CHAPTER I

A Temple Town: Pandarpur

(1) **Pandarpur and its environs**:

The town of Pandarpur is the headquarter of a Taluka (sub division) of the same name, in Sholapur district of Maharashtra State. This district lies in the basins of Nira, Bhima, and Sina rivers. The lands of the district were distributed in the various sub divisions eighty years ago. Of these Barsi lies to the north-east, Sholapur to the south-east, Sangola to the south-west, Malshiras to the west, Karmala to the north-west and Madha and Pandarpur in the centre.

Pandarpur became the headquarter of this Taluka in 1884. The town with a latitude of 17°-41' north and longitude of 75°-26' east is situated on the southern bank of the Bhima at a distance of about 44 miles to the south of Sholapur by road, and 152 miles to the south-east of Poona by rail. The climate of the town in general is dry and experiences extremes of temperature. In summer the temperature ranges between 108° F. to 114° F. or 43 centigrade to 46 C. and in winter between 40° F. to 50° F. or 16 centigrade to 20. The town is 1526 feet above sea level. The rainfall is scanty, approximately 15" to 20" in a year and this too is not regular.

Pandarpur is bounded on the north and east by the river Bhima. *This river flows in a curved almost crescent shaped bed*

+ This river was treated as a sacred one from ancient times and is known as Bhimrathi or Chandrabhaga in the Bhagwat Purana.
and this probably gives her the name Chandrabhaga. The town is situated on the right bank of the Bhima. The river Bhima approaches the town from the north and flows away in an easterly direction.

Bhima rises in 19° 4' north latitude and 73° 34' east longitude in the Sahyadris in the Khed sub-division of Poona. The source of the river which is adorned by the sacred shrine of Bhimashankar, is one of the twelve sacred Jyotirlomgas or famous Shiva shrines in India.

From Bhimashankar the river runs south-east through Poona, Ahmednagar and Sholapur districts before it flows around Pandharpur. The river then enters the Bijapur district and after forming the boundary of Maharashtra and Mysore joins the Krishna about sixteen miles north of Raichur in Andhra Pradesh. The course of the river is throughout winding with a generally south-easterly direction. The river Bhima flows between high alluvial and tilled banks. Its breadth varies from 500 to 1500 feet. In some places it is rocky. The three main tributaries of Bhima namely Nira, Man and Seena are not near to Pandharpur. Bhima is, however, joined by a small stream known as Pushpavati to the south of Pandharpur. An all weather railway bridge and a cause-way (generally unusable during the rainy season) across the Bhima are the only links Pandharpur has with the western and northern regions.
The roads radiate from Pandharpur to the following places:

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<th></th>
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<th>Direction</th>
<th>Distance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>Mangalwedha (Bus route)</td>
<td>South east</td>
<td>14 miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>Sangola (Bus and Railway)</td>
<td>South west</td>
<td>20 &quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td>Malshiras (Bus route)</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>32 &quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td>Kuruwadi (Railway line)</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>31 &quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>5)</td>
<td>Sholapur (State High Way)</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>44 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6)</td>
<td>Miraj (Bus and Railway)</td>
<td>South west</td>
<td>77 &quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>7)</td>
<td>Maharapeth (Bus route)</td>
<td>South west</td>
<td>97 &quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>8)</td>
<td>Mahad-in Konkan via Satara (Bus route)</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>148 &quot;</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The small roads or kachha routes from Pandharpur radiate to the following places:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Direction</th>
<th>Distance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>Pandharpur - Akluj</td>
<td>North W. West</td>
<td>20 Miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>Pandharpur - Anvali</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>4 &quot;</td>
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<td>3)</td>
<td>Pandharpur - Kasegaon</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>5 &quot;</td>
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<td>4)</td>
<td>Pandharpur - Natepute and Indapur</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>35 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5)</td>
<td>Pandharpur - Mendhapur via Pakhalpur</td>
<td>North east</td>
<td>15 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6)</td>
<td>Pandharpur - Degaon and Chincholi</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>4 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7)</td>
<td>Pandharpur - Karkamb via Gursala</td>
<td>North east</td>
<td>10 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8)</td>
<td>Pandharpur - Brahapaure via Gopalpur</td>
<td>South east</td>
<td>20 &quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(2) Pandharpur: History and Antiquities:

1) Pre and proto-history:– The banks of the river Bhima around Pandharpur were inhabited by early stone-age man. Stone-tools of this period have been discovered about half a mile upstream by Prof. Sankalia recently. These might go back to 1,00,000 years or so.

Further upstream, in the region now known as "Panchaganga beta" were discovered extremely rolled stone tools (known to Archaeologists as Series II and dateable to around 50,000 years back) and a few Microlithic blades. The latter are assigned to a period of 25,000 years. *

From this remote past one comes to the "Chalcolithic period" dated around 1200 B.C. About 15 miles South-east of Pandharpur along the river a mound was discovered at Ita. It yielded the typical black-on red ware of the Deccan Chalcolithic period at a number of places in Maharashtra like Nevasa, Chandoli and Sonegaon etc. (1500 - 1300 B.C.). This shows that the banks of the river Bhima in the vicinity of Pandharpur were the abode of man for at least a 1,00,000 years, like many other sacred places in this region (e.g. Nevasa).

+ Summarised from the report published in weekly "Gopan" of the lecture delivered by Dr. H. D. Sankalia, Head, Department of Archaeology, Joint Director, Deccan College, Post Graduate Research Institute, at Pandharpur on December 3, 1965. The lecture was arranged on behalf of the Pandharpur Samshodhan Mandal and Navabharat Vatvayana, Pandharpur
ii) **Historical Period** :-  From the Chalcolithic period Circa 1200 B.C. to the beginning of the early Rashtrakuta Period (516 A.D.) which comes within protohistoric and historic periods we have neither excavations nor inscriptions which can shed light on this temple town.

A record of *Rashtrakuta King* Avidheya speaks of a village of "Pandurangapalli". This happens to be the only record in the first millennium of the Christian era. But this is important because of the following considerations.

It mentions the town in almost its modern form. The four villages mentioned in the inscription are Anevali, Chal, Kandak and Dudhapalli. Of these three are existant even now. Their present names are Anavli, Chale and Kondharki which again are very much like those mentioned in the inscription. The fourth village Dudhpalli cannot be traced. One wonders whether the present Gopalpur about a mile from the town is the ancient Dudhpalli. Another very important factor is the name of the Brahmin to whom the grant is made out. This is Jayadvittha. Vittha undoubtedly is the name of a deity and that deity cannot be any other than the present God Vithoba also called Vithu or Vitthal. Though we do not know whether

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**Pandurangapalli Inscription**: This oldest mention of Pandurangapalli is in the inscription of 516 A.D. The Inscription was engraved by the order of "Rashtrakuta king, Avidheya". The copper plates were inscribed in the 16th year of "Avidheya's" reign.

Pandurangpalli had a temple of Vitthal. We do not know that God Vishnu was known in this prakrit form by the 6th A. D. Perhaps a small temple to the God might have been in existence even then.

iii) From the Early Rashtrakutas to 1325 A.D.: (The later Yadav Period): - From 516 to 1187 we have no reliable record of anything connected with Pandharpur. There are, however, two references which fall into this period. The earlier reference to Pandharpur is in a devotional verse supposed to have been composed by the first Śankarācārya (Circa 788 - 820 A. D.). These verses are known as "Shri Pandurangāshtak". The first verse of this hymn contains very significant mention of various things. The verse is as follows:

"In the great seat of Yoga on the banks of Bhimarathi stands the source of all joy 'Pandurang'. The Brahmaling (whose other name) - Pandurang I worship. He had come with great sages to this place to bless Pundarik".

Although it is tempting to put the verse in the mouth of the Ādya (First) Śankarācārya it is extremely difficult to prove it. As such it has little value as historical data.

The Pundalik or Paundrika mentioned in the verse above is connected with the God Vithoba since the thirteenth century by the first poet saint Nāmdev of Maharashtra. The legend is as follows:
"There was a young man named Pundalik. He was very much attached to his aged parents whom he served day and night in their old age. Srikrishna who could not serve his parents wanted to see this parent-serving and dutiful son and came to Pandharpur in the shape of Vithoba or Vitthal.

The God Vitthal was very much pleased with the devotion of Pundalik and appeared before him in human form to bless him. Pundalik who was very busy with the service of parents had no time to spare for this godly visit. He threw a brick towards the god where the God was requested to stand on and await him.

When Pundalik was free he came to the place where the God Vitthal was standing on the brick. The God asked him to choose a boon for himself. He requested the God to stand on the brick on the bank of the river, to free from sin all those who came to worship the God.

The God at Pandharpur is still supposed to be standing on the brick, waiting for the devotees coming to take his 'Darshan'.

Because of this legend, Pandharpur has also been called Paundarik or Pundarik Kshetra. But this name is not in common use."
The God Pandurang or Vitthal: The God is called Pandurang which is a name used for the God Vishnu since 13th century. Whether it was used before we do not know. Pandurang also means "white colour" (Pandu rang). But the image in the temple of Pandharpur has always been of black stone. Vishnu and his incarnations like Krishna are supposed to be black.

Prof. Ludwig Alsdorf* in his introduction to Harivamsapurana has shown that the śri in Sanskrit becomes śrī in Apabhramśa. The word Viśṭhū is written for Vishnu in this Purana and Viśṭhū is identified also with Krishna four times. In the same way the Sanskrit word Vṛshnī (Vrushnini) becomes Viśṭhī. In the same way the Sanskrit word Trśnnā (Trushna) becomes Trśṭhā.

There is, however, another surmise, Pandurang is called 'Parabrahmaling' in the verse of Sankarācārya. The word 'Linga' refers to Shiva in general and to the phallic symbol in particular. It is very curious that some of the later saints whose names are also always attached to the town of Pandharpur and the deity Viśṭhāl were also worshippers of Shiva. Jnaneshwar is especially fond of showing the oneness of Shiva and Viśṭhāl worship. In the whole of Maharashtra there is no antagonism

between worshippers of Shiva and Vishnu worshippers as one finds in the south. Shiva is always depicted and sung as a fair skinned God. He is called Karpuragaura (white as camphor). Perhaps in this town there was an ancient Shiva shrine which was later on turned into the Vaishnava shrine, keeping the memory of both the Gods Pandurang and Vitthal. These are nearly surmises which lack historical proof.

(1) **Pandarage Inscription**


The inscription is carved on a beam. The beam is fixed over the eastern door outside the main hall (Solkhambi Mandap) of the Vitthal temple.

It is written in the Devnagari Script but the language of the inscription is Sanskrit and Kannad. In that inscription, the temple town is mentioned as "Pandarage" or "Pandarange". The deity is mentioned as Vitthal and Vithal.

(2) **Hebbalil Inscription** 1248 A.D. Šak 1170.

This inscription was found near the temple of Jambukeswar at the village Hebbalil which is near Dharwar in Karnataka.


1. Ibid, 57.
In this inscription there is a mention of the grant (\textit{vritthi}) given by the village headman (Sing-gavund) for giving food to the persons regularly visiting the temple town of the God Pandurang and halting at Hebbal on way.

This \textit{vritthi} is a land grant.

The Brahmín was asked to go to Pandharpur on Hari-Din. Hari-Din is the 11th day of each fortnight of a month which is sacred to God Vishnu.

(3) \textbf{Bendigere Inscription} :*1249 A.D. Sak 1171 : 

This inscription was found at the village Bendigere which is about 11 miles from Belgaum. The script and language of the inscription is Sanskrit. In that inscription the town (Pandharpur) is mentioned as Paundarik Kshetra and the deity Vitthal is named as Vishnu.

(4) \textbf{Chouryanshi Inscription} : **1273 A.D. Sak 1195.** The inscription known as writing of 84.

The inscription is in the Vitthal Temple at Pandharpur just near the north-eastern door of the main hall (Solkhambí Mandap) of the temple. The script is Nagari and language of the inscription is Marathi. The names of the devotees and their villages who had made donations from 1273 to 1277 A. D. for the repair or reconstruction (Jeernoddhār) of the temple have been recorded in this inscription.

* Khare, op. cit., p. 40.

** Dr. S.G. Tulpule -- Prachin Marathi Koriv Lekha -- published by Poona University, p. 165.

+++ "श्री पंडरपुर श्री विठ्ठल देवता मार्गित श्री दुर्विवेश्य धर्मकोश कुलेखा सिद्धव्यवस्थाओ अधिकारिक प्रथम भाग",
The deity and the temple have been mentioned as Vitthal and 'Paganipur' in this inscription. The names of the Yadava king Ramchandra (1271-1309) and his finance minister Hemadri as donors have been carved along with many others. There are Kannad sounding names of men and place names from the Karnataka region.

(5) Chokhamela Inscription*: 1311 A.D. Sak 1233.

This inscription was found near the samadhi of Chokhamela (a devotee of 13th century of an untouchable caste) in front of the main gate of the Vitthal temple. The language as well as the script of the inscription is Marathi. In it the deity is mentioned as Vitthal and Vitthal and the town is mentioned as Pandharipur.

From the 13th century onwards the sources of our knowledge regarding Pandharipur, its deity become very rich. We have no longer to depend on a word here or a word there in inscriptions found accidently or otherwise. For, from zero a great series of saint-poets is available. They are all devotees of God Vithoba and their writings contain numerous references to the deity, the temple and the town. Chronologically the more important of them could be placed as under:

*Ibid : P. 36
* Jnaneshwar (1275 - 1296 A.D.)
Namdev (1270 - 1350)
Sopande (1277 - 1296)
Sawara Mali (? - 1295)
Gora Kumbhar (1277 - 1318)
Chokha Nela (? - 1338)
Narahari Sonar (? - 1313)
Muktadai (1279 - 1297)
Janadai (? - 1350)
Damaji (1425 - ?)
Changa Mudhesh (? - 1505)
Ekath (1528 - 1599)
Ramde (1608 - 1681)
Tukaram (1609 - 1649)
Sridhar (1678 - 1729)

A majority of them mention in their poems i.e. Abhangas about: 1) Pandhari, 2) The God Vitthal (Pandurang) with his wife Rukmini, 3) The ritual of Vadi i.e. going to Pandharpur once a month or once a year on the Ekadashi day i.e. on the 11th day of the bright half of every month.

Besides these poet-saints there were a few Sanskrit and Kannad poets who had specifically mentioned in their work about the God Vitthal and the town Pandharpur.

1) Hemadri (about 1260-1309) a Yadav Minister mentions

* Dates given above are those accepted by Prin S.V. Dandekar in "Varkari Sampradayacha Itihas" Poona,
@ Hemadri—"Chaturvarga Chintamani: Khare, op. cit. p. 39.
in his "Chaturvarga Chintamani" (a compendium of religious observances, consisting of four large books) both the deity and the temple town as Pandurang and Paundarika.

The Tirtha-Khanda of the "Chaturvarga Chintamani" describes the particulars of the temple town as follows:

\[
\text{मैम्या खेल ले देवि दरिये लीणुमुत्तमम्} \quad 1
\]
\[
\text{अरस्ते लोक दृष्टे च स्वयम-स्तूप गुरुस्मिम्} \quad 2 \quad 2
\]
\[
\text{पीपलीके प्रतिमित क्षरात कुलकेस स्तुतीलिन} \quad 1
\]
\[
\text{पाण्डुरंगश्च लगास्ते पृष्ठिमाने देवले तलम्} \quad 2 \quad 2
\]

6 Goddess : On the southern bank of the river "Bhaimi (i.e. Bhima) there is a wellknown sacred place and the best of the deities which is very difficult to obtain. That very sacred place is known by the name "Paundarika i.e. Pandharpur". There stands Pandurang who is adored at that sacred place and who is the God incarnate.

Here in these verses an explicit reference is made to the sacred place Pandharpur and the God Pandurang i.e. Vithoba.

2) Choundarasa * a Kannad poet who is supposed to have flourished in the second-half of the 13th century has composed the works "Nalchampu" and "Abhinava Das Kumar Charita". In it he mentions the deities as "Vitthal Raya" or "Vitthal" and "Pandharpur" as "Pandhari".

* Khare, op. cit., p.37.
3) **Bilva Mangal or Lilasuka** a Sanskrit author has composed a work (about 1305 A.D.) "Krishnakarnamrit". In it there is one rhetoric verse mentioning both the temple town and the deity indirectly.

4) **Dalapatisraj** (1490-1508 A.D.) was the finance minister of Nizam Shah of Ahmednagar who has composed a work called "Nrusinha Prasad" dealing with the Hindu Religion in general. In the book called "Tirthsar" of this work there is a detailed description of the various holy places in the town Fundarika Kshetra. In it Dalapatisraj explicitly mentions Pandharpur and the deity Sri Vitthal as Hari and Panduranga.

We do not get any authentic historical reference about Pandharpur during 1350 A.D. to 1538 A.D. However, there are some legends and references which refer to Pandharpur, the Vitthal temple and some incidents connected with Pandharpur. They belong to the period between 1460 to 1515 A.D.

**The Legend of Damaji:**

Damaji is supposed to have lived between (1425 - 1520 A.D.). Damaji was a revenue officer of Mangalwedha (a village 15 miles from Pandharpur) under the Muslim king of Bidar. It is said that the whole region of the Deccan (including Pandharpur

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* Khare, op. cit. p.38.
** " " " p.33.
+ Mangalwedhe (Karandikar
and Mangalwedha) was in the grip of a famine,* between 1467 - 1474 A.D. Damaji threw open the king's grainary and distributed cereals to the starving subjects without taking any permission of the proper authorities. The authorities reported the matter to the King. The Muslim king of Bidar annoyed at this act and ordered Damaji to pay in cash for the corn thus distributed. It is said the God Vitthal himself took on the guise of an untouchable messenger 'Vithu Mahar' and paid the money to the king.

The legend of Changa Mudhesh about restoring the temple:-

Changa Mudhesh was a Yogan. It is said that he flourished sometime in the second half of the 15th century. Changa Mudhesh had rebuilt the temple of the God Vitthal which was destroyed and turned into the Masjid by the Muslim king of Bidar. Mudhesh influenced the king with his Yogic powers by curing the ailing queen of Bidar, and got permission and from the king restored the temple. Mudhesh completed his work and ended his life by taking samadhi† in the holy waters of river Godavari at Puntamba in 1505 A.D.** This incident in

* J.M. Campbell: Bombay Gazetteer (Sholapur Dist.) Chap. VII, 1884.
† Samadhi: Samadhi is the word used for the self immolation of a saint or holy man. Vaishnavas generally chose their death by drowning in a river, (Bhakti & Tukaram) or sea (Chaitanya). But there are also cases of people who got themselves buried alive (Jnaneshwar). Sometimes when a saint or an important person dies & is cremated people talk of the monument as Samadhi. in the literature of the sect instead of the word 'Mrutyu' (death),the word Samadhi is used. Not every saint has immolated himself.
the life of Changa Mudhesh has been described by Shamaji Anant Gosavi: Vanjarkhede in the story of Changa Mudhesh written by him.

Vijaynagar King's Legend: about the image of the God Vitthal:

Krishnadevraya the king of Vijaynagar ruled between 1509 to 1529 A.D. He was a devotee of the God Vitthal at Pandharpur. He built at Vijaynagar a magnificent temple of "Vijay Vitthal". According to one legend he carried away the image of God Vitthal from Pandharpur temple and installed it in the temple at Vijaynagar. (He might have removed the image from Pandharpur to protect it from the Muslim invasions by the Bahamani rulers. The image remained at Vijaynagar).

According to another legend the poet-saint Bhanudas (1448-1514 A.D.) brought it back to Pandharpur during the lifetime of Krishnadevraya.

iv) Pandharpur & Vitthal temple under Islamic rule:

Politically the temple town and the area around it was under the Muslim Administration of Bahamani rulers throughout 14th to 16th century, and the most important document which brings to light the Priestly administration of the temple belongs to this period. (This document of 1519 is discussed in the next Chapter).
From the early 16th century up to the early 18th century the political administration of the town was constantly changing hands from the Adilshahi to the Nizamshahi and from the Nizamshahi to the Mughul regime.

Pandharpur never came under the political administration of the Marathas during the lifetime of Shivaji. The first reference to Pandharpur occurs in the middle of the 17th century, when the province was probably under the Adilshahis.

Afzulkhan, the Bijapur General, started from Bijapur in September 1659 on his expedition against Shivaji. He travelled with a select army of twelve thousand towards Wai. He went via Tuljapur and Pandharpur and despoiled * the sacred temples at these places, namely, Bhavani of Tuljapurkar and Vitthal of Pandharpur. This seems to have served as a signal for further despoilations of the Pandharpur shrine, as is evident from the papers available with the "Pandharpur Samshodhan Mandal". The image of God Vitthal was removed from the temple town and it was kept outside the temple town from 1669 to 1677 A.D. in the nearby villages around Pandharpur, according to these records. The image was kept in the following villages:

1) At Chincholi (four miles to south east of Pandharpur from December 14th 1669 to June 24th, 1672.

2) At Gursala (4 miles to east of Pandharpur) from 10th October 1675 to 27th October 1676.

+ "Pandharpur Samshodhan Mandal" Papers from unpublished record.
The image was taken off from the main temple and it was hidden at Gursala village because the armies of the Mughul general Bahadurkhan were passing through this district and the people as well as the temple priests were apprehensive about the safety of the image. The image was brought back on 4th July, 1677, at the temple and was established at its original place.

The people of the town were constantly worried on account of the repeated Muslim depredations. Shivaji could not effectively protect the shrine, much less could Rajaram* do it.

In March 1682 Aurangzeb the Mughul Emperor descended in the Deccan and this created panic in the whole region. This is reflected in the fact that the Kartiki Yatra (fair) at Pandharpur was very poorly attended in November 1684 A.D. The town was in a somewhat better condition during 1693 to April 1695 before Aurangzeb encamped at "Brahmapuri" (a village on the southern bank of Bhima river about 20 miles from Pandharpur. During 1684 - 1693 A. D. there might have been no fairs at Pandharpur due to the general unrest in the country, but in July 1693 (Ashadha Shak 1615) many devotees had gathered for the Ashadhi fair. The document which gives the details of Ashadhi-fair tax collection (Sadilvarpatti+) that was collected at the time of the fair in July 1693) indicates that more than 1000/- rupees were collected and a number of devotees attended the fair.

** Also known in Marathi as "Jatra and Vari".
The Maratha King Rajaram* and Temple Town.

The Maratha King Rajaram delivered an Abhaya Patra and the Ajnapatra on 23rd April 1694 (Rajshak 20). Two State Papers contained orders regarding the precautionary measures to be taken at the time of a possible Muslim attack at and around the town Pandharpur. In pursuance of Rajaram's instructions the Maratha General Santaji Ghorpade had ordered in July 1695 his cavalry to protect and defend the temple town and the nearby village Degaon which was used for keeping image of the God at that time.

Aurangzeb's Encampment at Brahmapuri +:-

Aurangzeb arrived from his Galgali camp in the Bijapur District at Brahmapuri on the southern bank of the river Bhima about 20 miles south of Pandharpur on 21st May 1695. For the next 6 months the image of the God was removed from Pandharpur and was kept at Degaon (2-10-1695). The image was taken to Degaon ++ to save it from Aurangzeb and it remained there until October 1699 when he finally left the Brahmapuri encampment for his Satara expedition (19-10-1699). Aurangzeb's huge camp at Brahmapuri ultimately became a small town which was later named 'Begampur', possibly in memory of the King's daughter Zebunnisa, who was buried here. The image removed in 1695 was not re-established in the temple till 1715 **. Since 1716 the image of the God has remained in the main temple at Pandharpur.

* Khare, op.cit. p.20.
+ S.M. Pagadi, "Marathe va Aurangzeb" (Marathi)
** " " "
† see Page 3
v) **Pandharpur under the Marathas & the British** :-

Before 1668 Pandharpur was a part of the Indapur Paragana (Division) of the Bijapur Government. The first two historical documents (from which the history and tradition of the temple priests at Pandharpur could be traced) namely 'Bijapur Paper of Watanzada or Bijapur Sthalprat of 1519 and Indapur Mahajar of 1568' were prepared during the Adilshahi reign. About the middle of 1668, a treaty was concluded at Agra between Aurangzeb and Ali Shah of Bijapur. According to this treaty the fort of Sholapur and some surrounding territory was given to the Mughuls. Pandharpur might have been part of this territory handed over to the Mughuls. Until Aurangzeb's death in 1707 it might be in the possession of the Mughuls.

It appears from the unpublished papers in the 'Bhatkunkikar Limaye Daftar' that during 1709 to 1739 the town was in the possession of a Maratha Kamavisdar (Civil Administrator) one 'Fahirjirao Pandhare'. This Pandhare was originally in the services of the Adilshahis. Later on, he moved to the Mughuls and finally to the Marathas. When the town came under Maratha rule it was transferred into the 'Kasegaon Pargana'.

By 1739-40 the town came into the possession of the Peshwas who entrusted its administration to the Patwardhans.

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* See Chapter II.
+ Preserved in Bharat Itihasa Samshodhak Mandal, Poona 2.
++ According to Mahamahopadhyay Dr. S.V. Boddar, the title of Shri Pandhare was 'Talammunrath. (Sriprthenga).
of Tasgaon and Sangli. Patwardhans, thereafter appointed a special civil administrator (Kamavisdar) named Ramchandra Krishna Limaye* at Pandharpur to look after the local administration of Pandharpur on their behalf. Before this arrangement has taken place the civil and revenue officials of the 'Kasegaon' Pargana were in charge of the town and the temple. A copy of the letter written by the Peshwa Balaji Bajirao in 1739 to the Deshpandes of Kasegaon became available to the present author while reading the miscellaneous papers in the Bhatkunkikar Limaye's Daftar.

From 1735 onwards one branch of this Limaye family took over the domestic administration of the Peshwas at Poona and were known by the nick name 'Khasgiwale' while another branch settled at Pandharpur itself. R.K. Limaye was the first 'Peshwa Kamavisdar' of this family, and he administered the town upto 1758. As civil administrator of the town the disputes among the priests of the temple went before him for adjudication. These generally related to the respective rights and duties of the "Badwas and Sewadhari*". Limaye had collected full information regarding the traditional rituals and the role of the Priest's organisation in the temple. The Peshwas Government at Poona was thus kept fully informed from time to time through the reports sent by him regarding the affairs of the temple. The same Limaye seems to have worked as the 'Kamavisdar of Pandharpur again in 1762-63 or so.

* Limaye 'Limaye Kulvruttanta' 1939,
+ See II chapter

The historical papers of Haridas Joshi—One of the Sekhandraos were traced by Mahatma Phalke, Dr. D.V. Patde. Some were published in the journal of B.I.S.M. Poona.
Naro Mahadeo Oze was the second Kamavisdar of Pandharpur who took charge of the Civil administration from R.K. Limaye at the instance of Govind Hari Patwardhan. Oze worked as the administrator of Pandharpur until his death sometime in 1774. After his death the son of the first Kamavisdar R. K. Limaye Chinto Ramchandra Limaye was named the successor to this office. He was in charge till 1794 i.e. for twenty years. After C.R. Limaye the names of other members of the Limaye family namely 'Jivajipant Anna'; 'Vitthal Daji, Baloba Tatya, Purushottam Daji etc. have been recorded in the historical papers in the 'Limaye Daftar'. The papers belong to the period 1794-1818 and 1830-1880. Some of the above mentioned persons from the 'Limaye Family were associated with the temple affairs and as the 'Peshakars' of the town.

After the abolition of the Peshwa government in 1818 the town Pandharpur passed to the Raja of Satara. The town was in the possession of the Satara king until his death which occurred in 1848. After that the town became a part of the Bombay Presidency.

The set up of local administration under the British rule during 1848 to 1947 was rather distinct than previous regim

While writing the first two sections of the Thesis Prof. G.H. Khare (Secretary Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandala Poona), Dr. P. M. Joshi (Department of Maratha History- D.C.P.R.I.), Dr. N. G. Kalekar and Dr. M. G. Panse (Department of Linguistics-D-C.P.R.I. Poona) helped the author. He is grateful to all of them for their valuable suggestions.

**+ Bhatkunkkar Limaye Daftar: Unpublished Papers. B.I.S.M. Poona.**
The Vitthal Temple

The temple as it stands today or most probably since the medieval period is situated to the west of the river Bhima, at a distance of about 300 yards. Around the temple is the 'Pradakshina Path' (road). On all sides of this road are the houses of the priests; small temples of various deities and some shops.

The main shrine stands in a huge courtyard 300' x 170'. This rectangular area is enclosed by massive brick walls. There are ten entrances to the courtyard, out of which the one in the eastern wall known as 'Mahadwar' (chief door way) is the main gate. There are two doors to the south, four doors to the north and one is to the southeast which is used especially during great fairs, when others are kept closed except the western gate: 'Paschimdwar'.

Mahadwar:

Before entering the 'Mahadwar' which is also called the 'Namdev Gate' the visitor has to cross 12 steps to reach the metal door of the shrine. Out of these 12 steps the lowest step and its front face are plated with brass, and on the brass-plated face of the second step are carved fourteen small standing figures being effigies of the person of the family of Saint Namdev. Close to the right of the first step is a brass bust of Namdev the saint poet (1270-1350) and a great devotee of the god. According to traditional belief, 'Namdev' who belonged to the tailor caste was an inhabitant
of Pandharpur, and descended into his 'Samadhi' on this spot in 1350. It is believed that his family members also entered the 'Samadhi' at the same time.

Chokhamela's Stone:

Opposite Namdev's bust to the right of the lane in a deep recess, is a stone about 2'-6" high and 1'-6" broad. This stone is worshipped as the samadhi or memorial of 'Chokhamela' (a saint belonging to one of the untouchable castes). Chokha has taken his samadhi about sometime between 1338 to 1358. According to Varkari tradition both Namdev and Chokha were contemporary and the Varkaris pay their tribute to their 'Samadhis' before entering into the temple.

Sabha Mandap and Solkhambi Mandap:

On entering the Mahadwar and crossing the open courtyard (satha-mandap 120' x 60') the visitor comes on the 'Solkhambi' Mandap (16 pillared chamber). As the name indicates it has 16 pillars on the old Yadav style. It has four rows of four pillars and four pilasters in each wall. Over each group of four pillars is a dome in the cut corner style. These have been opened for light and air. In the front wall of the Mandap are three gates. The middle gate is old and the side gates opened about 75 years ago. The north wall has three more gates and the south wall has two. In the Solkhambi Mandap the base and Capital of the second pillar in the second row are plated with gold and its shaft which is plated with silver.

*According to one tradition this plating was prepared as a mark of the memory of the famous Karnatak Poet Saint Purandardas. *Bombay Gazetteer (1884) Chapter XIV. Editor: Campbell J.M.
bears a small figure of Garud (the vahan of the lord Vishnu). It is said to stand in the place of an old Garud pillar which stood here before the Solkhambi Mandap was built. This Mandap was built about 1740-1775 A.D. by one devotee called Shenavi.

Choukhambi Mandap:

Adjacent to the Solkhambi Mandap to the west in the back wall a door leads to a smaller hall called the four pillared or Choukhambi Mandap. This cell connects the Solkhambi with the Garbhagriha and is square on plan.† The Choukhambi had two gates one on the South* (known as Elephant gate) and other leading to the Solkhambi Mandap; known as 'silver-door' (the doors of which are plated with silver). In the walls are four pilasters. The roof is in the cut stones dome style and has been pierced in six places for air about 70 years ago. The north wall has no gate and a deep recess faces the south gate. Near the north east corner of the Choukhambi Mandap a second recess is used as God's bed-chamber known as 'Shejghar' in Marathi. It is furnished with a silver couch with bed linen and some other regiment. At night when the Shejarti ritual is observed the God is supposed to retire here.

* See Plate no. 1 and Page no. 106A
† This gate is especially used by the priests.
Antechamber and Garbhagriha:

From the Choukhambi an arch resting on two pillars leads into the antechamber which is about nine feet square. This is a small cell connecting the choukhambi to the Garbhagriha. From this antechamber a small door leads to the Garbhagriha.

The image of the God.

In the Garbhagriha attached to the back wall is a square altar three feet high with a silver shade.

On this altar stands the image of Vitthal.

The image as seen today is about 3'-9" high and is rather plain. It has two arms, both resting on the hips. The left hand holds a conch and the right hand holds a lotus. It has a rather curious cylindrical ‘Mukut’ on its head. In the ears are huge Makar-kundals and on the chest are the divine marks of ‘Sri Vatsa-lańčhan and Sri-Niketan. (The image has a garland of Koustubha stones). A waist cloth is wrapped around the waist of the image (Kamarband) the end of which hangs on the right thigh. The image stands on a rough rectangular stone, commonly identified as Pundalika’s brick by the devotees. This is the image of the God Vitthal "Panduranga" which is worshipped in the Marathi speaking region since the time of Jnaneshwar.
The Rukmini Temple:

The temple of the consort of the God Vitthal i.e. the goddess Rukmini is situated in the same precinct as the Vitthal shrine. The present image placed in this shrine is more modern compared to the image of Vitthal. This image is held next in importance to the deity Vitthal.

The temple structure stands in the northwest corner of the enclosure facing east about 200' away from the back side of the image of the god Vitthal. Rukmini's temple has now a shrine, an antechamber a hall and a wooden outer hall or Sabha Mandap.

Generally in the temples of Vishnu or Rama there is an image of the consort by the side of the God. But in the temple town Pandharpur there are two temples of the goddess Rukmini exclusively. The first being the above temple and the other known as 'Rukmini' alias 'Lakhubai' temple which is situated in the 'Dindirwan' area near the western bank of the river Bhima, which was built in 1780.

There are two small temples of Rahi and Satyabhama adjacent to the Rukmini shrine in the same precinct. They are managed by the Utpats - the Priests of the Rukmini shrine.
Other Deities and their idols in the Vitthal Shrine:

Besides the Vitthal and Rukmini images in the Vitthal shrine there are various idols of other deities, which are known as 'Pariwar Devatas' i.e. the host deities. Some have got small independent temples whereas others have been carved out in a niche somewhere in the walls of the structure. Since most of them are intimately associated with the history and tradition of the Vitthal shrine their list is given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the idol</th>
<th>Place or spot.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. An idol of Ganapati</td>
<td>In the passage from Mahadwar to Courtyard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Temple of Maruti</td>
<td>In the 'Sabha Mandap' south wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Temple of Garud</td>
<td>In the Sabha Mandap opposite to Garbhagrih.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Temple of Maruti</td>
<td>In the Sabha Mandap near the Garud Temple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Jay and Vijay</td>
<td>At the steps of 10 pillard chamber.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ganapati &amp; Saraswati</td>
<td>To the left and right gateway of the 'Solkhambi - Mandap'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The idol of Ambabai</td>
<td>Near the 1st door of the south side of 'Solkhambi Mandap'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Tarti-Tree and Bust of Kanhy:Patra</td>
<td>Near the Deepmal Tarati door.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Vyankatesh Temple</td>
<td>At the south-door of the shrine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Shivaling

12. Surya Narayan

13. Khandoba

14. Nagoba (carved in stone)

15. Vaikuntha Swami Samadhi

All these idols are in small rooms called 'Ovari' to the west side walls and in different sections.

16. Muralidhar: An image of marble stone

Muralidhar Ovari

17. Nav: Grih or Nine planets slab with figures of nine planets

Navgrih Ovari

18. Rahi or Radhika

Near Rukmini Temple

19. Satyabhama (Temple) second Queen of Lord Krishna

Near Rukmini temple

20. Kameshwar Mahadev

In the North wall in independent Ovari.

21. Vishweshwar Mahadev

" " " " "

22. Kalbhairav and Devi

" " " " "

23. Dattatraya

" " " " "

24. Ram and Laxman

" " " " "

25. An image of Devi and an Inscription of '84'.

To the first north door of the 'Solkhambi Mandap'.
The Origin and Antiquities of the Vitthal shrine:

The problems in relation to the origin, location and antiquity of the shrine of Vitthal remain unsolved even today. Scholars have tried to approach the problem from various angles, viz. mythological, iconographical, epigraphic, etc. Yet nothing which can be called a final and firm answer is forthcoming. Data available from literary sources and inferences drawn from architectural observations have been brought to bear in the discussion. A few points discussed so far can be briefly noted here.

1) Mythological:— According to the mythological literature the shrine stands here from times immemorial. The questions about its antiquity etc. are not only ridiculous but non-existent too. For an objective analysis this source of information has no validity.

2) Iconographical:— A detailed description of the iconographic characteristics is to be found on page No. One of the few scholars who have devoted great attention to this aspect declares that these characteristics do not help the students in determining the date of the image or shrine*.

3) Epigraphic:— The various inscriptions pertaining to the town of Pandharpur and the Vitthal shrine have been already

+ Dharurkar Vithal Šastri Daji Pandhari Mahatmya.
* Khare, G.H. Loc.Cit.
enumerated in brief. It is obvious from these that but for
the Rashtrakuta copper plate, all records are later than the
11th century A.D. These very records have led to the controversy
regarding the location of the original shrine.†

4) Literary:- The literature of the Varkari Saints has
been utilised to show that the shrine existed somewhere near the
present Mahadwar. The pros and cons of this case have
been discussed in detail without much progress either way.∗

Dr. G.A. Deleury in his thesis (The Cult of Vithoba++)
has apparently accepted the version given in Lilicharitra —
that the Vitthal shrine represents a monument to a dead warrior.
This monument has an aprite stone called Virgal erected in
memory of the dead. This account of Vitthal worship at Pandharpur
seems suspect on the following grounds.

1) The Mahanubhav sect has on many occasions given deli-
berately false accounts of deities and temples visited by
Hindus. This seems to be one such statement. Especially
because 2) The time element contradicts this statement. Chakradev
lived+++ (1194 - 1273 A.D.) during the reign of Yadav King
Ramdev. The evidence of Jnaneshwari shows that Jnaneshwar
the composer of the book lived also during the reign. Jnaneshwar

+ Campbell J.H. Loc.Cit.
++ Chitrav Siddheshwarsastri : Madhyayugin Caritrakosa. p. 350
Published by Bharatvariya Caritra Kosa Mandal, Poona 2.

∗∗ Mate S.M. "Sant, Pant and Tant" Thokal Prakashan, Poona 1987
++ Khare G.H. Loc.Cit.
+++ Tulpule S.G. Loc.Cit.
and his older contemporary Namdev were visitors to the Pandharpur shrine. Jnaneshwar a brahmin of great learning could not be visiting Pandharpur and the God Vithoba, if it were just con-
temporary monument to a dead man. Thirdly Jnaneshwar's father who lived in Apegaon on the banks of Godavari was supposed to have the name Vitthal. This shows that Vitthal as a name of a deity antdated Chakradhar.

The term Vittu or Vithal seems to be a derivation from Prakrit Vishnu into Kannad Vitthu. There is no doubt at all that Vithal is a southern God adopted in Maharashtra. Pandharpur itself was apparently a Dravidian town and is even today very near to the borders between Karnatak and Maharashtra. Though there is no such transformation of the word Krishna in the Southern languages in Bengali we have the spoken epithet Kishta or Kitta. Krishna became as Avatar of Vishnu a few centuries before the Christian era. Krishna himself as his name shows was dark coloured person. Vishnu on the other hand, as representative of the sun God was white (fair). The Vishnu or Vitthu in the process of becoming the representation of Krishna and the husband of Rukmini might have become the dark God.

The name 'Pandarige' also leads to many speculations. The suffix gi or ge as a place name suffix is found all over Karnatak today. It is also found in the 'ge' form right upto the river Tapi in Maharashtra. Though in Maharashtra it is not so frequent as in Karnatak.
The fifth century inscription names the village as Pandurangpalli which may be a sanskritization of 'Pandarige'. We have evidence of such sanskritization. For example - the Village Dapodi of today is mentioned as Darppudika an obvious sanskritization.

Pandarige obviously is a Kannad place name. What Pandari means we do not know. There are no place names exactly having the cyllabus Pandhari. There are dozens of place names which have first syllable Pandhar. There are about a dozen other called Pandhari. In Marathi the word Pandhar or Pandhari means the white. It is also applied to the habitation area as against the sown area or fields which are called 'Kali' i.e. to say black. Pandhari Jamin (white soil) or Pandhari Aai (white mother) is the name by which a village is referred. Kali Jamin black soil or Kali Aai (black mother) is the general expression used for the fields. One need not, therefore, think that the place name Pandarige has any special significance beyond one place name referred to above.

5) Architectural:- An analysis of the present structure-complex has been attempted for nearly 75 years now. The Bombay Gazetteers put forth for the first time the theory that the temple once stood at the spot of the present Mahadwar. It was suggested by cousens that the temple was located where a police gate today stands.†† These suggestions have not found favour with Khare who has all along maintained that the structure which houses the Vitthal image at present is the original

One or at least stands at the place where the original one was situated. A detailed analysis of the various architectural characteristics of the temple and the surrounding structures had been carried out by the Department of Archaeology, Deccan College.

In a paper read before the Annual Conference of the B.I.S.M. Poona (1966) the following tentative points have been made out by Dr. Mate M.S. of that Department.

(1) The present temple structure is not the original structure.

The present temple structure is 'Dravidian' in its affinities, which are rather remote but still distinct.

(2) A temple might have stood under the Yasavas where 'Nagarkhana' (Drum-house) at present is.

(3) Chronologically the sequence of the architectural structure of the Vitthal shrine would be:

A) A small shrine erected in remote antiquity.
B) 1275 A.D. A large-scale renovation or a fresh construction of a temple on the spot where the Nagarkhana is situated and of which portions are visible.
C) 1500-1700. Construction of the present shrine.

(4) The various minor deities (Parivars Devatas) today found in the courtyard might have been in existence on the same spots for a number of years or perhaps even a few centuries, without implying any iconographic dependence on their part on the Vitthal shrine.

But the construction of the surrounding walls have imparted such a feeling of unity and dependence except the shrine of Garud no other temple has any legitimate place in the courtyard of the Vitthal shrine."
The Pariwar Devatas (Minor Deities) in the Temple Town.

1) All deities that are placed in City Survey No. of the temple the main Temple Precinct.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Temple Name</th>
<th>Survey No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Narsoba Temple</td>
<td>1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sri Khandoba Temple (Mahadwar road)</td>
<td>2358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sakambari Temple (&quot;</td>
<td>2363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shri Ganapati</td>
<td>2387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sri Maruti &amp; Ved Tres (Near 33 crores Deities)</td>
<td>2395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shri Ekveera Devi Temple</td>
<td>2482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Shri Narsoba Temple</td>
<td>2568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Shri Jalojibuwachi Samadhi</td>
<td>3272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sri Narharibuwachi Samadhi</td>
<td>3272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Shri Maruti Temple</td>
<td>3367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sri Maruti Temple (Chandrabhaga Ghat)</td>
<td>3374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Shri Ganapati Temple</td>
<td>3475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Shri Rokdoba temple</td>
<td>2084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sri Narad Muni (River bed)</td>
<td>3477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Shri Kala Maruti</td>
<td>3078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Sri Yamai Devi</td>
<td>3823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sri Yallama Devi</td>
<td>3836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sri Padmavati Devi</td>
<td>3950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Sri Ambabai</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sri Ambabai Drum House</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sri Vyaso Narayan (Sage Vyas Image)</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Sri Lakhubai</td>
<td>803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Sri Vishnupad</td>
<td>3475 A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Sri Vishnupad</td>
<td>3476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Shrine near Vishnupad</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Shri Samadhi near Vishnupad</td>
<td>3476 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Sri Namdev Payari</td>
<td>2392 A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Sri Maruti</td>
<td>3476 C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Sri Satwai Temple</td>
<td>2299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Sri Maruti Temple</td>
<td>3800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Sri Samadhi</td>
<td>3378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Sri Kal Bhairao</td>
<td>2375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other very minor deities are excluded from this list.

This list was submitted to the Charity Commissioner, Maharashtra State by the Chairman, Badwe Committee, in 1954.
The Town of Pandharpur

In 1856-57 the Survey settlement was introduced into 71 villages of the Pandharpur sub-division. At that time the town and its surrounding villages were the part of the Satara district. In 1869 Pandharpur was transferred into Sholapur. The district administration was entrusted to an officer called Collector; under whose supervision the sub-divisional officer i.e. the "Mamlatdar" used to perform his duties. The Sholapur district was reorganised in 1884; but Pandharpur sub-division remained unchanged as its part.

The Pandharpur Municipality - The town municipality was established on 19th October 1855 under act XXVI of 1850. Later on its constitution was formed under acts VI of 1873 and II of 1884.

Area and density of the town population - The area of the town according to 1951 census is 4.7 square miles. The density of the town population per square mile in 1951 was 8,620.

The town limits of Pandharpur - The main feature of the town is that the river Bhima which takes a big curve at Pandharpur. We have already seen that; because of this curve the river is called Chandrabhaga (half moon shaped). The river meets first at its northern boundary (see photograph
flows eastward and then turns to south-east whether it merges with the river course "Pushpavati".

Taking the Vitthal temple as a point of reference the limits of the town are as follows:

East - Upto the 'Mahadwar Chat' built in 1785; on the western bank of the river.

Southeast - Upto the 'Bhuleshwar Mahadev temple' built about 1787 by a Maratha noble Janaji Baji Ghatge.

South - Upto the "Gopalpur temple". The construction of which began in 1744 on behalf of some devotee called Shamjipant Nandivarekar.

Southwest - Upto the "Kala Maruti temple" built in 1799 (See photograph No. 5 P. 43 A).

West - Upto the "Padmavati temple" built by Krs. Sakwarbai Yeshvantrao Pawar of Dhar in 1778.

North - Upto the "Lakhubai-Rukmini" temple built in 1780.

Apparently the town of Pandharpur like many older towns viz. Poona, Ahmednagar, Bijapur etc. was walled. (The wall is called "Ves" or "Gaon Kus" or "Gaon Bhint", in Marathi.) At Pandharpur this wall had two main entrances, to the east the "Mahadwar Ves" and to the north is the "Haridas Ves".
These two entrance doors are in existence even today. Formerly the town was supposed to have been contained entirely inside these entrance limits. The town of Pandharpur gradually expanded during 1740 - 1855.

The extension of the town - The houses of the priests and other inhabitants were built within the above mentioned limits. The locality at the north end is recognised as "Govindpura" and the locality at the southern end was known as "Santa Peth". The extended town area that has occupied the space in last 150 years is as follows :-

North side - The Priests who were dependent on the temple had their houses built round about the Vitthal temple. As the number of their families increased they found it necessary to occupy other places for their residence. The Haridasa's one of the hereditary temple priests (of the God Vitthal) occupied much area outside the 'Haridas Ves' to the north upto the present 'Bhajandas Street' and Maruti temple.

To the northern side of this Bhajandas Maruti temple the Chief of Ex-Sangali State i.e. The Patwardhan got built a mansion for his residence.

East side - Outside the Rahadwar Ves the Maratha noblemen like Scindias of Gwalior, Holkar of Indore, the Chief of Jamkhindi State and the Peshwa Sardar Limaye (Khasgiwale)
occupied large lands on the western bank of the river and got built spacious mansions particularly called "wadas" for their residence whenever they came to Pandharpur.

Holkar of Indore has built the temple of "Ram" in his mansion. Adjacent to the mansion of Scindia Mrs. Baijabai Scindia has built the temple of Lord Krishna known as "Dwarkadhish temple", in about 1849 A.D.

All the major 11 ghats on the river bank between Govindpura and Gopalpur and were constructed in the years between 1770 to 1825. The town extended and houses were built right up to the water's edge on the western side. This will be cleared from the sketch attached herewith. The big circle in the sketch shows the Nagarpradakshina road. The small circle indicates the limits of the town before the 17th century. (See plate No.3 p. 374).

Some on the northern side people of the town priests particularly (Kshetro Padhyes) and the Priests of "Pundaik" temple namely the Mahadev Kolis built their own houses. This locality is known as "Govindpura".++

'Ghat' is a term meaning a flight of steps. It has been considere meritorious from ancient times to construct such 'ghats' on river banks, especially at the sacred places. A work basically of public utility (meant for bathing and fetching at water) is transferred into an act of piety. Such ghats adorn the banks of almost all the major water courses, the ones from Varanasi on the Ganges being more famous. During the reign of Maratha power wealthy people provided Pandharpur with this typically Indian combination of piety and utility. Here 11 ghats have been built within a stretch of a mile.

++ In this locality there is a vada built by Govind Hari Patwardhan Ex-ruler of Sangli.
The Temple Town - Pandharpur

Pandharpur
Habitation Area

scale 1"=600
sketch by the author
The Mahadev Kolis of Pandharpur and the people of other castes later on settled in this locality.

The Govindpura locality later on extended up to the Dindirwan nearly half a mile north again up to the water's edge (where Lakhubai's temple is situated). The people of the Marwadi community built one temple and few houses in this part on the southern bank of the river. This temple is known as "Rambag temple" and stands on the northern border of the town.

Southeast - The southeast side of the town was inhabited after 1787 A.D. When a Maratha nobleman Shri. Janaji Baji Ghatge, built the Mahadev temple called 'Bhuleshwar temple'. At present the people in this locality are mostly Muslims.

South - On the southern side the boundary of the town ends at a point where there is a temple of Gopal Krishna built on a low hill in 1744 by one Shamaji Nandiverekar. This temple is at the junction of Chandrabhaga and a small stream called Pushpavati and it is beyond the river Chandrabhaga.

This temple of Gopal Krishna is the scene of a large gathering of pilgrims coming to Pandharpur on the full moon
day of Ashadha and Kartik for the "Gopalkala Festival".

The people of various castes and communities (other than Brhmin) are residing around the temple. The locality was known as "Gopalpur" and it was the southern end of the town Pandharpur. This 'Gopalpur' locality was included in the town limits of Pandharpur upto February 1961. From 22nd February 1961 Gopalpur area was excluded from the town limits of Pandharpur Municipality.*

Southwest - 'Kala Maruti' temple is situated at the southwest corner of the town. It was built about 1799 by some Brahmin devotee. The "Mandap" of this temple was constructed in 1860. Formerly this temple marked the south-western border of the town but people of "Mali and Sutar" communities have built their houses around this temple. The locality later on came to be known as "Sant Peth" and is now new area.

West - To the west of the town there is a temple of the Goddess 'Padmavati'. It was built in 1778 by Mrs. Salkwarbai Yeshvantrao Pawar of Dhar. This area was supposed to be the western limit of the town.

The present Railway Station is situated in this area. The New State Transport Bus Station is about 600 yards from the railway station. The Peth market yard area is inside the big Pradakshina circle while the site selected for the new construction of market yard and agricultural produce market committee could be seen outside Pradakshina circle. (See Plate No.)*

Inner Pradakshina Route: (Small round):

"Pradakshina" means going round the temple of a deity. There is a custom in every sacred centre in Maharashtra to go round the temple. This custom is also followed in Pandharpur. When the limits of the town were within the two entrance gates, people used to go round the Vitthal temple. This was the only Pradakshina route formerly. But due to the expansion and new construction of houses, Matha, Temples and Dharma-shalas outside the old entrance gates a new route called "Nagar-pradakshina" road was prepared round the extended area.

Nagarpradakshina Road (Big Round):

On the Nagar Pradakshina road the following important temples and maths are situated :-

A) To the south from Mahadwar Ves to Kalikadevi Temple .1) Namdev Mandir, 2) Ram Mandir, 3) Chandrabhaga temple, 4) Vaskar Math.

B) From Kalikadevi temple to Kala Maruti Temple :- 1) Tukaram Mandir, 2) Bankatswami Math, 3) Sena Nhavi Mandir and Math. 4) Belicha Mahadev.


+ Like "Nagarpradakshina" there is another practice in vogue at Pandharpur. The local people take round of the whole town and also of the river Chandrabhaga and rivercourse Pushpavati. This holy round is known as "Dwarpradakshina" and a distance of about 25 to 30 miles is to be covered in it. The period required for this round is minimum three days, but 5 or 7 days are essential for completion of this "Dwarpradakshina" as it is to be performed on foot. The starting day for this "Dwarpradakshina" is the fourth day in the first half of Magh i.e. Magh Shuddha Chaturthi day.


I) Gopal Krishna Mandir : - 1) Ganapati temple, 2) Mahadev temple,
J) Choufala to Padmavati : - 1) Narsoba Mandir, 2) Tanpure
Dharmashala and Charodham Mandap, 3) Gadge Maharaj Dharmashala,
4) Padmavati temple.

Having reviewed the development of the temple town from
the pre-historic times to the 20th century, it would be worth-
while to give here, an outline of the castewise settlement of
the town of Pandharpur.

A brief outline of the social composition of Pandharpur:

In October 1855 the population of the town was 16918. The
people of the following castes and communities were living in the
town during 1855-1961. According to 1961 census the population
of the town is 45421. An approximate estimation of the families
of some of the castes and communities is given below :-

1) Hindu Brahmin ... 940 8) Lingayat Wani .... 260
2) Mahadev Kolos ... 300 9) Nhavi . . . . . . . 90
3) Namdev Shimpis ... 280 10) Kumbhar . . . . . 60
4) Mali . . . . . . . . 225 11) Sutar . . . . . . . 70
5) Kasar . . . . . . . 125 12) Sonar . . . . . . . 60
6) Gurav . . . . . . . 30 13) Maratha Kunbis ... 190
7) Gavali . . . . . . . 85 14) Komtis . . . . . . . 150
15) Koshti ..., not available.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Swakul Sali</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Lohar</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Burud</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Dhangar</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Teli</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mahar</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total of all the above families comes to **3704**.

During 1881 - 1901 the population of the town increased and the people of the different castes and creeds settled at Pandharpur from the nearby sub-divisions (Talukas) as well as from the parts of the former Bombay State. In 1901 the population of the town was 32405, which during the next two decades decreased. But in the next 40 years i.e. from 1921 onwards the population of Pandharpur is slightly growing. This can be seen from the table given in the section (Page 52) of this chapter.

**Major Castes and Community Groups in the town** -

1. **Mahadev Kolis** - There are about 300 families of Mahadev Kolis in Pandharpur. They are divided into four groups namely Adhatrao, Abhangrao, Mehatrao and Parchandrao. These were the names of their original ancestors who were sent from Paithan to the temple town to punish a rebel in the Dindirvan forest. They were warriors and were serving in the court of Satwahan King. His minister according to a legend of Shri Ramchandra Sonar ordered them to march to Dindirvan forest. Accordingly they came to Pandharpur and punished the rebels.
Dalpaji Ramoshi and others. After the rising was put down the Koli chiefs were placed in the charge of the forest and the country around the temple town and were ordered to maintain themselves by carrying on the work of boatmen and by acting as priests of certain privileges in all the Shiva shrines.

The Mahadev Kolis also enjoy the privilege of the priesthood of the Fundalik temple and of the Mallikarjun temple (Photograph No. 5). During Ashadhi, Kartiki and other fairs they receive some income from these shrines.

A large number of the Kolis is engaged in agriculture and river boat plying. Some are agricultural labourers and some are employed in local business as well as in the municipal service. In the rainy season i.e. from June to October the river is generally flooded between two banks and the harvest of all the local Koli-boatmen starts from the beginning of July. Before the construction of the Railway Bridge (Willingdon bridge) in 1915 and of the causeway - joining the Sholapur road and western banks of the river Bhima in 1925, the Kolis of Pandharpur were virtually the sole masters in the profession of River boat communication at Pandharpur. It was one of the major source of their livelihood. But owing to the construction of the Willingdon Bridge on the river Bhima near Pandharpur, the income of the Kolis operating the usual transport trips between the two banks badly affected and it was considerably decreased. In order to alleviate the Koli's hardships and enable to get a living the then Collector of Sholapur
district made grants for cultivation to the Kolis* in 1924. Some of these lands are being cultivated by the Kolis in 1959 - 1964+.

(2) Namdev Shimpis - Namdev Shimpis are tailors and settled in Pandharpur because the great saint-poet Namdev belongs to this community. They receive the money placed at the Namdev shrine in Namdev Mandir and have a Dharmashala for their own caste people and others.

(3) Malis - The Malis in Pandharpur are flower sellers and garland makers which are essential in the worship of the God Vitthal. They also had a saint Sawata Mali who had his fields and gardens at Arumbhendi village near Pandharpur.

(4) Nhavi or the Barbers - Most of the people of this community shave the heads at the ritual of Shraddha, which many pilgrims do at Vishnupad in Pandharpur. There was a medieval saint called Sena Nhavi of this community connected with Pandharpur. The Nhavis in Pandharpur possess a Math and Dharmashala belonging to their community. Some have opened shops of their own.

(5) Kasar - They are bangle and metal pot sellers.

* The Reserved Forest area and land given to the Kolis of Pandharpur is as follows: Survey Nos. 3 and 45; Area 16-9 A.C. and 17.16 A.C.; Assessment - Rs.29.6.0 and 17.4.0. Information supplied by Shri. V.B. Adhatrao, Advocate from Koli Community.
+ Information collected in personal communication with Shri. G.S. Abhangrao, Ex-President of the Koli Committee.
Pilgrims coming to Pandharpur generally buy new bangles and one or two brass pots - as prasad or merely as memento. Some of the Kasars in Pandharpur are jains.

(6) **Lingayat Wanas, Komtis and Marwadis** - People belonging to these three communities are shopkeepers. Besides selling the usual consumer’s commodities they also sell a number of things and articles needed for the worship of the God Vitthal. Most of the Lingayat Wanas and Komtis in Pandharpur are engaged in retail and wholesale trade and commerce of food grains and owners of Kirana shops. Some are engaged in the cultivation and trade of tobacco, cotton and sugarcane. Some of the Marwadis are money-lenders and others are shopkeepers.

(7) **Maratha Kunbis** - A number of shops in Pandharpur are also run by the Maratha Kunbis, who sell kumkum and bukka sweetmeats and eatables like Pedha, Burphy, Battasas and churmure etc. These articles are taken by the pilgrims and devotees.

(8) **Brahmins** - They are in overwhelming majority at Pandharpur. In the Brahmin population, the families of the temple priests in Pandharpur are dominant. They are known as Badwas, Sewadharis and Utpats. There are also other families of town priests. More about these priests is written in

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later chapters.

This will show that Pandharpur does not differ from other towns as regards caste-composition. But certain caste and communities have definite functions as regards the Vitthal temple.

The Pandharpur Municipality collects various taxes including house, water and sanitation tax from the owner of every house. For the sake of administrative convenience the entire town construction were divided into three wards until 1941. In 1942 the Municipal authorities decided to add one more ward and the town houses were regrouped in four wards till 1946. But in 1946 the town area was again modified and divided into nine wards. This position remained unchanged till 1965-66. From 1966 the Pandharpur Municipality has changed the grouping of the habitation cluster of the town houses and it is divided in 28 wards.

The Municipal Council with its elected representatives of 33 members from the local citizens administers the town of Pandharpur. The Municipal Council elected five years ago is at present (November 1967) dissolved and the administrator appointed by the Government of Maharashtra is in charge of the Municipal administration. A fresh election of the Municipal Council of Pandharpur is scheduled to take place within the next three months under the new Municipal Law of the Government of Maharashtra.
Comparison of the Temple Town with a Market Town

(Pandharapur and Barsi)

Pandharapur is a taluka town besides being a temple town. It is necessary here to give clear idea about the comparison between Pandharapur and another Taluka town Barsi. Barsi is 54 miles from Pandharapur and situated in the same district i.e. Sholapur.

The town of Barsi is the headquarters of a sub-division bearing the same name. It is situated in the northeast of Sholapur district. The town with its surrounding area of about 596 sq. miles lies between the 'Balaghat' hills in the east and the river Sina in the west. It is situated between 17°-59′ and 18°-26′ north latitude and between 75°-42′ and 76°-09′ east longitude. From the 'Balaghat' hill in the north and northeast the country slowly slopes southwest to the river Sina. The climate of the town is little bit cold and it receives more regular rainfall than Pandharapur due to its nearness to the hilly area. The average rainfall at Barsi is more than 30". The soil is rich.

The population of Barsi is more than that of Pandharapur. According to the 1961 census the total population of Barsi was 50,386 while the Pandharapur number was 45,421. Like Pandharapur, Barsi has the paraphernelia of a taluka town namely the Revenue Office (Mamledar Kacheri), Courts of Civil and Criminal
Justice, Headquarters of the Deputy Superintendent of Police and a small prison. It has a Municipality like that of the temple town which was established in 1865. Being the centre of a fertile taluka, the trades and communication of commodities from Marathwada district was quite feasible in Barsi throughout the 19th century.

Barsi is known today* as one of the important grain-market centres* of Maharashtra. Barsi trades in cereals like Jwar, Bajra and Wheat and pulses of three or four different kinds. Besides these it produces and trades in cotton, oilseeds and tobacco. At Pandharpur there is also a market-yard but it is on a smaller scale than that of Barsi. Pandharpur is situated in a dry area where many shepherds live and weave the rough blankets which are sold in the Pandharpur market; but Barsi is lacking in this trade.

The similarity of these two towns is well brought out in the table given hereafter which records various types of trades and shops which are common to both towns. The information was gathered by the author during the field work in 1964 and 1966.

* The rates of cereals in Barsi market-yard are included in the daily bulletin of market and exchange broadcast of the Bombay station of the All India Radio.
## Population Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pandharpur</th>
<th>Barsi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>16,275</td>
<td>18,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>16,910</td>
<td>16,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>19,554</td>
<td>20,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>32,405</td>
<td>24,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>28,550</td>
<td>16,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>25,210</td>
<td>20,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>29,460</td>
<td>27,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>33,329</td>
<td>34,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>40,514</td>
<td>41,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>45,421</td>
<td>50,389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source :-

*Census of India 1961, Volume X: Maharashtra.*

*published by the Manager of Publications,*

*Delhi-8, 1963, pp. 181-182.*
In the table below trades and shops have been arranged in descending order from the town 'Barsi', so that comparison with Pandharpur figures will become easy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trades and shops</th>
<th>Barsi</th>
<th>Pandharpur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Kirana and Bhusar shops</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirana shops</td>
<td></td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pan Bidi shops</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan Supari shops</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tailors' shops</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Adat shops (including Item 22)</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Stores and shops for selling coal and faggots</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cloth shops</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Hotels and Restaurants</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Cycle shops</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Stationary Marts</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Hair Cutting Saloons</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Hardware shops</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Machinery &amp; Electric Merchants</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Smiths</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Mutton and Fish shops</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Lodging &amp; Boarding Houses</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Gold Smiths</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Laundry shops</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Flour Mills</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Dispensaries</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Shroffs</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Photo Studios &amp; Painters' shops</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Vegetable and Fruit Merchants</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Shoemakers</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Sale and Purchase Societies</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Bangle shops</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades and shops</td>
<td>Barsi</td>
<td>Pandharpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Printing Press</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Metal Products Factory</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Cold Drink Houses</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Chemists and Medical Stores</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Bidi Factories</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1666</strong></td>
<td><strong>1700</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As regards social amenities, the eating houses, stores and shops for selling coal, faggots, stationary marts, cycle shops, flour mills, hair cutting saloons and dispensaries at both the places are about equal.

The trades and shops in Barsi, however, exceed in machinery and electric material, hardware goods, copper metal pot factories, printing presses, laundry shops, photo studios and painters' houses, mutton and fish shops, pan and bidi shops, goldsmiths and medical stores.

In Pandharpur the retail shopkeepers of food grains, cloth merchants, tailors, ironsmiths, shoemakers, vegetable and fruit merchants, shroffs, merchants selling metal pots are more than that of Barsi.

The distinctive character of the market yard of Barsi is reflected in the Adat Bazar shops - i.e. commission agencies for foodgrains and commodities of consumers goods. The Adat shops are different than the Kirana and Bhusar shops; both in transaction as also in capacity of storage. The

+ The very different pattern of visitors is involved in these two places and is very clearly noticed in the configuration of restaurants and lodging places. In Barsi the number of lodging and boarding houses is more than that of Pandharpur. At Pandharpur these requirements are well fulfilled by the priests of all types. This point is discussed in later chapters.
number of Adat bazaar shops and Kirana Bhusar shops in Barsi is 115 and 333 respectively; besides this, there are 20 more sell and purchase societies in Barsi. The transactions of the Adat bazaar and agencies and sell-purchase societies are on wholesale line while the Kirana Bhusar merchants generally stick to retail business.

In Pandharpur the number of Adat bazaar agencies is 25, comparatively smaller than Barsi. But the number of Kirana Bhusar shops is 358 i.e. 25 more than that of Barsi. There are also small trade societies numbering about 60 in Pandharpur. The total number of Adat bazaar, Kirana Bhusar and Sell purchase societies in Barsi comes to 468 (115 + 333 + 20) while for Pandharpur it is 443 (25 + 358 + 60) = 443.

In the two tables below are given figures for certain shops which are exclusive to the town of Barsi and to the town of Pandharpur.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Barsi</th>
<th>Pandharpur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tiles factories</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Workshops</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Roap selling shops</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barsi</td>
<td>Pandarpur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cement tiles</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5. Metal and brass utensils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Money Lenders</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7. Tobacco and Snuff Merchants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Loud Speakers and Mikes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8. Photo Frame Makers and Picture Merchants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Grass Sellers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10. Musical Instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Fountain Pen Factory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These tables show the difference of character of the two towns. The shops and trades in Barsi are those of a growing and enterprising market town; while the shops which are exclusively a feature of Pandharpur depend in most cases on the fact that Pandharpur is a temple town.
Halād-kumkum-Bukka, Tulsi mala are things needed for the worship of the God Vitthal. The shops of musical instruments, also needed for worship, - (these are not very high grade instruments). The shop for making "Tulsi garlands serve the sectarian necessity of the Vaishnavas. Sweetmeat shops, Dale churmure factories producing popped rice and popped beans are catering to the needs of the devotees to take sacred food (Prasad) while returning from a visit to the temple. The photographs and photo frames of the icon Vithoba and photographs on religious themes and religious books are also purchased by the pilgrims on large scale, and this trend is typical of the temple complex. The pilgrims coming to Pandharpur regularly also purchase tobacco and snuff as variety of its quality is available with Pandharpur shopkeepers. Both the places have shops for bangles. But more shops are in Pandharpur because women devotees get new bangles on their wrist when they visit Pandharpur, the distinct quality of bangles are known as "Chuda bangles are more popular in mofussil Maharashtra.

It is customary to buy a piece of cloth or a small copper or brass utensil as a momento of the visit to the temple town and we find many shops selling these things (item 2 to 5).

Pandharpur has larger opportunities for lodging; as each house of the Brahmins represents the lodging. The local Brahmins
those who are not the priests lent their houses to them at the
time of the fairs. Besides these there are common lodging houses
called Dharmashalas in Pandharpur. Barsi did not stand for
comparison for this item though it represents number of small and
one big temple. Both the places have the same number of Cinema
houses (3), the same number of educational institutions - (Secon-
dary schools (6), and one degree college. Recently one additional
college of Education has started in Barsi.

In this context one charitable institute which is unique in
Pandharpur must be mentioned. The Orphanage at Pandharpur known as
Vasudev Babaji Navrange: Anath Balakashram" is famous all over
Maharashtra. Ordinarily it would not be possible for a small
Taluka town to possess such a big orphanage. The history of the
orphanage says that it was found by charitable men; that in each
pilgrimage new born infants were left on the dry river bed; where
the pilgrims gather. Secondly in the famine of 1876-78 number of
infants and children were starving. While the famine was con-
tinued they were fed in relief house at Gopalpur+ - that time
a locality of Pandharpur -. But after the famine was over,
the relief house was closed, and an orphanage was started in
February 1878. V. B. Navrange and Lalashankar Umiyashankar
are the names associated with this Orphanage. The institution
afterwards was maintained from the interest of the funds which
were vested in the Bombay Pratharna Samaj.

The great crowd (that assembles in the temple town)

+ Now an independent village.
offered an opportunity for secretly abandoning an illegitimate child in many cases, and it also gave an opportunity for such a infant or child to be noticed and protected by somebody. The Orphanage thus is a direct result of Pandharpur being a temple town with great pilgrims coming throughout the year from all parts of the land.

The most important respect in which the towns differ is the number of temple which Pandharpur has. Barsi has also a fine big and well known temple of Vishnu called "Bhagwant temple". It is visited by all the town people, but it is not the centre of the sect as the Vitthal temple of Pandharpur. Like other sacred towns the number of small temples in Pandharpur is more than 60; in Barsi they are nearly 15. The Priests of the temple town have succeeded in making compulsory a round of all the temples; i.e. the local complex of "Nagarpradakshina". The Varkari devotees coming every month rarely visit all these temples some of which are situated outside the "Nagarpradakshina circle. But thousands of other pilgrims who come to Pandharpur for the occasional visit were made to visit not only the Vitthal temple but all these other temples; and to perform rituals like 'Shradha' on the banks of the river Bhima. There was a thus a kind of sacred itinerary of Pandharpur and its sacred complex of temples. This is entirely lacking in the town of Barsi which mainly "Secular". Because of this very fact the Priesthood in Pandharpur is very large in number and has also yielded great power in the town of Pandharpur.

+ The same remained unchanged even in present day.