accompanied by social, moral, and religious reforms".

It does not mean that the moderates were against political reforms i.e. freedom. It was a matter of priority of one over another. In this context Justice P.B.Gajendra-gadkar correctly pointed out that "during this period many social reformers who were radicals in social reforms tended to be conservative if not reactionary in the matter of political freedom, whereas some nationalists who were radical in the matter of political freedom were conservative if not reactionary in social matters".

The politics of these two groups over giving preference to social reforms or political freedom (or reform) went to such an extent that the Indian National Congress decided in 1887 not to allow discussion about social reforms on its platform in the same session.

This led to the formation of a separate organization called "National Social Conference" in December 1887.
II
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1) Pre-British Society in Maharashtra:

(a) Social Life: The society in Maharashtra during pre-British period was mainly organised on the principles of Hindu religion. Caste system, village community and joint family system were the three important foundations of that society. Society was divided in two major religious groups viz. Hindu and Muslim. However, the majority was obviously, that of Hindus who were divided in number of castes, and sub-castes based on the broader frame of Vernas. Thus, it was a hierarchical structure based on multiplicity of behavioural patterns and hereditary social positions.

This system universally established the Brahmanical superiority par-excellence. At the other extreme the Shudras were degraded to sub-human level. The caste system was considered as divinely ordained and was in existence in all its manifestations. Religion had strong hold on the society, and was regarded in a strong force behind the caste system. The position of an individual was predetermined by birth, and the birth was regarded as a result of his 'Karma' in previous life. All these principles of Hindu philosophy and Hindu way of life is reflected in the life of Maharashtra of pre-British period.
As elsewhere in India, the Brahmins were dominant in Maharashtra also. Their dominance increased considerably during Peshwa period. The original role of Brahmin was limited to study of Shastras, teaching and preaching religious principles and temple worshiping. However, during Peshwa period, with direct axis to political power, they acquired to themselves the functions of rulers, warriors, administrators, writers, clerks, landlords etc.

The Marathas were the next to Brahmins in social hierarchy. They claimed status of Kshatriya and claimed decendence from Rajput origin. The term Maratha also signifies as an inhabitant of the area in which Marathi language is spoken. Marathas were not a single caste. But it is a caste cluster of different groups. Kunbis, which constituted the bulk of peasantry in Maharashtra is a larger group in this caste cluster. R.V.Russell observes that, "from 11th century the word 'Kunbi' is taken to mean cultivators of land".

The Vaishys were the third in the hierarchy. They included traders and artisans. Each group was organised in separate castes. In Maharashtra 'Vani' is a separate caste. The word Vani or 'Baniyas' is used for trading class. Some of them migrated from Gujarath and Rajasthan. The trading class came from Gujarath is known as Baniya.
The Vani class is sub-divided in number of smaller groups known as 'Kunbi-Vani', Kudale-Vani, Sangmeshwari Vani etc. The Shudras were at the lowest level in hierarchy. They included castes like Mahar, Mang, Dhor etc. They were assigned menial work like scavenging, carrying dead animals, keeping watch at night in the village and carrying the messages etc. They were known as untouchables. This practice of untouchability was in its worst form before and during Peshwa period.

As stated above caste system is a special features of Indian society. This type of society continued to live for centuries, the same sterile, superstitious, narrow, stereo-typed social and intellectual life. Cultural blindness, economic and intellectual stagnation were the features of village life. The culture of the society was predominantly mystical in character. "This was due to the fact", observes A.R. Desai, "that the society was economically on low level, stationary and socially rigid".

The people were traditional in their outlook. There was a tremendous influence of traditions and customs on common man. They had religious sanctions. Static nature of the society was a feature of Peshwa rule. K.T. Telang observes in this regard that, "Peshwâs rulers did not favour any deviation from the past. They did not like to create new and dynamic conventions, but were interested in following the beaten path".
Rational thinking was nearly absent. Society never allowed man to welcome any change in any walk of life. The religion was individualistic in its approach to human life and concerned more with personal salvation. It is also seen that there was no class, group or association which condemned unwanted and unnecessary rituals.

Besides this, mass illiteracy was a common feature of the society at that time. Hence the people never questioned the age old practices and rituals. On the contrary they accepted rituals and beliefs without any protest as they came down to them from generations to generations. Caste feelings made the society narrow-minded. Hence it is said that this society never allowed a national feelings to grow. Traditions of Sati, child marriages were never looked upon as social evils. Even rulers did not bothered about these things. No individual or association came forward even to raise a word of contempt or disapproval of these irrational customs. Peshwa rulers themselves were engaged in time consuming religious rituals.

In general the society under Peshwa rule presented a dark picture. It is pointed out that, "the entire society thrived on corruption, debauchrous behaviour was very common and visits to prostitution was common in high society".

Peshwa never undertook any activity in the field of
education, architecture or literary movement. They completely ignored the promotion of education. This is proved by so many instances. Not a single book of class was produced during their regime.

This was a picture of a society existing in the days of Peshwa rules. Social condition during the early period of British was not much different from the earlier period, as it was the continuation of the society during the Peshwa rule.

In short, the society was more traditional and orthodox. Overall circumstances during the period were not at all favourable for social change and social reform of any kind.

(b) Economic:

Villages in Maharashtra by and large were autonomous and self-sufficient - village was the basis of economic order of 18th and 19th century Maharashtra. Agriculture was the main occupation of the people and sole means of subsistence. The structure of village economy and agricultural production remained undisturbed for centuries.

As stated above self-sufficiency was the main principle on which the village economic life was organized. This led to the rise of various skilled artisans, groups which later on became castes viz. - gold-smith, black-smith,
carpenter, potters, oilmen, washer-man, shepherds, barbers etc. They worked to satisfy the needs of the village population. The main feature of this system was its hereditary professionalism. Every caste group of artisans had a specific function and place in the entire social structure.

There was another class who was engaged in trading and money lending, known as Vani, and 'Marwadi'. There was financial relations between Vani and Kunbis.

The rulers only discharged the function of protecting the people from external aggression. But they never thought of discharging functions concerning social welfare and economic development.

Agricultural production was very low due to uncertainty of rainfall. This made the society fatalitic. A.R. Desai observed that, "the village society remained for centuries an invulnerable stronghold of the same stationary stereotyped social existence".

(c) Political:-

The great Shivaji laid the foundation of Maratha empire in the 17th century. The rise of Maratha power was "not a mere accident due to any chance, but genuine efforts on the part of a Hindu nationality". It was a first experiment of this kind attempted in India after the foreign Muslim invasions.
As a king, Shivaji extended his toleration and bounty to all sects, opened the public service to talent regardless of castes or creed and ensured efficient and effective administration. His system of administration continued to exist throughout 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century in Maharashtra till the end of Peshwa rule.

After Shivaji's death Maratha kingdom was in disarray. The successive Chhatrapatis had to fight the Mughals for survival.

The designation of 'Peshwa' was conferred by Chhatrapati Shahu in 1749, which means the "Prime Minister". He was one of the ministers among "Ashta-Pradhan Mandal" i.e. the council of eight ministers. Peshwa, originally was one of the eight ministers occupying the first position in the kingg's council. From 1750 A.D. the supreme authority in Maratha rule came to be exercised by the Peshwa, who obtained a charter or "Sanad" from Chhatrapati Shahu. Thereafter the position of Peshwa became hereditary. Hence a period from 1750 to 1818 A.D. is broadly taken as Peshwa rule, because the Peshwa was the real functionary at the Maratha courts. Under the Peshwas the Maratha empire expanded, but materially and morally it was a deteriorating proposition. 1818 saw the end of Peshwa rule and with that the end of Maratha empire.
Nature of village Political setup:

The administration of villages was largely organised on the traditional pattern of self-governing institutions - (a) Gram-Panchayats, (b) Gram-Sabha, (c) Gram-Pramukh and (d) Jati-Panchayat were the major political and social institutions functioning at village level.

Gram Pramukh was known as Patil. He was the leader and important person of the village. Local conflicts and disputes were settled by him. The office of the Patil was hereditary. Normally he belonged to Maratha caste. The word Patil is derived from Sanskrit word 'Patu'. Every village government had a office known as "Chowdi" where public affairs were discussed. "Balutedari system" was also an important feature of social arrangements at village level during Peshwa period. They were twelve in number and their services and skill was useful to village economy.

Judicial system was also traditionally during Peshwa rule. By and large the judicial work was carried on by the village Panchayats and caste-Panchayats. From chief justice of the Peshwa down to the village Patil and Panchayat decisions were given according to their wisdom and according to Dharma-Shastras, customs, conventions prevalent at that time. It was governed by the flexible rules and procedure.
At the village level the institution of Gram Panchayat with five elderly Persons from the village as its members was entrusted with large powers in deciding the disputes. When we study the administrative side of the Peshwa, we observe that they knew that there must be rules and regulations and laws to carry on government. They had all powers in their hands and could rule according to their will and wishes. Entire society was static and was under the domination of religious influence. Economic and social life of the rural society was so self-sufficient that it never felt urge for any social change. Too much adherence to religious rituals made the society heterogeneous. The rulers never took initiative in bringing the society out of its traditional fold. Hence, desire for social change could not be developed.

To sum up it can be stated that the social, political and economic life in the Maratha period remained traditional as it was in the past. Nobody thought of changing the social and political order existing for centuries in the past.

The rural masses did not show much social and political awareness. Social and political life returned to medieval situation. It is essential to note that the rulers never cared to curb social mal-practices. They never took serious note of the social, political and economic change that were
taking place in Europe. They had not even got the slightest idea of the progress in the western society. No efforts were made by them to stop evil practices like child-marriages, Nar-bali (i.e. human sacrifice), practice of Sati among the people. In those days social reforms could have been possible if the rulers had shown some determination to wipe out all bad practices. Had the Peshwa rulers realised the importance of social changes, the work of the reformers in 19th century would have been easy.

 Besides, Peshwa did not follow any policy that encouraged economic progress and commercial development.

 Therefore, overall situation during this period were not at all favourable for social change and reform movement of any kind.

 2) Tradition of Social Reforms in Maharashtra:

 The term social reforms in Indian context is generally associated with the social movements to bring changes in the traditional society resulting out of western influence, with the advent of British rule. In case of Maharashtra it is argued that the social reform movements began after the end of Peshwa rule in 19th century and the British took initiative in this matter. But this is a half truth. Even before the British rule, one comes across the tradition of social reforms in Maharashtra in the form of
"Bhakti-Movement". It began with Dnyaneshwar in 13th century and carried on by other saints like Tukaram, Namdeo, Eknath, Janabai, Chokhamela in subsequent period. The main thrust of Bhakti movement was on equality between men and women of different Varnas and caste groups in the realm of God. It also aimed at removing various complexes among the people and encouraged mutual tolerance, creating sense of understanding amongst them as human being.

Justice P.B.Gajendragadkar observes in this regard that "... these saints made a valiant efforts to modify the strictness of the old spirit of caste exclusiveness sought to raise the Sudra classes to a position of spiritual power, and social importance. They gave sanctity to the family relation and raised the status of women".

While propagating these ideas the saints gave encouragement to ethical values, morality and character.

One more important feature of Bhakti movement was that the saints propagated their ideas in the language of the masses through methods like Kirtan, Pravachan etc. A vast literature consisting of poem in the form of Shlokas, Aryas, Ovis and Abhangas were produced by these saints to communicate their ideas to the illiterate people.

Thus, Bhakti movement tried to bring the change in texture of the society in Maharashtra. The saints also revolted against the domination of priestly class and
tried to show that "there was no difference between a Brahmin and Pariah in the kingdom of God". Thus, Bhakti movement tried to bring social change by appealing to the hearts of the peoples with spiritual and moral overtones.

While evaluating the role of Bhakti movement in bringing social change in the medieval Maharashtra, G.B. Sardar observed that, "the Bhakti movement, though primarily concerned with religious and spiritual progress of the masses had some social content. This sect, without disturbing basic structure of the society, undertook the work of restoring confidence and self-reliance in the minds of women and depressed classes who had lost all self-respect and who were leading very miserable life. Hence, people from all castes, high or low and of all professions joined this movement."

However, one of the limitations of this Bhakti movement was that the saints were unable to challenge the existing social order. They had a faith in traditional Verna system.

Another limitation of the efforts of these saints was that they advocated equality among all in their attempts towards attainment of personal salvation within the existing frame-work of Hindu religion.

It is further argued that "the saints did not take any
positive steps to uplift the down-trodden (i.e. Shudras) classes", and the movement "offered no alternative - programme of social and economic re-organization of Indian society".

In spite of these limitations of Bhakti movement, one cannot ignore its pioneering role in the adverse circumstances, to reform the society in Maharashtra. The saints have given more importance to intuition and humanism which changed the minds of the people.

III
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1) Objectives of the Study:

The focus of this study is on the social reform movements in 19th century Maharashtra. However, the emphasis of the study is on the impact of these movements on the politics of Maharashtra in that period. Reforming society is a great challenge to those who want to bring changes in conformity with the changed socio-cultural, economic and political situations in that society.

The social reform is one of the important problems studied in sociology and political science. The reform movement gathered momentum because of early initiative taken by the reformers like Jambhekar, Nana Shankar Sheth,
Bhau Daji Lad, Telang, Ranade, Vishnushastri Pandit, Phuley and others, and government's support it received in the late 19th century.

If we really begin to examine the influence of the reforms and their impact on the society, perhaps we have to accept that the success of this movement in the past is not as real as it appears to be from the various acts passed supporting reforms. In order to find out the progress and the development of social reform movement it is necessary for a modern researcher to once again review the movement in historical perspective and in scientific manner.

The questions that need to be studied are (i) was the Indian society really interested in accepting reforms by discarding social evils? (ii) How did the reformers got interested in propagating reforms? (iii) What methods they adopted in their reformist activities? (iv) What was the response of the British rulers to these efforts of social reforms? and (v) To what extent these efforts were successful in achieving desired efforts and brought change in this traditional society?

These are some of the questions which create curiosity in the minds of present day generation.

2) **Survey of Literature:**

A lot of information regarding the social reforms in
Maharashtra is available in the form of writings of reformers, thinkers and scholars. Many books have been published on this problem which give us a lot of information and historical account of social reform movements and their impact on contemporary society.

C.Y. Chintamani edited a book in 1909 (Indian Social Reforms) which is an excellent source material in itself. The book contains various reports, presidential addresses delivered and resolutions passed in various sessions of National Social Conference.

"A Century of Social Reforms" by Nateson and "Social Background of Indian Nationalism" (1968) by A.R. Desai are the important books which give us analytical and sociological insight in the study of this problem of social reforms in India.


M.R. Lederle published a book "Philosophical Trends in Modern Maharashtra" in 1976, with the objectives to review the "philosophy of social life". This book deals with the work of revivalists and spiritual movements in Maharashtra in length. The author in this book argues
that the work of Christian missionaries and the British Government created public awakening and favourable atmosphere for social reforms.

G.R. Madan has published a book "Indian Social Problems". The book reviews the social work activities with emphasis on social legislation made by the British Government concerning child welfare, women welfare activities etc. This work throws light on the detailed provisions of these laws.

In addition to this number of scholars have worked on the issue of social reforms in India. Reference can be made in this regard to Ravindra Kumar's "Western India in 19th Century (1968)", "Indian Nationalism and Hindu Reforms" by H. Heimsath, Kenneth Ballhatchet's "Social Policy and Social Change in Western India (1957)", "Soundings in modern South-Asian History" edited by D.A. Low, etc.

The problems concerning the social reforms in 19th century Maharashtra are reflected in number of writings in Marathi language as well.

Biographies of Balshastri Jambhekar, K.T. Telang, Dr. Bhau Daji Lad, N.C. Chandawarkar, Dadoba Pandurang, M.G. Ranade, B.G. Tilak (by N.C. Kalkar), Mahatma Phuley (by Dhananjaya Keer) and autobiographies of Baba Padamanji, Ramabai Ranade, D.K. Karve and others throw light on numerous facts about the contemporary situation and social
reforms of that period. These books also help us to understand the views and approaches of different reformers regarding the issues of social importance of that period.

Various books, articles in Marathi language, also form an important part of the available source material published on the subject.

"Social and Political Thoughts in Marathi Literature", a Ph.D. thesis by Dr C.M. Ranade, submitted to Jabalpur University in 1971, evaluates the social reforms and problems in Maharashtra as reflected in Marathi literature.

Dr Y.D. Phadke of Tata Institute of Social Science Research, Bombay has written number of books in Marathi which analysis the work and achievements of reformers like Phuley, Agarkar. Dr Phadke has also written "Social Reform Movement in Maharashtra" and "Social Reformers of Maharashtra" in English.

In addition to these published works, there are certain unpublished scholarly works which also cover various aspects of social reforms in the period under study.

N.M. Jain submitted his thesis in Marathi about "social and political thought of Vishnubawa Brahmachari" to Pune University in 1989 which evaluates the role of a social thinker of later half of 19th century Maharashtra.

Miss G.S. Badhe in her thesis entitled, "Social Legislation in Maharashtra" has concentrated on legal aspects of the social reforms. The thesis was submitted
to University of Bombay in 1954.


J.R. Shinde submitted his thesis entitled "Social and Political Thought of Mahatma Jyotirao Phuley" to Marathwada University, Aurangabad.

S.G. Malshe and Nanda Apte of S.N.D.T. Women's University undertook a project concerning widow remarriages during 19th century. They have collected detailed information about the widow re-marriages and published a book, entitled "Vidhava-Vivah Chalwal" 1978 (Marathi).

The brief review of the literature on the social reforms in Maharashtra shows that the focus of many studies is either on the studying the life and work of individual reformers. However, some books give importance to the issues and problems of social reforms of that period. Their emphasis is on the social rather than the political aspect of the dynamics of social reform movement.

The present study is an attempt to look to the process of social reforms in the light of its impact on the political process in 19th century Maharashtra.
The focus of the study is not on the work or contribution of any particular reformer, leader or any organization working in the field at that time, but it is an attempt to view the whole dynamics of social reforms and its impact on the politics of that period.

3) Methodology:

This study is basically of historical nature. The life and work of individual social reformers is a matter of separate study. But this study is mainly concerned with social reform movement 19th century Maharashtra in its totality. This is an attempt to understand the impact of social reform movement in the political sphere of the region under study.

The present study is mainly library work. The information is collected from already available source material in the form of books on the social reform movement in Maharashtra. The books published in English and in Marathi on the life and work of different social reformers, various organizations operating in the fields during the period under study are also used. The biographies and autobiographies of some social reformers are also used.

Some periodicals and newspapers published during the period were useful in collecting information and substantiate the arguments. They include Indian Reformer,
Dnyanodaya, Indu-Prakash, Vividha-dnyan-Vistar, Sudharak, Kesari etc. The reports on native papers published by Bombay Presidency are also referred occasionally.

4) Outline of the Thesis:-

The whole thesis is divided into six chapters as follows:-

Chapter I: This chapter deals with the conceptual framework and Research Design. In this chapter in the beginning an attempt has been made to explain certain terms like social change, social reforms, social movements, revivalism, revolution etc. Besides this, agencies of social reforms and methods adopted for the purpose are also discussed. Thereafter in the second part nature of pre-British society in Maharashtra is explained. This part also includes discussion on tradition of social reforms in Maharashtra.

In the third part the objectives of the study, methodology adopted, outlines of the work done and relevance of the study are also explained.

Chapter II: This chapter takes the overall view of impact of British rule in Maharashtra during the period under study. In this chapter the impact on (1) education (2) press and (3) economy are discussed.

Chapter III: In this chapter an attempt has been made to focus our attention on certain important issues like
emancipation of women, spread of education, religious reforms and crusade against caste system.

Chapter IV: - This chapter discusses the role of certain important reform organizations like Paramhansa Sabha, Prarthana Samaj, Satya-shodhak Samaj, Widow re-marriage Association etc. In this chapter role of Christian missionaries in the field of social reforms is also discussed.

Chapter V: - In this chapter the emergence, nature and role of leadership in 19th century Maharashtra is discussed. During this period, it has been observed, the press has also played an important role in the social reform movement. Therefore, the role of press is also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter VI: - This chapter contains concluding remarks.

5) Relevance of the Study:

Social reforms are the need of the time. They are necessary to infuse dynamism in social life which enables the traditional society to transform itself into a modern one. Even today the movements to bring changes in the society are working because the problems of the society are not over and the reforms are still necessary. Whatever reforms have taken place in the 20th century are based on the pioneering work undertaken by social reformers of 19th century.
Social reforms and social progress are interdependent. It is a continuous movement. Female education, prevention of Sati, permission for widow marriages, prevention of child marriages are the examples of some of the major changes taken place in the Indian society over a period of time. These changes are responsible for social progress that we have witnessed during this century which may be partial and not complete. Yet we have to accept the fact that whatever progress towards modernity that we have achieved today is based on the work of the reformers in the last century.

Second generation of reformers of 20th century are inspired by the work of reformers of the 19th century.

If we have to comment on the relevance of social reform movement of 19th century to present day, we have to admit that the work undertaken by the reformers and the success they achieved was limited. Yet it is measurable because we have to evaluate their success with reference to the stiff opposition they face from various vested interests in the society.

The work of the present day reformers has became comparatively easy because major spade-work was done by earlier reformers, and therefore, the vision of the present reformers is definitely wider than that of earlier reformers.
The reformers of the 19th century had the objectives of changing the traditional outlook of the people. Even today that has not been accomplished completely, has come to India is the technology and knowledge from various sciences by which we have achieved some material progress, but at the same time we have to admit that Indian society as a whole is far away from rational outlook and spirit of scientific enquiry.

However, it can be said, that national freedom movement which spread rapidly in 20th century and spirit of nationalism that we have witnessed are the fruits of the work undertaken by the 19th century reformers.
NOTES AND REFERENCES:


6. Bossarel Jamco, H.S., *Social Change and Social Problems*, Happer Brother New York, p. 1. The author said, "social situation which are responsible for the deviation below the normal come to be spoken as social problems..."


13. Ibid., p.2.


25. Mukharjee, A.N., Social Legislation With Reference to India, (nd), (np).
34. Society was divided into four Varnas or groups. They were Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishays and Sudras. Bhagwat Gita also expressed that "these four castes or Varnas are based on the 'conduct' and 'aptitude' of individuals (Bhagwat Gita), Chapter: 18/42-44."


37. Ethoven, R.E., Tribes and Castes of Bombay, Vol. I, Cosmo, Delhi, 1975, p. 17. He described, "Marathas were from fighting class and was to claim for themselves Kshatriya Ranks".

38. Rusell, R.V., Tribes and Castes of Central Provinces of India: Radhanagari Book Centre, Delhi, 1975, p. 17. There are different theories propagated by sociologist and anthropologist about the origin of Kunbis and their status and role in the society. In spite of the differences, the distinction between Kunbis and Marathas was entirely social. Kunbi castes allow widow marriages, whereas Maratha do not allow such widow marriages.


40. Russell, R.V., Op.Cit., p. 17. There are various theories and legends regarding the origin of Mahar community. It is also explained that the word Mahar is the corrupted word of 'Mehtar' (p.3. Gava-Gada: by T.N. Aatre, Mote Publication, Bombay, 1959). Dr Ambedkar said that Mahar belonged to one of the castes among Aryans of "Suryawanshiya" and were treated as co-equals of Kshatriyas. (Who were the Shudras ? p. 149).


42. Walimbe, R.S., Maharashtratil Samajek Punarghatna: (Marathi), Walimbe Publication, Pune, 1962, p. 35.


45. Atre, T.N., 'Gawgada' (Marathi), H.V. Mote Publication, Bombay, 1959, p. 21. The word 'Patu' means intelligent person, or it might have been derived from the word "Patta" meaning "head of the village".

46. System of Bara-Balutedar (twelve professional families) was a unique feature of village, even in the administration of Peshwa. Baluta means yearly allowance of grains for the service rendered to the village community. The important Balutedars
among them were Patil, Kulkarni, Sutar, Parit, Kumbhar, Nhavi, Lohar, Chambhar, Mahar etc.


52. Pandit, Nalini, Jatiwad Aani Wargawad, (Marathi), Sadhana Prakashan, Pune, 1965, p.94.


55. Some important books are as under:- Adhunik Maharashtracha Warsa, (G.T. Madkholkar); Maharashtrachi Samajek Punarghatan, (R.S.Walimbe). Dharma Ani Samaj Parivartan, Sant Wangmayachi Samajek Phalshrut, (G.B.Sardar); 19th Century Maharashtra (G.D. Khanolkar), Adhunik Bharat (Acharya Jawadekar); M.G. Ranade Yanchi Bhashane. Agarkar Lekha Sangraha. Lokhitwadi (Phadkule); Maharashtra Jeewan (G.B.Sardar)(ed.); Maharashtraat eel Samaj Parivartan (Ramesh Panse)(ed.) etc.

56. Wyakti Ani Vichar, Shodha Bal-Gopalancha, Shahu Chatrapati Ani Tilak, Visavya Shatakatil Maharashtra (Vol.I,II) are some of them important books.