CHAPTER – II

MAHARASHTRA SOCIETY IN 19TH CENTURY

The social structure of Maharashtra prior to British rule was basically a variant of the all-India system dominated at the cultural level by caste. It is important to have a clear model of the caste system both in order to understand the social structure over which colonial rule was imposed and the features of that structure which survived as well as to adequately understand the very important differences between the “traditional” and the colonial social structure. This chapter therefore will deal with general issues of the nature and functioning of the caste system.

For understanding caste as a cultural system is that of the French sociologist, Louis Dumont. Though he tends to make short shrift of recent socio-anthropological studies, Dumont, in a series of articles in his Journal Indian Sociology, culminating in a recently translated book actually climaxes a number of recent works discussing Indian caste in terms of ‘purity pollution’. For identifying the nature of Brahmanic orthodoxy, which has been to the present the dominant cultural system of India, his work is so far unsurpassed, and for this reason it will also serve in identifying to what extent a movement represents a form of cultural revolt aimed at and with potentially for transforming the system.

But before drawing on this, a few points must be made. Dumont develops his theory, to a large degree, as a polemic against those who would hold an economic or a historical-racial interpretation of the caste system. He argues that the central ordering feature of the system is a religious one, i.e. its value system of purity pollution and hierarchy, and that while in these terms economic and political aspects are given a place, they are secondary to, or ‘encompassed’ by, the central
ordering religious values. This he has undeniably proven. It also seems true that the value system of caste as such has had an important casual influence on the development of Indian civilization, to use Marxist terminology, the ‘superstructure’ is not simply an epiphenomenon. But to show that economic factor are secondary to religious ones in ideology or the value system is not the same as proving that they are secondary infact. The issues of what the caste system is (what its values and ordering features are) is different from the issue of how it arose (what historical problems it was a solution to) and how it is maintained or changed. The latter issue will be crucial here.

Dumont attempts to deal with the issue of change in the modern era, but remains ambiguous and in the end begs the question. That is he admits fundamental changes in the economic and political spheres and states that “One indeed seems to be present the transition from the world of caste to the modern world” but argues that because economics and politics are encompassed and secondary “in the traditional perspective” that the change is not fundamental. But the question is precisely whether the “traditional perspective” can still be called the fundamental ordering feature of Indian society³. We shall argue here that while caste ideology remains as an important ordering value system on the Indian subcontinent, that it is not the most relevant ideology ordering people’s lives, and that its values are maintained in the modern era in an essentially new way. In fact, the total transformation of the economic and political basis of the system by colonialism has meant that it is primarily its cultural features that have survived, and for this reason, again Dumont’s analysis of caste as a cultural system will prove useful.

Caste is fundamentally a holistic, hierarchical system, which views the person not as an individual but as a functioning part of an
interdependent system who helps to maintain that system by following the Dharma, or duty, that birth has assigned to him. In being oriented to an organically-conceived hierarchical socio-biological universe in which every member had its place it shared features with other pre-modern of “feudal”, social orders. Thus many sociologists have seen it as an extreme development of a society based on ascription as opposed to achievement, on principles of hierarchy and holism as opposed to equalitarianism and individualism\textsuperscript{4}.

Nevertheless caste is unique in its realization of these principles. The fundamental dichotomy which orders the system and sets up the hierarchy is the dichotomy between pure and impure. Organic life, in general, is viewed as impure in opposition to the spiritual realm, and in a sense, the whole system is set up to allow its purest members, the Brahmans, to be as uncontaminated as possible by the material world. Impurity attaches itself to foods, but to some ie., non-vegetarian more than to others. It attaches itself to the fundamental biological facts of life-birth, death, menstruation, secretion – hence it must be remedied by bathing, seclusion and other means. It attaches itself to occupations concerned with material affairs; hence specialists performing these occupations, from agriculture to the more polluting ones of washing and barbering, not only function to maintain society in a material sense, but also remove the necessity for Brahmans and other high-caste men to come in contact with polluting activities and thereby allow a section of society to maintain greater purity. Finally, impurity is passed on through all forms of physical contact, most especially eating together, sexual relations and heredity. Thus a child inherits the relative purity pollution status of his parents and people who eat and marry with each other necessarily share the same level of purity or impurity. And this produces the castes.
Identifying exactly what a caste, as a group is, has been a difficult one for social scientists. Boundaries are rarely clear and even, it may be argued, are inherently unclear. Scholars early recognized that the theoretical varna system — under which all groups are classified as Brahman (priest or intellectual), Kshatriya (warrior, king), vaishya (Businessmen or trade), and shudra (servant, peasant) — provided an ordering system or a model in terms of which groups defined their place in society but did not in fact identify any actual group. Attention was then turned to the jati, the word now generally translated as ‘caste’, the named group or category which the unit in terms of which an overall regional ranking was made since caste ordered the performance of economic functions, these were frequently the names for such functions: shimpi (tailor), kunbi (peasant), koshti (weaver), Dhangar (shepherd). Where this occupational naming does not apply is most frequently at the top and bottom of the hierarchy, where, as Dumont points out, the economic function is less crucial than religious status (the Brahman at the top was not necessarily a priest but rather than maintained the apex of purity for which the system functioned, while the untouchable represented its extremes or impurity) and on its outskirts, where semi-tribal groups have become absorbed and maintain their old names (bhil, koli, ramoshi).

However, jatis in this sense, as scholars discovered, also did not represent solidary groups but usually contained either hierarchically ranked or endogamous sub-sections. Thus many scholars have focused on the ‘Sub-caste’ as the ‘real’ caste. But this, as Dumont argues, is to ignore the central feature of the system in which relative rank is attributed to a local group as a representative of the ‘caste’ or jati. Further, it is not always easy to identify the ‘Sub-caste’ as a group; it may also have splits and segmentations and in many cases where
the jati as a whole contains diversely ranked people they do not always split into definable sub-castes. (This is above all true of such predominantly agricultural jaits as the Maratha – Kunbis).

What is important is to begin not with 'castes' conceived of as solidary units joined together in a system, but with the system itself which generates tendencies to heredity and separation. Persons sought to maintain as high status as was possible; thus, since they shared the status of those with whom they interdined and intermarried, there was the constant tendency to narrow the range of such social relationships, to intermarry only with those whose status and maintenance of social standards was known. And this meant, in a society of limited communications, with only very localized groups of the same status. Caste thus to a large degree involved processes of fission, the splitting of groups, the narrowing of the range of relationships. And because caste limited interaction in this way, it prevented unity and identity among those similar status or 'class' position, making it difficult for them to act in common. Thus as a major effect of the system, the typical organization of conflict in traditional caste society has not involved people of similar status acting together against enemies of different status but rather has been one of 'factionalism', with actors at all levels splitting and opposing those of a similar level, backed up by clients and dependents.

However, elements of 'fusion' and 'mobility' have also existed. If a local group has sufficient economic and political resources it can rise in the social scale by cutting itself off from its former occupation and fellows, taking on the attributes of a higher status, paying a Brahman or bard to establish a respectable heredity, and seeking marriage alliance with recognized high status group. By the rules of the game, such an alliance means its shares in the status of that group. Agriculture and
military occupations have been the most open and relatively pure, and thus the most absorptive in this sense; once gained, control over land and people can be fairly easily transformed into a good status no matter what one's antecedents, "Sanskritization", i.e. the process of rising in the social scale by taking on attributes of a recognised 'varna' and having this legitimated through the help of Brahmans, has thus been a major feature of Indian society. It is important not to exaggerate it, however, high status groups have an equal interest in preventing such mobility since it tends to dilute status, and one can also identify areas of resistance to sanstritisation, in the case of tribal groups who have refused to give up their ancient customs and tribal equality for Brahmanic hierarchy.

Finally, in terms of cultural rules, hierarchy (and lack of mobility) is most clear at the extreme ends of the scale. Dumont argues that the system necessarily requires a sort of absolute purity in the Brahman at the top, and an absolute impurity in the untouchable at the bottom:

It is clear that the impurity of the Untouchable is conceptually inseparable from the purity of the Brahman... in particular, untouchability will not truly disappear until the purity of the Brahman is radically devalued.

This clarifies important cultural features of the system which bear on the development of anti-caste movements. Not only is 'untouchability removal' a crucial symbol of opposition to caste, but so is anti-Brahmanism. This lies behind their linkage in the non-Brahman movement, and helps also to explain why untouchables today can
continue to see Brahmans as the main enemy even while facing non-
Brahmans as the main opposition to their rise at a village level.

HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND FUNCTIONS OF CASTE:

Dumont’s model is crucial in helping us understand the cultural
essence of the caste system. However, it is insufficient by itself in
explaining how and why caste arose and the particular functions it
performed in the ethnic diversity of the Indian subcontinent, and it is
insufficient in understanding how the system at first has positive
economic functions but later became an orthodoxy hampering further
development. For this we have to turn to other authors.

One of the most important opposing theories is one that
emphasises the racial character and origin of caste. While originating
with European work in the nineteenth century, this theory is an
important interpretation of caste among Indians today. Caste, by this
theory, is seen as arising in the process of the invasion of Aryans, or
light-skinned Indo-European peoples, who described the native
inhabitants of the subcontinent as dark-skinned, flat-nosed, aliens
barbarians, demons, and evolved the system as a means by which to
subjugate and divide their enemies. Thus the four varnas are seen in
racial terms: Brahmans, Kshtriyas and Vaishyas are considered to be
descendent of the Aryan conquerors; tribal people and untouchables as
representatives of the original inhabitants; shudras as, at best, a mixed
group.

And there is infact a generally observable colour scale roughly
corresponding to the caste scale; as one goes from north to south, and
from the higher to the lower castes, colour becomes increasingly
darker.
Dumont, in opposing this theory, is right in stressing that there is an important difference in the ordering principles of caste and race. Caste involves principles of hierarchy and interdependence within a community, Racism, on the other hand, has a link to equalitarianism; it has arisen in modern times in the context of a spreading capitalist system and an ideology of individualism and opportunity. It is socially assumed that achievement of a social position is open to any qualified individual while in fact distinct ethnic groups are excluded and dominated. Hence an ideology to justify this is necessary, and so one arises which does so on the basis that certain cultural ethnic groups are inherently inferior. In caste, there is in principle no individualism or competition for positions; further the fission principles of caste operate at all levels and it is unlike the racial systems of modern times which see the unification of large ethnic groups posed against one another. To the extent, then, that there is such large-scale unification of groups with a semi-racial ideology, we have a system that is something other than the traditional caste order.

Nevertheless, the readiness with which Indians accepted European-derived theories of a racial origin to caste testifies to the degree to which a racial aspect was an important latent feature of the system. The Aryan invasion and the incorporation of indigenous and racially diverse groups as well as later invaders of various races and cultures was a reality. However, it is important to emphasize the intermixture of culture and race in this process. Among early vedic tribes, a crucial emphasis in distinguishing 'Arya' from 'barbarians' was not so much racial as behavioral and cultural:

Where the 'shraddha' ceremony i.e. offerings to ancestors on stipulated occasions was not carried out, and where
people did not observe the laws of the 'varna' were called Mlechhas and habitation of there is called impure lands. Not only because those who lived, but they spoke an alien language. But what was more important they did not perform the correct rituals\textsuperscript{11}.

The fundamental dichotomy was indeed that of purity and impurity, but as Aryan civilization spread and became Brahmanic Hindu civilization, the groups and territories identified as impure and alien changed. The system did in fact allow for the incorporation of the 'barbarian' and both lands and peoples were assimilated:

Large numbers of mlechha peoples were incorporated into the social, political and religious system and were in fact the progenitors of many of the essentials of Indian culture\textsuperscript{12}.

However, while the rulers of such groups were incorporated as kshatriyas, and their tribal priests occasionally became Brahmans, generally the majority were absorbed in the position of shudras, thus suggesting indeed a rough correlation between ethnicity and caste. Similarly, the racial features remained at an ideological level: those absorbed at higher status levels had their position justified in mythologies of descent from those originally pure and of Aryan blood\textsuperscript{13}.

One result of this process of incorporation is that in most of the southern peninsula there are fewer Brahmans than in the north, though these few are in a more powerful position, and almost no recognized kshatriyas or vaishyas. Similarly, the other side of "Sanskritization"
processes is the persistence of tribal groups and of non-Sanskritic and freer, more equalitarian customs among lower castes—elements of resistance to the spreading culture of Brahmanic Hinduism. Both geographical and caste position, then, become crucial to the discussion of features of cultural revolt.

Perhaps the most sophisticated version of a historical theory of case is that of D.D. Kosamb, the Indian historian, Sanskritist and mathematician. Kosambi stresses the economic aspect of the process of incorporation, involving the transformation of hunting and food-gathering tribes to a settled, agricultural economy. The older functions of Brahman priests were wrecked by the invasions of Alexander, the growth of new kingdoms and the flourishing of Buddhism; but they remained as the most important holders of an intellectual tradition. The role that these Brahmans then began to perform was not simply one of maintaining the class structure of society and winning over new tribes to caste culture, but also crucial to economic development:

Disruption of the tribal people and their merger into general agrarian society would not have been possible merely by winning over the chief and a few leading members. The way people satisfied their daily needs had also to be changed. The tribe as a whole turned into a new peasant jati caste-group, generally ranked as shudras. The brahmans acted as pioneers in undeveloped localities; they first brought plough agriculture to replace slash-and-burn cultivation, or food gathering. New crops,
knowledge of distant markets, organization of village settlement and trade also came with them\textsuperscript{14}.

For this reason, Brahmans were often brought in by kings, or chieftains in the process of becoming kings, and given land grants in return for legitimizing the rulers’ caste-status and helping to develop their territories.

Caste, then, according to Kosambi, originally had a positive function which enabled Indian society to be formed out of many diverse and even discordant elements, with the minimum use of violence\textsuperscript{15}. But once developed, he emphasizes with equal vigor, it tended to grow into a narrow orthodoxy, hampering further development with the tightening of caste bonds, the loss of a sense of unity, superstition, the obliteration of Indian history and the prevention of further development of commodity production. We now turn, then, to the important question of the political and economic functions of a fully developed caste systems and its relation to the formation of a “modern” social order.

The economic system which caste maintains is typically one of interdependence and not of exchange. There is in it no concept of an individual holding rights or “property” in land, labour power, or wealth; rather persons, at all levels, perform functions for society in terms of the caste position of their birth. For this, they have a right to a share of the produce of society; a share of grain at harvest time was the typical image of the indigenous system is not one of buying and selling this produce, but of dividing shares of the grains heap\textsuperscript{16}, a share of some ritual sort in village festivals, and so forth. This is typified in the village jajmani system which includes all those who perform functions for the village, from headman and village accountant through artisan castes down to the village untouchable or general servant of the village
is called as Balutedar in Maharashtra. The agricultural castes, often called the 'dominant castes', have as their functions cultivation and as their share a claim to the land. But the basic concept is not one of property in the land but rather of a sort of property in the position the hereditary right to perform a particular function for the village, whether it be that of a blacksmith or accountant or cultivator. In this case the Japanese economic historian Fukuzawa argues that in traditional Maharashtrian society the artisan castes were not servants of the dominant castes as such but rather of the village as a whole. There is no moment by moment process of exchange when a duty is performed; the artisans, priest etc., perform their functions throughout and get their reward throughout the year, in grain at harvest time and in perquisites at times of ceremonies.

Thus to the extent that it was based on the interdependent village economy, caste made modernization difficult. It did not prevent the formation of merchant groups oriented to and skilled at profit-making; indeed it necessarily contained castes of the Vaishya category whose 'dharma' it was to act in a business like way. But while the interdependent village system was maintained, it limited the degree to which it could be penetrated by an urbanised commercial development; urban or merchant castes were cut off from control over the land just as landholding castes were cut off from the concepts of agrarian entrepreneurship and saw themselves primarily as rulers of men and maintainers of the local society. The system hampered enterprise on the land and while there has been, in traditional India, a good deal of money economy, it has never fully upset this "basic form of the division of labour in traditional India".

Politically caste culture had just as crucial effects. With its absolute dichotomy between pure and impure, the caste system
involved a clear separation of sacred and political functions; power force are admitted into the system but at a secondary or "encompassed" level. Power is necessary to maintain society, but it also necessarily involves one in impurities; by taking this responsibility the king absolves the Brahman of the necessity of becoming polluted and in turn is allowed a greater degree of impurity in life style than any other caste. He has the highest secular status, but it is irrevocably a secular and not a sacred one:

It is a matter of an absolute distinction between priesthood and royalty. Comparatively speaking, the king has lost his religious prerogatives: he does not sacrifice, he has sacrifices performed. In theory power is ultimately subordinate to priesthood, whereas in fact, priesthood submits to power. Status and power, and consequently spiritual authority and temporal authority, are absolutely distinguished.

The sacred-secular dichotomy extends all the way down to the village level where it rationalizes a system in which the "dominant" agricultural caste performs functions of ordering and ruling the small society while the Brahman continues to represent without fail, the highest sacred status. (Where Brahmans are also secularly dominant as landholders of rulers, the functions are merged in fact, though distinguished still in terms of individuals performing them).

Just as important was the tendency of the system to hereditarize positions and claims at every level. Just as men within the village claimed a share of the produce on the basis of caste functions, so those above the village who acted as feudal
intermediaries, also claimed a share on the basis of performance of political functions. Representatives of the political overlord — accountants or military chieftains at a country level in Maharashtra these were known as deshpandes and deshmukhs also claimed their position as a hereditary right or watan, a traditional family possession. This did not mean there was not a great deal of mobility among various groups claiming such positions; nevertheless, the emphasis was on heredity and stability and the resulting tendency was to sink down local roots.

Politically, these features tended to hamper large scale power formation. It is no accident that the most extended empires on the Indian subcontinent have been Buddhist. (For example the early Ashokan empire), The Mughal system or from Europeans the British Raj, the system which deprived the king of all sacred status made it difficult to evolve a cosmological order around which loyalty to a king could be focused to make it possible to maintain an absolutist regime and a strong bureaucracy. Rulers and tribal chieftain turned king gained legitimacy and assurance of their status from the Brahman priests, but there were limits beyond which they could not go; they were expected to maintain ‘dharma’, the caste system with its hereditary implications. Conquest was approved of; the new kings were encouraged to engage in war and attempt to extent their power, but it was against the rules of the game “to annex conquered territories and deprived conquered nobles of their position; the latter were expected only pay tribute and recognize the conqueror as an overlord. Since at all levels of society position tended to become hereditary watans, intermediaries maintained an inherent strength conquered chieftains remained to fight again, or else the new men the ruler appointed were able to claim their position on a hereditary basis and sink down local
roots and when the time was opportune, establish their autonomy. As a result, attempts at large scale empire were deprived of their force by continuing fissiparious tendencies. The typical "feudal bonds" of this system did not operate in terms of personal loyalties between an overland and his subordinates but rather in terms of his hereditary claim to a position for performance of the social function.

The self-sufficient village community operating from below with the same result; as the British conqueror Elphinstone argued, it made a powerful centralized polity both unnecessary and almost impossible. Robert Frykenberg has described the way in which small caste and kin groups, with assured positions in village and local society operated at all levels to undermine the central power: the system in his words, was one of an "anti-state" which lacked not only a centralized bureaucracy, but even a clearly definable political territory21:

Of frontiers, we can only grope in blind uncertainty. Furthermore, we read of annual forays by the armies of each power in which the opposing forces crossed and re-crossed what we would normally feel to be the lands of the other dynastic systems with impunity and with little regard for the niceties of territorial integrity. Different centralized powers seem to have ruled congruently over the same territories, to have shared the same intermediate agencies and administrative apparatus, and to have laid claim to revenues from the same villages.
This occurred because hereditary social claims were maintained regardless of their relationship to the centralising power. Rulers and intermediaries attempted to maximize wealth and power by conquest and tribute and by claiming ever new rights. But to override the feudalising tendencies within their own territories, to create a bureaucracy dependent on and loyal to themselves, to invoke a territorial or ethnic "nationalism" as a basis for power, was something Indian kings found almost impossible within the context of caste culture. Absolutism, l'etat c'est moi, was a concept almost meaningless in terms of 'dharma' and 'chaturvarna'. Thus, just as the caste system made it difficult to achieve "unity at the bottom" in the form of large scale peasant revolts, so it made unity form the top almost equally impossible.

Thus caste hampered the formation of property rights and control over land that might have been the basis for large scale entrepreneurial agricultural development linked to urban enterprise; it hampered the formation of an absolute kingship or royal bureaucracy; and it hampered the formation of a "nation", a group feeling an essential unity based on a common language, territory and history. To a very important degree, then caste hampered economic and political modernisation. But this cannot allow us to conclude, as many Western scholars have, that India could not have achieved such development without the intrusion of British conquest. Rather, the implication is only that such development would have required, in the process, something of a "cultural revolution", a transcending and transformation of castes values as such. But this was true also of other societies which have had to transcend the forms of "feudalism" that hampered their modernising, the Japanese creating a version of emperor loyalty to override feudal loyalties, the Western Renaissance
and Reformation developing notions of individualism and "innerwordly asceticisms" transcending older forms of organic social theories which downgraded 'usury' and wordly enterprise. Both Japanese and European societies were able in the process of economic and political development to find cultural resources to overcome traditional cultural barriers. The significant issue regarding caste, then, is whether the same would have been possible in India.

Maharashtra literally means a great country. The present state of Maharashtra came into being on May 1, 1960 by the incorporation of the three Marathi speaking areas namely, Western Maharashtra, Vidarbha and Marathwada. It has a total area of 1.18 lakhs square miles and a population of above 3.2 crores. But when we speak of Maharashtra in the 19th century we refer to a much smaller area and population, which then formed a part of the Bombay presidency.

The Bombay presidency then consisted of such regions as Sind, Bombay (City and island) Deccan, Konkan and some north western part of Karnataka. Of these only Bombay, Deccan and Konkan constituted the (predominantly) Maratha speaking area.

Kolhapur also come under this political suzerainty of the presidency though the local ruler and his autonomy, to a great extent was kept intact. Thus the total area and population under reference. In this context was much less than what is now. Excluding Kolhapur, the Maratha speaking area was 47090 Square miles, with population of 837,608. If Kolhapur were included the area would be 49583 square miles and total population 9,175,795.

The people of the entire Maratha speaking area, whether within or outside the Bombay presidency, historically constituted one people and were unique in culture and habit or mind. This uniqueness to a
great extent, may be the result of geographical and historical factors. The river Narmada and Tapti which define the northern boarder of Maharashtra provided a barrier to any invader from the north. Beside the Ghats running parallel to the Arabian coast and its eastern branches constituted an ideal base for armed resistance against an invader. Consequently right from the beginning of the Christian era almost upto the end of the 13th century. It was ruled by indigorous Hindu dynasties such as Satavahana, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, and Yadava\textsuperscript{25}. Even the emperor Harsha who ruled over almost whole of the territory beyond the Narmada was defeated by Pulukesin-II of the Chalukya dynasty in the seventh century. This continuing of the Hindu rulers was broken in 1294 AD (Saka 1216) when Ramachandra Yadava of Devagiri was defeated by Allauddin Khilji\textsuperscript{26}, subsequently, the Deccan remained subject to the emperor of Delhi till 1315 when the Muslim nobles of the region revolted against Mohammad Tuglak and establishment of an independent Bahamani dynasty\textsuperscript{27}.

In the Seventeenth century, in a bid to re-establish his political suzerainty over the Deccan Aurangazeb led a series of attacks on the Muslim Kingdoms of the Deccan and subsequently destroyed some of them. The political Vaccum, was successfully exploited by Shivaji to establish an independent Hindu Kingdom\textsuperscript{28}. Hence, once again after a break of about 3 centuries or so a Hindu Kingdom was established over some parts of the region.

Shivaji in the 17th century established an enduring political society, but his successors, owing to lack of political acumen and intensified internal feud, paved the way for the emergency of the Peshwas as the de facto rulers of Maharashtra\textsuperscript{29}. The Peshwas signified the political supremacy of the Brahman caste. Under the Peshwas a novel political system was evolved in Maharashtra. It
resembled a confederacy of the Maratha chiefs who on the one hand, recognised the suzerainty of peshwas but still enjoyed a considerable amount of freedom of action and were for all practical purposes independent. It helped the Marathas to successfully extend their territories until their defeat at Panipat in 1761. After a brief pause in the 1780's the Marathas once again switched on to the policy of expansion. But soon they came into conflict with the East India Company. This period also witnessed the tension between the Marathas chiefs and the Peshwas. The Peshwas were constrained to approach the British for protection. The East India company troops acted on behalf of the Peshwas and in 1803 forced the Maratha chiefs to cede large, portion of their territory and accept British overlordship. This placed the Peshwas Bajirao-II under British Tutelag. But he refused to accept it and conspired against the British dominion and fought against them but was defeated in 1818 in a Kirki. He was taken a state prisoner and the whole of Maharashtra passed under British control.

The rise of the peshwas not only emphasised the feudalising process, but also marked the triumph of orthodoxy. The Maratha state was born on the crest of a movement of social and religious reform, which had attacked the sacerdotal authority of the Brahman and laid stress on social equality. Under its impetus all castes and classes had participated in the work of liberation. Shivaji in administration emphasised merit and talent wherever he found them. His army consisted of local maratha peasantry while Brahman, Prabhus and Saraswats manned his civil establishment. As the Peshwas rose in importance the complexion of the services slowly began to change. From time of Balajirao (1740-61) his castemen found favour in clerical as well as Military services. The Marathas administration became Brahanenical and the principal officers of government were either in
the procession of Brahmans or disposed as to be under their control. Other communities felt neglected by the monopolisation of power by Brahmans and made them apathetic to the fortune of the state.

Religion was a predominant factor which governed the life of people in ancient and medieval Maharashtra. All social institutions, therefore, had the sanction of the religion or religious tradition. Maharashtra of the seventeenth century, the immediate past of the Peshwas period was known by certain peculiar social institutions such as the following.

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**JATI SANSTHA:**

In India caste is a very old institution that determined men's station in life throughout the sub-continent for ages together. The caste system is a hierarchy in which one remained above the other. For example, the Brahmans represented the first rank and the untouchables were the lowest rank in the society. Under this system the lower castes suffered various disabilities through the centuries. In early ancient times the society was divided into four castes. Viz; the Brahmans, the kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras. With the passage of time these four castes became crystallized into number of castes and sub-castes. The caste was a social organization around which the life revolved in the seventeenth century Maharashtra.
Brahmans were the most privileged caste enjoying privileges in all walks of life. The two dominant groups of Brahmin's in Maharashtra were the Konkanastha or Chit – Pavans and the Deshasthas. Deshastha Brahmans were closely integrated into the social structure of the villages, and as Kulakarnis and Joshis were most popular among the peasant communities. There were the other groups of Brahmans also in addition to these two. Of all these, only a few Brahman caste, were found engaged in religious duties. They studied the ‘Shastras' acted as Temple worshippers and Preached the traditional religions to the masses by reading ‘puranas' and holding religious discourses, popularly known as ‘Kirtanas' and ‘Bhajns'. These kirtans expounded the philosophy of Hinduism and of Varnashrama Dharma. Some of them officiated as priests on certain occasions like birth, marriage and death, read horoscope and performed worship for their patrons as specially holy or auspicious occasions such as Ekadasi, Shivaratri.

Brahmans were experts specially in the clerical branch, because of the illiteracy of the general masses. Important administrative posts at all level viz. Village accountants and district accountants and ministerial posts were in the hands of Brahmans which were hereditary. Thus the Brahmans were an important factor in the society who tried to maintain their monopoly of the sacred lore and their aloofness from other castes as a sort of spiritual aristocracy.

**MARATHAS:**

Next important caste in the society was the Marathas who were generally engaged in Military agricultural and in certain cases in Mercantile activities. They were called as Kshtriyas due to their assignment to Military activities. Hence it was their duty to protect the country and the people from foreign aggression and to maintain law and order in their respective areas.
They were practically divided into groups. In the first group were included *Patil, Deshmukh, Chaugula*, the village and *Paragana* officers, or the chief landholders (*watandars*). The second group was of the cultivator Marathas called *Kunbis* who were referred to as *Mirasdars*, "Thalkaris" and "upris" in Maratha records.

*Patil, Deshmukh, Chaugula* enjoyed rights and privileges in village communities and hence they occupied a special position in the village. They served as military servants and held high position in military department of the state.

Cultivators were mainly devoted to agricultural work. They cultivated land and served as common soldiers in the military whenever needed, socially these two groups were poles apart.

**VAISHYAS:**

The third was the *Vaishyas* caste or the mercantile community. The group of artisans and traders were included in this caste but each of these groups represented a separate caste. The artisans in the village carried on their trade in a traditional way and served its simple needs. The trader was often a bania from Gujarat. The carpenter, the smith, the coppersmith, the oilman, the barber, the fisherman, pandealer, etc., were all functional groups and were different from the general Maratha community in their religious and social status. Each caste has a sort of religious and moral government among itself, conducted by a council of elders, which decided caste matters. So far as their caste matters were concerned, they would be the final arbiters and that the ordinary courts of the state would not interfere with the same. The rules could not interfere in their decisions because the caste sabhas were supposed to have been based on tradition sanctioned by the religion.
The village played an important part in the social and economic life of Maharashtra, Dr. A.S. Altekar thinks the real history of India consists of the history of its village communities. Dynasties have come and dynasties have gone, but it is the village communities that have preserved in fact the culture and tradition of the old Bharatavarsha through several revolutions.

The village in Maharashtra is called Gov. Other names such as 'Grama', 'Dehe', 'Mouja', 'Khede' etc. Every village was a close knit and an isolated self contained unit. The active inhabitants of the village were generally known as 'Desaks' i.e. cultivators (Mirasdars and upris) village officials (Patil, Chaugula, Kulkarni) and the Balutedars. These inhabitants formed the village communities which always existed as the socio-economic unit in the Maratha territories.

The figures given are for six districts in Vidarbha (Wardha, Nagpur, Amraoti, Akola, Buldhana, Yeotmal), seven in the Deccan (Ahmednagar, Dhulia, Jalgaon, Nasik, Poona, Satara and Sholapur), and three in the Konkan (Kolaba, Thana and Ratnagiri). The district of Marathwada and two easternmost districts of Vidarbha are excluded since they were largely not involved in the movements described here. The percentage of total population (including Muslims) in the Maharashtra state is given the Appendix-I.

**WATANDARS: A SOCIO – ECONOMIC SYSTEM:**

_Watan Sanstha_ presents the next striking features of the society of Maharashtra.'

_Watan_ was a matter of great social significance in the Maratha society. It was an instrument for political, social and economic career. It was a sign of prestige and dignity in those days. Therefore, _watan_ became the root cause of many disputes in the society. Claims and
counter-claim to *watans* gave rise to excessive litigations village feuds, conspiracies, violence, murder and deceptions\(^{38}\). Not only this but sometimes people changed their religion to obtain *Watan*.

**PATIL:**

The Patil, the village headman, was the chief hereditary officer of the village. The village could not function well without a *Patil*. His main duty was to bring the idle and barren land under cultivation and to make it fruit-bearing. He was the chief revenue officer, the chief police magistrate, and he also united in him the function of the Chief Judicial Officer\(^{39}\).

He received a share of the total revenue collection of the village in kind and cash, mainly on the order of the state. He also received some grain from each holding. From the cultivators he took ‘*Ghugri*’ an exaction in kind from each holding) ‘*Phaski*’ (a handful of nay corn) ‘*Hurda*’ (unripe *Jawar*), from artisans and shopkeepers he received the article such as a pair of shoes, *pasodi* (a garment), *cholkhan* (a piece of cloth for bodies), oil, coconuts, ghee, fowl, mutton etc. without paying for them. He also received a share from various levies imposed and collected by the state such as marriage tax, divorce tax transit tax on cattle etc. He also received free services from *Mahars*, drummers and other artisans for his private purpose\(^ {40}\).

**CHAUGULA:**

The *Chaugula* (*Gramani*) was another important person in the village administration. He was assistant to the Patil in the work of village administration. He served as his messenger and helped him in collecting land revenue and also in bringing back cultivators who had left their fields\(^{49}\). He transported the revenue collection in kind from his village to the headquarters of the *Paragana*. He looked after the
warehouse of village office and also the private storages of the village some times at places chaugula performed the functions of the patil.¹¹

**KULKARNI:**

The Kulakarni was another inevitable village Watandar whose services were thought essential. He has been referred to as Gav Kulkarni in Maratha records. He was also called “Gramlekhi” i.e. village accountant. His main duty was to keep a record of the land held by each individual cultivator and the revenue due from each. He was the keeper of the records of the total estimate of the state revenue that a village had to pay. His main duty was to attract peasants to the village and increase the areas under cultivation. Kulkarni received both in cash and in kind from the villagers in addition to his salary. The revenue received from each holding was fixed per Chavar (i.e. measure for 120 bighas) or per 'khandi'. At the time of harvest he received a small amount of grain as his own. He was entitled to have ‘Hurda’ or unripe Jawar and ears of a corn i.e. ‘Lombia’ He also received a pair or shoes per year from the shoe makers. He received free services from Mahars and the services are referred to in our records as Padewari (i.e. a Mahar) ⁴².

**DESHMUKH:**

The Deshmukh was an intermediary between the state and the village. He held some land in the village. He was superior to the village patils only in rights and perquisites of economic nature and not in rights and perquisites of social nature. His main duty was to look after the work of patils normally within his region. He visited annually the villages under his charge. He settled the revenue of lands newly brought under cultivation and looked after its appropriate entries into the kulkarnis record. He expected cooperation of the Patil, Kulkarni and shete – Maharajas of his paragana in his work. He was entitled to a
share of grain, of fodder and fuel from every village. He collected mangoes for pickles from the owners of the mango groves, he collected several things from the villagers such as ghee, blanket, sheep, flock, shoes, oil, earthen ware, chiken etc. during the Navaratri festival. He did not pay for any of these articles. He also claimed several things from the shopkeepers, from hawkers and vendors of the weekly bazar. He received Silk thread from the ‘Patewegars’ (Makes of rings, tasser, nettled work of silk) a variety of vegetables from the vendors, betel-nuts and twelve betel leaves from the pan dealer, sweets from the vendors attending a village fair. He collected certain yearly dues from the village artisans, such as barbers, washermen, blacksmith, carpenter, weavers, tailors etc. he collected three ‘rukas’ on the sale and purchase of cattle per head. He also used to get a share from the proceeds of such taxes as ‘Khavastak’ (i.e. tax on nobility) ‘Gavtaka’ (i.e. perhaps a levy imposed on the entire village) a tax on marriage as well as on divorce. He received free services of Mahars to the extent of one of two months in a year.

**DESHPANDE:**

The Deshpande was subordinate to the Deshmukh in position. His main duty was to keep the accounts of the village under his jurisdiction. Some times he acted as Kulkarni of the village in the absence of the hereditary kulkarni. He enjoyed rights and perquisiter in cash and kind. As regards the articles of grain, consumption articles from weekly bazaar and from merchants his share was usually half the share of the Deshmukh.

He received a pair of shoes from the cobbler, plate (patravali) from Gurav, betal - leaves from the ‘tamboli’ oil from oil man. He was entitled to the free services of the Mahar for fifteen days in a year from each village under his jurisdiction. In village marriages it was his right
to receive sugar, betel-nuts, pans and clothes from the marriage parties.\textsuperscript{44}

**GRAM SANSTHA: VILLAGE COMMUNITY ORGANISATION:**

The Joshi or an astrologer, was a Brahman who calculated nativities, foretold lucky and unlucky days. The Gurav looked after the village temples. The Guravas were engaged in preparing plates of leaves (Patrowal) which were used on occasion of eating. They were also employed in Maratha armies as trumpleters\textsuperscript{45}.

**CULTIVATORS:**

Cultivators were divided into two groups\textsuperscript{46} – Mirasdars, or Thalkaris and Upris. Mirasdar possessed permanent proprietary rights of land and right of settlement in the village. They cultivated their own lands and enjoyed all the privileges of the village communities. Upris were strangers to the village. Whenever the Mirasdars were not available the village head man had to bring outsiders for the purpose of cultivation. They were not hereditary cultivators but they settled permanently in the village.

**BALUTEDARS:**

Bara Balutedars, the village artisans, who held rent-free land in village, served in sphere of economic and social needs of the society. They were assistants to the Patil in the various social and festival ceremonies in the village\textsuperscript{47} and also rendered valuable service to the whole village in its economic activity and growth.

In the Maratha records they are referred to as Balutedars\textsuperscript{48}. Their names found engraved in many Mahajars. Their number has been mentioned as twelve in some Mahajaro; but some records raise their number to more than twelve\textsuperscript{49}. 
The Balutedars as members of the village councils, affixed their signature or thumb impressions against their names on the Mahajars. Every Balutedar had his own symbol. The potter's wheel, the barbers mirror, the carpenter's chisel, the shoe maker's thread and picker, the washerman's mallet, the Gurav's censer, the goldsmith's hammer and Mulana's knife are mentioned in many Mahajars.

The Balutedars were generally classified in three rows. The first row of the Balutedars included those artisans whose services were considered to be more important to the peasant for productive activities. The second and the third rows included those Balutedar whose services were less important than the services of the first row of Balutedars.

1. Carpenter, blacksmith, shoe-maker and the watchman or mahar were members of the first row.

2. Washerman, potter, barber and the rope Makers or Mang represented the second and

3. Goldsmith, gurav, Joshi, Mulana, Koil (water carrier) and Ramoshi were in the third.

The sutar (the carpenter) was the head of the artisans. He made the villagers ploughs and repaired their carts, he provided wood material for building the house or making a cart. The Lohar (the smith) made the shoes of the ploughs and other implements. The kumbhar (the potter supplied the village with earthen ware, pitchers, waterpots and jars, receiving a cake of bread for every fresh article. During the days of ripening crop he took a jug and water vessels to each field for those engaged in watching the crops, receiving in turn his ears of corn (nimboor). He had also supply any government servants on his arrival.
at the village with vessels he required. He supplied images of deities in the festivals and received some grains.

The Nhavi (the barber) shaved all the villagers. He attended the weddings in Patil's family. He also attended the Patil in the festival. Whatever presents Patil received came to him duly through the Nhavi. The Parit (the washrman) washed the cloths of the village.

The last in the social scale was the Mahar caste. Mahar was assigned such low works as scavenging, cleaning away dead animals, keeping watch at night, and acting as a messenger and guide to government officials and strangers passing through the village. Many, Dhors, and Chambars also occupy the lowest position with Mahars as untouchables. The Chambhar (the shoe maker) made all leather buckets, halters, whips, ropes and bounds for agricultural purposes. He had to furnish gratuitously the Watandars of the Paragana and village with a new pair of shoes annually. The Mahar was the village watchman, scoutman and messenger. His evidence was required in every dispute. Specially when the cultivators quarrel regarding the boundaries of their fields, the Mahar's evidence often decided it. In large villages they were divided into two or three heads and these were (1) Weskars or Porters waiting at the village gates (2) Khale – Weskar or guards of the stack-yards. The Gav-Weskars were those who attended the Chavidi (village office) and the Gav-Mahar were those who did the general duties of the villages. His remuneration was a government Inam a title upon which every thing grown, presents of bread and other victuals, small impost of oil, sugar and condiments received from shopkeepers and the like.

The Mang provided the villagers with ropes and prepared the hides for the Chambharo to work. He was assigned with the work of man-hanging and man-killing. He was frequently acted as a
watchman. The Ramshis held the office of Watchman and they were automatically turned into auxiliaries in the police when to the country was settled. Under the weak government or under anarchy they became thieves and robbers.

The Mulani or Mulla or Mohamedan Priest took care of the Mosque and tombs. It is very strange that he found a place in Hindu Baluta system of the village\textsuperscript{58}.

The Koil or water carrier kept earthen vessels filled with water at the village Chavdi for the use of all Hindus. He supplied water to travelers for marriages and festivals. When there was a river near the village, the water carrier acted like a ferryman and took people across on a boat or inverted earthen pots.

**RIGHTS AND PERQUISITES OF THE BALUTEDAR:**

The Balutedars were artisans hailing from different caste groups that possessed hereditary rights of service in the village they were only remunerated by the village.

**GRAIN SHARES:**

The document of the Peshwa period throw light on the proportion of the grain share given to the Balutedars. A document mentioned that out of a total of 70 the first row of Balutedars i.e. the sutar, the chambhar, the Mang and the Mahar were entitled to a share of 10 each. Whereas the Balutedar of the second row i.e. Kumbhar, Nhavi, Parit and Lohar were entitled to a share of 5 each. The third row of Balutedars i.e. Joshi, Gurav, Sonar or Potdar, Mulana were entitled to a share of 2 1/2 each. Thus the first row of Balutedars got grain share twice that of second row of Balutedars and four times more than that of the third tow of Balutedar\textsuperscript{59}. 

52 rights of Mahar Balutedars among their right are includedley of tax from 2-4-0 to 3-4-0 or the marriage of the caste Hindus including the other Balutedars such as Carpenter, shete Mahajan, Coldsmith, Mali Lohar, Kasar, Ghisadi, Pinjari, Ramoshi, Beldar, Washerman, Barber, Potter, Shoemaker, Teli, Koshti, Jinagar, Vadar, Halalkhor, Kalkadi, Gurav, Mulani, Kazi, Bagwan, Laman, Gavali, Gopal, Dombari, Gondhali, Dhanagar, Tambat, Phasepardhi, Vaishnava, Gurudi, etc. The Sanads also give the Mahars a right to collect Rs. 3 1/2 on the funerals of the above mentioned castes.

The Sanads have also mentioned the right to levying excise duty on the various consumer commodities brought to the Market for sale. The Mahars were permitted to take skin, of the dead animals removed by them. In some cases the Mahar returned the skins to the owner of the cattle on the payment of one maud of grains to him.

The barber did not shave the Mahar but lent him the razor, Bagwan or fruit seller gave 100 fruits to the Mahar for every 1000 fruits brought to the Market. vani or grocer gave tobacco and betel to the Mahar everyday. The ‘Tamboli’ or Panseller supplied a little quantity of betel-leaf to him. The Mahar served the Patil, Deshmukh and Deshpande as ‘Rabta-Mahar’, ‘Ghar Mahar’ and ‘Padewar’. The Deshmukh paid Rs.6/- to the Mahar for his clothes, and gave him some bread everyday. The village Patil had a claim or the services of the Mahar round the year and round the clock.

**PROBLEM OF UNTOUCHABILITY:**

Untouchability is a age old social institution, which condemned the so called untouchables to sub human social standard, existed in the worst from under the rule of the Peshwas in Maharashtra.

Manu mentioned the untouchables as ‘Antyas’, ‘Antyaja’ and the Antiyavasin, and put their abode out side the village. The Antyajas
were also *Avarnas* - those not belonging to any of the four *varnas* or castes. So the *Shudra* is a *Savarna* while the untouchable is an *Avarna* i.e. outside the *Chuturvarna* or the system of four castes. The caste Hindus who became polluted by their touch could become pure by adopting purificatory prescriptions. But the untouchables as such could never be made pure. Because “they were born impure, they are impure while they live, they die the death of impure and give birth to children who are born with the stigma of untouchability affixed to them. It is a case of permanent, hereditary stain which nothing can cleanse”. Thus the untouchability as practised by Hindus, for centuries had led to the virtual isolation and segregation of a large number of people of their own religion\(^64\).

In the literature of the period the *Mahars* the *Mangs* and the *Chambharas* are mentioned as untouchables. The *Mahar* sometimes was called as Dher ‘*Bhoomia*’ or guide, ‘*Yeshkar*’ or watchman. ‘*Tara*’ or gate keeper\(^65\). The *Mang* was also some times known as *vajantri* or Musician. The chambers were known as *Mochis* (shoe maker) *Jingar* (saddle maker) etc. In all this *Mahars* are the principal untouchability community in Maharashtra. The *Mahars* are to be found in every village. Every village in Maharashtra has a wall and the *Mahars* have their quarters outside the wall. The *Mahars* did by turn the duty of watch and ward on behalf of the village and they claimed 52 rights against the villages.

The *Mahabharata* says that the *shudra* can have no absolute property, because his wealth can be appropriated by his master at will. If the master of a *shudra* has fallen into distress, the latter shall be placed at the disposal of the poor master. The king is enjoined to appoint only persons of the first three classes over villages and towns for their protection. If *shudra* trying to hear the Vedic texts shall have
his ears filled with Molten tin or lac. If he recites the Veda his tongue shall be cut off: and if he remembers it he shall be dismembered. If he assumes a position of equality with twice born men, either in sitting, conversing or going along the road, he shall receive corporal punishment. A shudra committing adultery with women of the first three castes, shall suffer capital punishment, or shall be burnt alive tied up in straw. According to Apastamba, sinful persons are born as low castes and even as animals. A person for example, who steals a Brahman's gold will be reborn as a Chandala.

The theory of Pollution, the touch of a Member of any caste lower than one's own defiles a person of the higher caste, but in actual practice this rule is not strictly observed. In the Maratha country the shadow of an untouchable is sufficient, if it falls on a member of higher caste, to pollute him. It is recorded that under the rule of the Marathas and the Peshwas the Mahar and Mangs were not allowed within the gates of Poona after 3 pm and before 9 am, because before 9 am and after 3 pm their bodies cast too long shadow, which falling on a member of the higher castes, especially Brahman, defiles him, the impure castes are debarred from drawing water from the village well, which is used by the members of other castes. In the Maratha country a Mahar one of the untouchables might not spit on the road lest a pure caste, Hindu should be polluted by touching it with his foot, but had to carry an earthen pot, hung from his neck in which to spit. Further, he had to drag a thorny branch with him to wipe out his footprints and to lie at a distance prostrate on the ground if a Brahman passed by, so that his shadow might not defile the holy Brahman. The schools maintained at Public cost, are practically closed to such impure castes such as the Chambars, and Mahars. Both teachers and pupils in the schools make it most difficult for low caste boys to sit in the classes, under the Peshwas a greater distinction was made in the punishments on account of the caste of the criminal than of the nature
of the crime itself. Hard labour and death were punishments mostly visited on the criminals of the lower caste. During the career of Sawai Madhav Rao, the Peshwas government had decreed that the Mahars being 'atisudhras' beyond Shudras, could not have their marriage rites conducted by the regular Brahman priests. They were asked to content themselves with the services of their castemen-priests, the Medhe Mahars. In the Maratha region, the inner most recesses of temple can only be approached by the Brahmans, clean shudras and other high caste having to keep outside the sacred precincts. The impure castes, and particularly the untouchables cannot enter even the outer portion of a temple but must keep to the courtyard.

Under the Hindu rulers the Brahmans must have secured to themselves many pecuniary privileges, denied to others, on the strength of his orthodox theory of the proper functions of the state, and perhaps more because they happened to occupy the post of importance. Thus in the maratha region, during the latest period of the peshwas rule (latter half of the eighteen century) the Konkanasth Brahman clerks obtained the privilege of their goods being exempted from certain duties and their imported corn being carried to them without any ferry charges. Brahman land holders of a part of the country had their lands assessed at distinctly lower rates, than those levied from other classes. Brahmans were exempted from capital punishment.

**DUTIES OF THE UNTOUCHABLES:**

The duties performed the untouchable were various. Their main duty which the ancient law givers like Manu and others enjoined on them was the service of the twice born. During the period under review the untouchables were required to perform many duties.

*Mahars* most important revenue duty was that he watched over the boundaries both of the village lands and of each individual's field, to see that they are not encroached upon, to give evidence in cases of
boundary disputes to watch over crops whether cut or growing, so long as the crops stood in the field. He was also a public messenger and a guide and was considered very important by the police. In case of boundary or other disputes in the village his evidence was considered very crucial in arriving at the decision. In fact the Mahar acted as a Messenger both for the individuals and the Government. He carried the death news to the relatives of the deceased person from one village to another and conveyed the death information from the military camps to the relatives of the dead and also to the Government. He helped in disposing of the dead persons and dead animals. Further in case of dacoit or theft his evidence was deemed important to detect the thieves or dacoits. He supplied fuel on the occasion of festivals and also on the occasion of the caste (community) dinner. Untouchables also performed certain important duties on the occasion of public festivals. For instance, in the Pola festival. The Mang and Mahar tied the Toran and gave red paint to Patils house.

The Peshwas followed a traditional pattern of socio-religious rules and regulations formulated in the laws of Manu, Peshwas also suggested and formulated certain codes of behaviour for the society. If castes or individuals tried to adopt themselves against the established code of conduct they were punished by various methods. Brahmans under the Peshwas were found engaged in the literacy profession, rule, money lending, trade, commerce etc. as the Peshwas were the orthodox Brahmans, stratification of castes was one of the basic reasons leading to the caste conflicts especially the low caste protest movement was led by the low caste reformer such as Jotirao Phule against the orthodox Chitpawan Brahmans Peshwas, and the social stratification of the caste system in Maharashtra.
FOOT NOTES


4. Dumont's View., though he argues for the uniqueness of caste to India, he begins with an assertion of the basic opposition between 'traditional' and 'modern' society and states that 'our modern denial of hierarchy is what chiefly hinders us in understanding the caste system,


6. Higher Castes, with greater access to travel and communication. tended to marry over a wider territory: see Eric Ipiller, Caste and Territory in Malabar, American Anthropologist, pp 410-420, 1954.

7. Gali Omvedt., 'Caste, Class and Conflict' M.A. Theis, Department of Sociology, University of California, 1966


   "It is clear that the impurity of the Untouchable is conceptually inseparable from the purity of the Brahman... in particular, untouchability will not truly disappear until the purity of the Brahman is radically devalued"


11. Romila, Thaper, The image of the Barbarian in Early India Comparative Studies in Society and History 1791. PP. 408 – 436 "Where the 'shraddha' ceremony i.e. offerings to ancestors on stipulated occasions was not carried
out, and where people did not observe the laws of the ‘varna’ were called Mlechhas and habitation of there is called impure lands. Not only because those who lived, but they spoke an alien language. But what was more important they did not perform the correct rituals."

12. Ibid P.436. Large numbers of mlechha peoples were incorporated into the social, political and religious system and were in fact the progenitors of many of the essentials of Indian culture."

13. Ibid, p.419


"Disruption of the tribal people and their merger into general agrarian society would not have been possible merely by winning over the chief and a few leading members. The way people satisfied their daily needs had also to be changed. The tribe as a whole turned into a new peasant jati caste group, Generally ranked as shudras the brahmans acted as pioneers in undeveloped localities they first brought plough agriculture to replace slash and burn cultivation or food gathering new crops Knowledge of distant markets organization of village settlement and trade also came with them."

15. Ibid, p. 172

16. Walter, Neale., Economic Changes in Rural India, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1962, pp 18 - 47


18. Frykenberg, Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press 1969 pp. 3 – 16


20. Ibid, pp 66 – 72

"It is a matter of an absolute distinction between priesthood and royalty. Comparatively speaking, the king has lost his religious
prerogatives: he does not sacrifice, he has sacrifices performed. In theory power is ultimately subordinate to priesthood, whereas in fact, priesthood submits to power. Status and power, and consequently spiritual authority and temporal authority, are absolutely distinguished


Of frontiers, we can only grope in blind uncertainty. Furthermore, we read of annual forays by the armies of each power in which the opposing forces crossed and re-crossed what we would normally feel to be the lands of the other dynastic systems with impunity and with little regard for the niceties of territorial integrity. Different centralized powers seem to have ruled congruently over the same territories, to have shared the same intermediate agencies and administrative apparatus, and to have laid claim to revenues from the same villages.


24. Ibid,


37. Watan is an Arabic word and its use is traceable to the Mahamadan Kings of the Deccan. Watan is a grant made by the state to a person who holds a certain office in administration. But in Maharashtra watan had a different meaning. Watandar was maintained by the village and village communities, which paid him in cash and in kind for his services to the village. His rights and privileges were recognised traditionally, by the society with the help of the state deeds.
42. P.A.Gavli., Society and Social Disabilities under the Peshwas, Op.Cit, pp 16-17
43. Ibid, p.18-19.
44. Ibid, p.19.
47


47. K.V. Purandere., *Marathyancha ltihasachi Sadhane* (Marathi), Vol. XV, p.44.


52. Ibid.

53. Ibid, p.23.


57. K.V Purandare op.cit. page Vol .XV, p 50


60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.


SAVITRIBAI PHULE