CHAPTER 4
PREVALENCE OF BRITISH RULE

During the regime of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Maratha sardars Raoji Somnath, Chimnaji Damodar, Parsoji Bhosale used to plunder Vidarbha for collecting chauthayi and sardeshmukhi revenue. Parsoji Bhosale settled down in Vidarbha. Chhatrapati Rajaram bestowed on him title of Senasaheb Subha for establishing Maratha rule in Berar and Gondwan in 1699.

Though initially work of Parsoji was to collect chauthai and sardeshmukhi revenue, he used to establish his rule wherever he went. He stayed basically at Bham (tehsil Wani, District Yavatmal). Shahu returned in South in 1707. He again gave title of Senasaheb Subha and retained Berar to Parsoji.¹

Moghul ruler Farukh Shiyar through Peshwa gave legal authority of collecting the revenue to Maratha sardars in 1718. Nizam became independent after the battle at Sakharkheda in 1724. During this period, West Berar was under regime of Nizam while East Berar was with Bhosle. Bhosale used to collect chauthai revenue. The region was under rule of Bhosala and Nizam. It was thus double regime in Berar.

After defeat of Bhosale and Shinde in 1803, British handed authority of the region to Nizam. Instead of relieving the region from the despotic double regime, it put Berar in even more despotic and tyrannical rule.

Nizam stopped Malik Ambar's revenue collection method adopted by Maratha ruler and started new Maktedari (contract) system of revenue collection. The ruler had no problem with the system as the ruler would get the fixed revenue on production and profit, but the complete burden was directly put on the subject. The contractor who was also administrative head of the region would take no care of public welfare. The revenue contract was merely a means of acquiring wealth. Thus contractors, sub contractors and their men used to over exploit the people.² It caused despotism beyond limit during the rule of Nizam. As Nizam had to engage in different battles, he never objected people's crude exploitation. He had time to time take help of British forces. Later, British put its army battalions for Nizam. Higher officers of these forces were British. Nizam had to bear expenses of the forces. Nizam consequently was dependent on British. British Resident officer began to live in Hyderabad. And Nizam had to accept British interference in some important policy matters.³
Nizam started system of giving the region of Berar for revenue contract of annual 52 lakh rupees. There was competition to achieve the contract. Often the pursuers did not mind corrupt means to get the contract. And after getting the contract, they absolutely robbed the people. The percentage of robberies, arson, plundering to take land revenue was increased manifold. In view to lessen increasing debt, Nizam gave the contract of tax collection to Ms Pamar Company, Puranmal Company and Pestanji & Company. Nizam also used to take loans against the tax collection contract. Before expiring contract with Pestanji & Co. Nizam made auction of tax collection contract and gave the contract to a contractor in Balapur division. Therefore, both the old and the new contractors used to collect revenue. Pestanji & Co had adopted comparatively better system of revenue collection. It gave impetus to trade and industry and public welfare was given partial attention. He also initiated custom of distributing early loans to purchase cotton.  

During 1803, Barshitakli and Adgaon were plundered by dacoits. Pendhari people looted the region till Elichpur in 1809. Washim, Jalgaon, Pimpalgaon were also occasionally plundered. Patur was plundered and dragged into arson.

During 1825-26, Pestanji & Company for the first time sent the cotton from Berar to Mumbai. Impetus was given to cotton production and since then it continued to increase.

The south Berar was put at stake due to constant riots of Naik people. Nizam rein in Berar was anti people. Larger area was left barren. Due to increased atrocities, farmers were largely making exodus. Meanwhile, Nizam's loan taken from the British accrued to 70 Lakh. Nizam was finding it hard to pay back the loan as no money lender was ready to provide loan at high interest rate escalating to Rs 2. At last, Nizam agreed to pay the expenses of British troops.

Initially Berar was a region of fertile land for best agriculture and rich mineral wealth. The British were expecting to make the region a part of their empire. Therefore, they pursued Nizam for their loan. At last, succumbing to British pressure, Nizam ultimately made a treat with them and handed the region on 50 years for revenue control.

4.1 The British and The Berar :-

During the revenue contract of Pestanji & Co, the company gave impetus to cotton cultivation in Berar. It resulted in increased production of cotton. Pestanji understood that the real wealth of the region depends on cotton. He established markets at Khamgaon, Bandnera, Akola and other places. Similarly Berar had rich mineral wealth and huge amount of industrial raw material. The British had understood the worth of the region and were inclined to use
abundant raw material in the factories. Similarly, they also understood the strategic importance of the region.

4.1.1 The Contract of 1853:-

Burdened with the increasing debt, Nizam ultimately made treaty with the East India Company in 1853. The contract heralded a new modern era. The foot prints of Medieval gave place to modern times. It brought a thorough change in Berar. It brought new establishment, science-technology, education, administrative and other reforms. These reforms and changes were vital and brought the difference that could not have been attained even during an aeon.

On May 21, 1853, Nizam made a treaty with the British for repaying the debt. According to the treaty, Nizam handed the region of Berar to the British for 50 years with Rs 25 lakh yearly gross revenue. The new treaty included the payment of the then existing British contingent force and other administrative claims on the Nizam.7

Following the treaty, Raichur duwab and Naldurga these two regions came in British ambit. The north Berar included Washim, Akola, Amaravati, Yavatmal and Buldana.

4.1.2 Modern Administrative setup and formation of Districts:-

After the treaty of 1853, re-arranging administrative set up was required as during Nizam rein, the province was in the state of anarchy and despotism. The people were annoyed and region was left barren. Berar province was divided in South Berar and North Berar and the complete authority of the province was handed to Hyderabad Residency. The northern Berar included pine plateau ghat which was initially recognized as Berar and its head quarter was at Buldana while the headquarter for south Berar was at Hingoli.8

Due to 1857 uprising, the administrative reforms were postponed. During the revolt, Nizam provided military and other help to the British forces. Nizam and the British signed a treaty in 1860 waiving off loan of Rs 50 lakh against Nizam and regaining control of Raichur and Naldurga back to Nizam. The parts of Northern Berar remained with the British.9

Berar province was reconstituted into East Berar and West Berar. After the revolt of 1857, the administrative set up get impetus. The British put the minute administrative set up so as to easily curb any such public or army uprising. As part of the new set up, Amravati was made the head quarter of the East Berar. Initially Amravati and Akola these two districts were made.10

Division of Berar Province with view of administration, politics, military and commerce was not enough. Therefore, later Berar was divided in four districts.11
They were Akola, Amravati, Mehkar and Wani. North eastern parts of Berar province were included in Wani district. Wani had large coalfield extended to district of Chandrapur and Wardha to Warora. A small hill at Wanjari village of pink lime stone was at some five miles distance to north from Wani.

Similarly to some 4 miles toward east there was rich mineral of lime of different colours ranging from buff to dark grey with chert passing into jasper with tolerably regular layers. Therefore, the district appeared industrial importance to the British.

North-East part of the province was given district place at Mehkar. The head quarter was set up in Janefal tehsil for one or two years till 1867. Janefal was merely 10 miles towards north to Mehkar. Chikhali, Malakapur and Mehkar tehsils were included in Mehkar district. 28 miles metal road railways station was set up at Mehkar.

After 1857 uprising, the British government was very conscious and meticulous in administrative set up so as to crush down any attempt of civil disturbance. The province was divided into districts with specific boundaries and administrative headquarters.

The percent of rains was average in Berar and during summer there was higher temperature. Mehkar, northwest district of Berar was at mere 900 feet from sea level and during summer there was comparatively hotter summer. The British could not tolerate the temperature during summer. It was uncomfortable for British people; therefore, the district was shifted to Buldana, a colder place, which was at altitude of 2190 feet.

Buldana is the coldest station after Chikhaldara in Berar. It was pleasant. Therefore, the British took headquarter of North East Berar district to Buldana. There was a way of cart from Malakapur. Later in 1902, Chikhali tehsil was included in Buldana district.

To solve the administrative difficulties, different tehsils were formed and included according to their places into the districts. Washim tehsil was formed. It was earlier the district place during 1868 to 1905. It was situated 52 miles south to Akola. Washim district was formed in 1902 with inclusion of Pusad tehsil. As a separate sub division, Washim district was separated from Akola district. When Berar province was restructured into six districts in 1903, Akola, Akot, Balapur, Khamgaon and Jalgaon tehsils were included in Akola district.

Elichpur, a sub division was one of the separate districts in administration of Berar Province during 1867 to 1905. It included Elichpur, Daryapur and Melghat tehsils. After 1905
Elichpur tehsil was included into Amravati district. In 1869 Morshi tehsil, part of earlier Elichpur district, was included in Amravati district. In 1864, Yavatmal, Darwha, Kalapur and Wani were included in South East district of the Berar province. Yavatmal is the biggest district covering South Eastern quarter of the Berar province.

With administrative requirements, many tehsils were changed district wise, for example, Murtijapur tehsil was included in Akola district. Washim district place was included in Akola district. Berar province was divided into four districts of Akola, Amravati, Yavatmal and Buldana covering different geographically and administration wise respective tehsils. The administrative work began with district head quarters.

4.1.3 Geographical Position and Natural Situation:-

The Berar Province lies between $19^\circ\ 35'\ N$ and $21^\circ\ 47'\ N$ and $75^\circ\ 59'\ E$ and $79^\circ\ 11'\ E$. It consists of broad valley running east and west, between two tracts of hilly countries the Gawlogarh hills (Melghat) on North and Ajanata ranges (Balaghat) on the south. The old name of the central valley was Payanghat and the three names of the region also referred to as Melghat, Payanghat and Balaghat.

Berar province was divided into four districts. Accordingly the geographical position of Amravati District is $21^\circ\ 46'\ N$ to $20^\circ\ 32\ N$ and $76^\circ\ 38'\ E$ to $78^\circ\ 27\ E$; and including parts of North West Berar. Geographical position of Akola district lies between $19^\circ\ 51'\ and 21^\circ\ 16'\ latitude and $76^\circ\ 77.44'\ E$. Geographical position of Yavatmal district lies between $19^\circ\ 16'\ and 20^\circ\ 42'\ N$ and $77^\circ\ 18'\ and 79^\circ\ 9'\ E$. Geographical position of Buldana district lies between $19^\circ\ 51'\ and 21^\circ\ 17'\ N$ and $76^\circ\ 49$ and $75^\circ\ 57'\ N$.

Berar has area of 175000 sq miles. East West average distance is 150 miles and the region is spread North South at around same distance. Population of Berar was 10,75,442 in 1867. Satpuda ranges are towards north of Berar while Ajanta ranges are to South. Rain water accumulated on both the ranges flows north south in numerous tributaries through the valley and reach to river Purna. It flows down from East to West and concedes into Tapi River. Wardha River flows towards east. In the south, a famous Lonar salt water reservoir is at Lonar.

Weather in Berar is hot and dry. Narnala, Chikhaldara and Budnana are at higher altitude from sea and therefore are cold destinations. There is comparatively less rain fall in Berar. Traditional crops include sorghum, wheat, cotton, sugar cane, sesame, tur, mug and harbara etc.
Limestone, soft stones, coal, iron etc minerals are found in Yavatmal district. The water at Lonar Crater lake includes sodium, carbonate of soda and insoluble matter with minutes quantities of other substances. Other agents, carnelians and calcite (double refreshing spar) etc is found in the southern parts of Buldana district.

Iron ore, sand stone etc minerals are found in Amravati District while Basalt and sandstones are in Akola district. Along with rich mineral wealth, Berar has wild life including rich fauna and flora to some extend. Saline water belt covers the parts of Akola and Buldana district.

4.2. National Awakening in Berar:-

After 1853, British government brought a new system, new thought, new reforms; creating awakening. Hyderabad resident was posted to Amravati to control the administration of Berar. The British government was reformist comparatively to the despotic rule of Nizam. It built modern offices, courts, schools, hospitals roads and other administrative buildings.

Due to establishment of courts and schools, the percentage of newly educated lawyers and school teachers increased. Their active participation was also seen in reformist movements in social and political life in Berar. They were also in better terms with journalists who put reformist thoughts fearlessly through their newspapers.

In 1881, the government announced that the Municipal Councils would be set up in towns with population above 5000. The government will appoint five members. Nagpur received the honour of the first Municipal Council.

Varhad Samachar, a newspaper was published from Akola. Its editor was Khanderao Balaji Fadke. Earlier to establishment of the Congress, he had written an article "when will the British Government give us freedom?" The article in strong words voiced the general sentiment that the 'British rule was despotic and anti people'.

Lord Ripon, the founder of local body government passed the Act of local body government in 1881. Municipal Councils and Tehsil board were also founded in Berar. The period of Ripon ended in 1884. The Congress was established in 1885. Lord Ripon annulled the earlier 'Vernacular Press Act" and press given much needed freedom of self expression to Press and Journalism.
The positive impact of different administrative facilities was undoubtedly felt with slow but sure revival of public awakening. The winds of national awakening started slowly blowing in Berar.

4.2.1 Western Education and Religious & Social Reforms:-

After the establishing British regime in India, education was given prominence. People welcomed the new light of knowledge. With new foreign education, they come to know more about the global happenings and rapidly changing world and at the same time they became aware of their ignorance. The people who left Berar due to despotic rule started returning. Agriculture was given importance with cash crop of cotton. Similarly, ginning factories were started in Berar.

Due to the commercialization of agriculture and new policies of land and crop revenue, new agriculture technology was introduced and farmers were inclined towards cash crops. Farmers were having cash in the hands. People from cities like Pune, Mumbai and Madras approached Berar for employment and trade.

The new reformists thought began in Bengal did not take much time to reach Maharashtra. Social Reformers in Maharashtra were influenced by new teaching of Brahmo Samaj and they started Prathana Samaj. They started introspecting about different customs and rituals like Sati, casteism, child marriage, child-old marriage, polygamy, infanticide etc. During the same period, under the mask of western education, Christian Missionaries started English Schools and started their work of religious conservation. Some people attracted towards the new religion and become converted to Christian religion. To retain the honour of Hinduism, Swami Dayananda started Arya Samaj. The new tide of reforms flooded to Berar through Maharashtra.

The first branch of Arya Samaj in Berar was founded at Amravati district in 1887. Arya Samaj began its social and religious work through the centre. The branch of Arya Samaj was opened up at Akola, Yavatmal and Buldhana district. Intellectuals in Berar started introspecting about different customs and rituals like Sati, casteism, child marriage, child-old marriage, polygamy, infanticide etc.

In view to propagate the message of widow remarriage ‘Punar Vivah Utejjak Mandal’ was started in Maharashtra. Its main office was in Mumbai. R B Moroba and Kanhoba were its directors. The condition of widows were not improved even after Sir William Bentinck put ban on the custom of Sati. They had to endure life long anguish. They continued to receive
mistreatment in family and society. Punar Vivah Utejjak Mandal decided to improve the condition of women.

It started to put the ideological and then less pragmatic thought in practice. Waman Prabhakar, resident of Akola remarried her widowed sister to Pandurang Vinayak Karamkar, who was a teacher at Sawde in Khandesh. Varhad Samachar took note of the reformist remarriage. It reads

“This surely, if honour is due to Sir William Bentinck for abolition of suttee, a far greater honour is due to Mr Waman Prabhakar, who as a head of house, led the venin assault against this monstrous progeny of superstitions, and in spite of the opposition of the same of his nearest kin, and if all the family of his sisters’ first husband, and that of the whole of the so called orthodox partly of Brahmins, has preserved until he has freed from degradation and misery, his own sister, the first Hindu widow for two thousand years whose misfortune is not imparted as her crime, and from whose life the hand of the black demon of superstition has been liberated, but she will not be the last. The thousand Brahmin widows will rejoice in the same freedom and will bless Mr Waman Prabhakar as their deliverer.”

‘Warhad Sarvajanik Sabha’ was founded at Amravati in Berar on Dec 27 1886. It was primarily a political organization. Three lawyers at Amravati namely Sir Moropant Joshi, R. B. Mudholkar and Dadasheb Khaprde and R. B. Deorao Vinayak Digambar from Akola were the main members of the organization. Its main intention was social and political awakening. It started the process of social and political awakening throughout the parts of Berar.

The British introduced education with limited objective of making educated employees available for the British administration. It had its indirect but positive influence as the doors of knowledge were made open to people. The historic picture of then society, clearly points out the pervasive impact of the British rule in social, economical, political and religious aspects of life.

The movements of social and religious reforms began during the same period. Initially, reforms in religion and society were not different as the people were highly religious. The reformers had to take up religious reforms for attaining real social reforms. It was necessary to make the society prepare for the social reforms through national awakening and the social reformers were successful in the task.

4.2.2 Modern Administrative Reforms and Facility of Transport:-
In view administration convenience, the Berar province was divided into five districts Akola, Amravati, Yavatmal, Washim and Buldhana. Amravati was the centre of Judicial Commissioner of East Berar, therefore, different government offices were opened at Amravati.\textsuperscript{36}

The railway had its first run between Thane to Mumbai in 1853. After that the web of railways was spread. After Berar region was included in British regime, the railway which had reached to Bhusawal was extended and brought in Berar.\textsuperscript{37} Bhusawal to Akola railway route was built in 1864 and within next two years, the construction was extended to Badnera, Wardha and Nagpur. It was completed in 1866.

In view to expand trade, military base, a meter gauge railway line was put from Achalpur to Yavatmal in 1914. It is still continued.

Akola post office which was under the postal department of Mumbai province till Dec 5, 1868 was later included in the Central Province.\textsuperscript{38} The government included Money Order the department of Post. The facility of Telegrams was put in the major cities of Berar.\textsuperscript{39} The first telegram was made from Akola to Nagpur on Nov 17, 1868.

The currency notes were started for the first time in Akola in 1867.\textsuperscript{40} Different administrative buildings were rapidly constructed in Amravati city in 1870-71. Railway station was built in 1839. The office of deputy Commissioner was built in 1860. The building of Small Cause Court was built in 1868. The buildings of Head Post office and adjacent building of Telegram and Telephone office was built in 1868

These advanced facilities were dream like for the people in Berar. A sense of curiosity and fascination about the modern technology was created in the minds of people. When the railway first time arrived in India, a huge multitude of people thronged to the spectacle. The branch of Bank of Bombay was opened in Amravati in 1868.

The district Jail was firstly at Achalpur. After construction of the building it was handed to the police administration. The Central Jail at Amravati was reduced to the First Class District Jail. It had capacity of 633 men in 48 women. The hospitals of the Civil Surgeons were at Amravati camp and Achalpur Civil Station. The smaller units were situated at Chikhaldara and Dharni in Melghat. Dispensaries were introduced at every place. There was one 20 beds hospital at Amravati.\textsuperscript{41} Vaccination was made at each tehsil place of the districts. Vaccination was made compulsory in four Municipalities in the region.
Like Amravati, the urban facilities were introduced in Akola district. The collector office at Akola was built in 1862. The building of Police station and City Kotwali was built in 1874. 30 police stations and 20 out posts and 10 road posts were included. Similarly, Civil Surgeon hospital of 15 beds was introduced in Akola.42

The office of deputy commissioner was built in Yavatmal district.43 Yavatmal was made circuit house of Forest department.44 Public Work Department was working for the four major tehsils. There were 25 Police Stations in the district while with 15 out posts and 3 road posts. The district had Fourth Grade Jail with capacity of 64 convicts and nine under trial prisons. The district had hospitals and dispensaries. The vaccination was made compulsory in the complete district.

In Buldana district the court of the deputy Commissioner was built in 1873. The District Circuit office was built in 1891. The facility of Telegram and Post was introduced. The district Jail was built in 1873. The civil hospital was built in 1869. These constructions were built by the PWD department.45 The district had the police stations with 19 of first grade and 8 of the second grade with 3 out posts.

The district had secondary grade District Jail with capacity of 78 men prisoners and 9 women prisoners. The district had 11 dispensaries with the chief dispensary at Buldana. The vaccination was made compulsory at tehsil Municipalities Buldana, Khamgaon and Shegaon. The district had five veterinary dispensaries at Buldana, Mehkar, Malkapur, Khamgaon and Jalgaon.46

Many advanced facilities in administration and new system of transport was completely new to the public in Berar. After the despotic regime of Nizam, the region experienced a state of law and order. The British had introduced the facilities of roads, railway, telegram, Post for its convenience for trade and to exert its control on the region. The transport infrastructure was also put for military to curb any revolt and uprising. Important districts in Berar were connected to each other. The distance and separation between distant regions was reduced and emotional bond was created among the people of different districts. Transportation facilities made travel easy to reach district, tehsil and rural places. It boosted interaction among leaders of different district and region. The modern facilities created the foreground for the rise of nationalism. The facilities made to exploit the people were used to integrate and organize the people. Similarly, people of different caste, creed and religions used to travel sitting in railway boggy. It helped to ease the
self imposed restriction and alienation of people of one community to other. It created a feeling of nationalism and infused a single Nationality.

The district Boards Act was introduced for the region of Berar in 1885. Following the new administrative Act, the district and tehsil Boards came to be formed during 1890-93. The district boards were entrusted the task of creating facilities of roads in rural areas, public wells, lakes etc at rural places. Due to the four districts boards in the region, Amravati, Akola, Buldana and Yavatmal, special efforts were made to aware people. These institutions really worked out different schemes of public welfare. It proved beneficial for rural and urban parts as well.

In 1887, Punjab Municipal Act was implemented for Berar region and according to its provisions, Municipalities were formed. According to the new Act, at each district and tehsil place, Municipalities were formed. The new bodies and their presidents and vice presidents played instrumental role in implementing public works. During the great drought in the region, the plight of people was put before the government. During drought in 1896, Kakasaheb Bhagwat, Dadasaheb Khaparde, R B Mudholkar, Dada Jog, Sir Moropant Joshi came together to help the drought affected people. They put the demands of aids for the drought affected people and some work for their hands.

Thus due to the creation of local self bodies, people gradually became aware of their rights. The Gram Panchayat Act was introduced on Oct 1, 1923 and consequently 441 GPs were formed in Berar.

The British established the education department in Berar region in 1866 and established Primary and Secondary Schools. Similarly, people and social leadership also established private schools.

With advent of new thought, a process of introspection was started during the British regime. A sense of curiosity and fascination was created due to the new advancement. Though the British government brought modern facility for creating its administrative and military base, it curtailed the distance among cities. The contacts could be established among different people engendering spirit of nationalism.

4.2.3 Racism of British:-
The unfortunate scar of the 1857 revolt resulted into a sense of hostility and racism between the ruler and the subject. Bureaucrats controlled by Anglo Indians gave humiliating treatment for Indians. They had their separate stratum of High Class society. They considered Indians inferior to them and were meted out insulting treatment. Due to such insular treatment, educated Indians adopted the path of self protection.\(^{52}\)

Indian continued to felt the agonizing spirit of racism by the British. The crimes committed by the British were often ignored and at times were given insignificant punishment. But the offences lodged against Indians were given heavy punishment. The British brought the principle of judicial equality. But different courts were set up for Europeans. There was evident injustice in the actual implementation of Law. To curtail the prevailing spirit of racism in Judiciary, Edward Bill was brought, but it could not pass in the central Assembly. It once again bared the spirit of racism during the British regime.

Despite having eligibility and experience, Indians were not appointed on important posts in Revenue, Administrative and Military Services while British, without proper qualification and experiences, were appointed on important posts. They used to maltreat Indian employees. Similarly, Indian employees were given less salaries compared to the British officers and employees. Indians were denied entry in different British Clubs. Insulting plates with message “Indians and Dogs are not Allowed” were put on the gates of such clubs. Similarly, travel in higher class of Railway was reserved only for Europeans and entry of Indians was not received favourably.

It was a daily routine that the British officers in Berar used to maltreat Indians. They beat many educated and illiterate Indians.\(^{53}\) No authority was there to take note of the continued racism. One such incident was reported in Berar in which one English officer was on foot on Nagpur road in Akola who was confronted by a swarthy Indian, afraid of him, the officer had asked his servant Ramdayal to kill him. But Ramdayal did not kill him. The English officer, on breach of his rude command, gunned down his servant Ramdayal. The case was lodged against the officer. But the Judge acquitted him due to lack of evidences.\(^{54}\) Many such instances happened during the British regime in Berar. The English officers used to maltreat Indians on trifling matters and were sorely punished.

Assistant Police Superintendent Hapson in Yavatmal district in Berar who had sorely beaten up Indian police constable was fined Rs 40.\(^{55}\) In another instance Chief Commissioner at
Akola District Mr. Morris lodged offence against a poor Indian for taking water from the backyard well of his bungalow and put him in Jail. The court released him on guarantee that such mistake would not be committed again. But the Chief Commissioner again appealed in the court and made the court to charge fine Rs 4 against the poor Indian.\textsuperscript{56} Such many instances were held in Akola, Amravati and Yavtmal and Buldana districts.

These recurring incidents a created a sense of discontent among Indian against the British rule. The poor and illiterate people silently suffered the inhuman treatment. Indians lost their faith of judiciary.

Attitude of hatred and contempt was prevailed against the British government due to the recurring incidents of their racial supremacy and arrogance. The inhuman treatment given to Indians created awareness against the unjust rule of the British on one hand and the other created a sense of integration against the continued harassment. They understood the fact that they could not challenge the British unless Indians got united. Thus it gave impetus to the spirit of Nationalism in Indians.

\textbf{4.2.4 The British despotism and Police Atrocities:-}

The British government started its despotism under the disguise of law. The continued oppressive rule increased the discontent of the educated people in Berar province. The British Parliament made a special law to declare the Queen as the empress of India. Then Litton had arranged the special royal convention at Delhi\textsuperscript{57} and all the kings of the India were invited to attend. The British government wantonly spent huge amount of wealth to exhibit its prosperity at such royal meetings on one side while to other hand famine was taking toll of human lives. On such dismal backdrop, the British government ought not to exhibit its wealth in spendthrift manner. The national newspaper had criticized the extravagant policies of the British government. As a result of the criticism, in 1878, Linton passed an oppressive act to put rigid regulations for news papers. Similarly during the same period, Linton had passed another regulation Army Act curtailing freedom of possessing weapon for common citizens. The breach of these laws was given rigid punishment of life imprisonment.

The oppressive rule started in Berar province. The newly transferred officers at district prison at Amravati started committing atrocities against the c grade political prisons by denying food and water. Severe beating and cell imprisonment was the common programme at the jail.
The arduous works like grinding food grains and water storing was given to the political prisoners.\textsuperscript{58}

Total 10 political prisoners from Nagpur, Amravati and Khamgaon area were put in criminal cells of the prison. They were served simply four chapatis with little pulses and sabji. If they offered prayers, they would be given inhuman and cruel punishment by whipping with chain, lashing by boots etc. Lakshman Koshti, 12 year old prisoner from Nagpur was also given arduous punishment. If the prisoner did not wake up in time, he would be lashed with boots and given gibes. 100 prisoners were dragged into the barrack of 50 prisoners. The prisoners were held hostage even after completing tenure of imprisonment for 3 to 4 days. They were served stale food even after completing the works. Achyutrao Deshpande, a political prisoner was put in shackles during his ritual of Pranopweshan and it was not removed even after completing the dates. Similarly Korde Guruji (Khamgaon) was put in criminal cell where no complaint was heard in any circumstance.\textsuperscript{59}

Vaidya (Nagpur) had made complaint that Jamadar at the prison had used bad language against him. Instead of taking step against Jamadar, Vaidya was put in the cell of criminals. A minor political prisoner, who simply had gone to attain nature's call, was given beastly punishment of putting chair on his hands and scourge by whip.

During tenure of Harve, such inhuman and beastly treatment was given to political prisoners at Amravati district prison. An editor of Uday newspaper was awarded imprisonment due to criticism against a police officer at Morshi. Despite visit of the Home Minister, the complaints of the political prisoners could not be sorted out.

Amravati Jail Superintendent Pawanskar had gone on leave in 1932, on his vacant post an English officer Mr. Harshe took the charge on April 19, 1932. During his tenure, political prisoners were inhuman treatment. The news of such inhuman treatment started getting out of jail and reached to the nook and corner of the state. Babasaheb Khaparde expressed the anguish of the political prisoners by putting the starred question of suspension of the jail superintendent Harve in the legislature of the Central Province. However, the government argued in favour of the jail officers.\textsuperscript{60}

Innocent people in Berar were the victim of police atrocities. Varhad Samachar in Akola district had demanded the government to stop inhuman and heartless treatment to the people.\textsuperscript{61} News papers in Berar Varhad Samachar, Uday and Harikishor had bluntly criticized the anti
people policies of the British government. They publish many articles on Ban on Weapon Act. Harikishor raised its voice against the atrocities of police. It wrote “It is necessary to put guard to protect the budding patriotic sprout as against to the hidden foe who wants to cut it down.” The newspaper answered the despotism and police atrocities fearlessly. The British government filed a case against Harikishor. Many of the newspapers in Berar were under the strict vigil of the British.

People came to know the duplicity in the policies of the British government. They understood crafty and Machiavellian policies of the British. They were felt strongly against the slavery. They started coming on streets and began to take active participation in the national movement.

4.2.5 The British policy of Economic Exploitation and Awareness of Newspaper:-

The British had commercial and industrial empiricism. They had to sale their industrial products in India and to indirectly exploit Indian people. They constructed railways as a major transport link with Indian market firstly to take the agricultural produced here as raw material and also to exploit Indian rural industry by introducing foreign goods. Its disastrous impact was felt on Indian industries and many Indian industries had to be shut down. Urban people had to go to village and take up again agriculture. Earlier, there was close link between agriculture and other cottage industries. The link between the two industries was completely broken up during the British regime. And consequently, the problems of poverty and unemployment generated for the public in Berar.

Against the British government’s policies of economical exploitation, awareness was created in the educated class. Education created a sense of nationalism and patriotism. Newspaper was a important medium to reach the sordid saga of exploitation taken up the British. The Newspaper made an important work of national awareness by creating a spirit of unrest.

In Berar, many newspapers invoked the spirit of national unrest against the British empiricism by writing articles of creating public awareness. Varhad Samachar, Uday, Matrubhumi, Swadesh, Lokmat, Harikishor etc Newspaper started in Berar. Braving the oppressive rule of British, these newspapers created work of public awareness simply for the sake of patriotism.

The sense of nationalism was created due to initial freedom of Press. They understood the importance of freedom. The conducive atmosphere was generated to introduce greater leadership
in Berar. And it is through the sense of nationalism, great leadership of Deorao Vinayak Digambar, Pandurang Martand, Lakshman Gupte, Kakasaheb Bhagwat, R. B. Mudholkar, Moropant Joshi, Dadasaheb Khpdrde, Loknayak Ane, Tapaswi Babasaheb Paranjape, Vishnu Gangadhar Ketkar, Balwantrao Deshpande, Ramchandra Kanitkar, Dadasaheb Soman etc immersed in Berar. They made leadership of Berar in social and political movement and at times faced hardship and imprisonment for the national cause.

Initially, the leadership of social movement was taken up by lawyer community in Berar. Gradually teachers and writers came to take up leadership giving thoughtful, intellectual leadership to the region. Bar Associations were established in Akola and Amravati districts. It gave the proper leadership to take social and political movement. In a short time, these Bar Associations were the centres of political activities.

After 1830, the branches of National Congress were established in Berar. Vishnu Moreshwar Mahajani took up voluntary retirement to work for National Congress. People in Berar, in respect for his spirit of the nationalist cause, entitled him as Justice Ranade of Berar.

The leadership in Berar used to attend the annual conventions of the National Congress and also take active parts in social conventions. After coming from the convention, they used to create awareness among people about the work and objectives of the National Congress by going to every district and tehsil places in Berar. The fifth convention of National Congress was organized in Mumbai in 1889. Total 214 representatives from Berar participated in the convention.

In Brief, as against the oppressive rule of the British, the spirit of nationalism was generated. The public received the national platform to make their voice heard. Berar had its lion's share in the development of National Congress.

4.3 The British Regime and Economical Set up in Berar:-

The British regime adopted policies to exploit the wealth of Indian people. The British had better knowledge of technology and science. It was due to their policy of exploitation, they handed a backward, poverty ridden and country with negligible income to people of India in 1947.

If a close review of the economical set up of India during 1920 to 1947 is taken, it does not show any sign of improvement of economical set up or all round development.
Agriculture, industry and trade are three aspects of national economics. Though these three sectors are separate, they are interdependent and mutually beneficial entities. Its impact is felt on social and physical growth of the country. Similarly the growth of these aspects is largely depended on the government policies. If a close review of the economical aspects of the country are reviewed during 1920 to 1947, a pessimistic picture comes up.\(^70\)

20th Century economic of India during British regime can be divided into four stages. National industries got impetus during the period of early two decades (i.e. till 1920). During 1920 to 1930, British government had to give protection to Indian industries by weighing off imposed restriction to match balance for its own collapsing economy due to World War I. During 1930 to 1939, the British adopted the protective policy for its own economy to get out of financial brake down and prevailed acute tide of recession. As it gave complete preference to the British industries to get out of the economical slow down, naturally, the British government had unfair treatment for Indian industries. During this period, the British started taking stocks of gold to the Europe. The condition of importing food grains came to the agrarian country. The unemployment was increased manifold. It resulted in the acute sense of discontent among the middle class and farmers against the oppressive rule of the British. During the fourth phase of 1939 to 1947, in view of the impending World War II England provided help to increase manufacturing of war material in India. Though a few industries came up in India, the British did not put aside its age old policy of exploitation.\(^71\)

Pointing out about the economical policies of the British, Ranganath Mudholkar, a noted lawyer at Amravati district in Berar observed "per capita income of Indian people is mere Rs 27 while per capita income of British people is Rs 570. Despite drastic difference between the income group, the British residents and Indian people have to pay the same taxes. It is unjust policy of the government causing poverty for Indians."\(^72\)

The schemes of the British government were felt absolutely scanty during the famine causing death of 15 lakh people in 19th century. Ignoring the plight, the British government had continued the export of food grains. Food grains worth 79,00,000 pounds was exported during 1877 while the export rose to 93,00,000 pounds in 1900.\(^73\)

Great drought was felt in Berar during 1845, 1896 and 1899-1900.\(^74\) But the schemes of the government remained scanty. The British government grabbed the annual revenue of 33,699
pounds, but very little was spent on scheme to meet acute famine. It simply revealed the policy of exploitation implemented by the British government.

4.4 Impact of the Agriculture policy of the British Government :-

Since the early period of Nizam, the British understood the value of fertile soil in Berar for cotton crop. Along with the cotton productivity, it was the medium of land revenue. They gave attention to marketing the agriculture and its production. The British appointed the agriculture directorate in Amravati district giving him complete authority of Berar.

Agriculture Farm was established in Akola district. The British made the modernization of agriculture. Through the farm, the farmers were provided information about agriculture, seeds, fertilizers and instruments. They provided facilities of irrigation. Their only aim of the modernization of agriculture was to increase the agriculture production. It gave impetus to commercialization and marketing of agriculture. The cotton produced in Berar was exported to London from Mumbai. The cotton was referred as Amravati Cotton. The cotton was valued for its long staple. The first centre of All India Cotton Purchase Centre was opened at Khamgaon in Buldana district in 1870. The following table points out that the production of cotton was reached about 43 percent during 1872 to 1908.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cotton Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907-08</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to increase of production, the traders from Mumbai, Rajasthan, Madras and Uttar Pradesh came to Berar. Some of them resided permanently here. Agriculture and trade received impetus due to people from other parts of the country. It scaled up living standard of people. A confidence was gone up in mindset of people and they began to increasingly participate in social and political movements.

Berar had fertile land and better employment opportunities. Due to migration of employment seeking people, population here continued to rapidly grow.
The above table indicated that the population of Berar increased by 1.25 times. It was due to migration of labourers, artisans, industrialists and middle classed employment seekers. Similarly, the cotton market at Amravati was held best in the country. Due to the importance of cotton, Mumbai-Calcutta railway route was joined to Khamgaon, Jalamb, Amravati and Badnera. With increase in production of the cotton, agriculture tax was also increased. The farmers had to pay increased taxes. As agriculture was completely dependent on nature, farmers had worries of drought and wet drought. Therefore, the farmers were always under the yoke of money lenders. Farmers were victimized by money lenders, government officers, traders etc. The British government did not make any effort to solve their problems. In brief, the farmers had to undergo continue plight.

Due to implementation of 'rayatwari' farmers deprived of their land and these lands were owned by money lenders and rich land owners. In the then set up, there was complete control of rich land owners. During 1891 to 1921, the percent of Jamindar increased by 52 percent in Central Province and Berar.

Thus, the British government paid only attention to agriculture only to accrue the benefit of cotton. The land revenue was continuously hiked. The collection of crop and land taxes was recovered during the time of cultivation. Though it increased the land revenue, it made not bearable for the farmers. It was the general picture of farmers in Berar.

4.4.1 Commercialization of Agriculture:-

Farmers usually took season wise crops during Pre British Era. But British promoted farmers to take commercial crops like cotton. Farmers gradually began to cultivate the crops according to market demands. The farmers earlier were inclined to take regular crops to fulfill their basic needs. Similarly, twelve Balutedars and eighteen Alutedar used to eke out their mutual demands and they did not any need of establishing contact with outside world. But during
British era, the British used to decide the crop patterns as per their requirement. As a result, farmers began cultivating the crops having market demand and as a result food production fell sharply. Rich farmers took benefit of the new trend while small and marginal farmers found it hard to make their both ends meet.

The percentage of dependence on agriculture increased manifold during British regime. The British government intentionally broke the natural equivalence between agriculture and industry and exploited India by implementing dictatorial policies in industrial, economical and trade sector to make India agriculture based country. And therefore, the present plight has been caused.\textsuperscript{83}

The British Government had launched a primary trade policy that India should purchase the goods purchased at the British industry on one hand and on the other provide necessary raw material. Due to its direct impact, the number of farmers and agro based business saw a rapid increase.

Farmers in Berar had no self anxiety of their livelihood as ground nut, sesame, safflower, sorghum, tur, udid, mug and other crops were cultivated along with Cotton in Berar. But emphasis was put on trade and naturally farmers were inclined to take cash crop like cotton. It resulted in scarcity in production of food grains. Thus, the unhealthy impact of the British policy was felt in crippling the self sufficiency of villages.\textsuperscript{84} Though farmers acquire money by cultivating cash crops, but they could not retain the money of their sweat due to the unholy nexus of the revenue officers, auctioneers and money lenders. The commercialization of the agriculture though proved beneficial for Industry and trade in Europe, it marred the prospect of farmers and the common interest of rural economy. It cast its wrong impact on the condition of farmers. It was the discontent among people against the British policies which propelled farmers and peasants in rural areas to largely participate in the national movement called by Mahatma Gandhi.

4.4.2 Changes in Rural life and Challenges:-

Pre British period agriculture was the main occupation and industry. It was the backbone of the economics as the complete social set up and economics was centred on agriculture. The system of \textit{Alutedari} and \textit{Balutedari} was strongly founded. The system made the rural life self sufficient and other professions were supplementary to agriculture. The agriculture products produced in the villages were sold at local markets and the money was retained in villages. It
made each village economically self sufficient. Each village had caste based system of twelve Balutedars and eighteen Alutedars. Balutedar system was economical system that had the villages self sufficient.

The self sufficiency of villages was severally threatened during the British rule as it gave impetus to industrial, individualistic and currency based economic system. Instead of earning for needs, every individual started thinking of profits. New Moneylender, auctioneers etc came into practice. The exploitation at the hands of these new groups increased the poverty of farmers while the new class became richer. It disrupted the earlier co-existing traditional harmony between diverse groups and the co-operation. The effective rural economy was collapsed.

As a measure to bridge the gap between earlier rural economy and the new market oriented economy, Yavatmal District Association was formed on March 16, 1915. Berar was continuously lagged behind in development. The newspaper, a medium to put the problem of people was banned by the government. Similarly, a social organization was required to mediate and show the problems of people and peasants to the public representatives and government appointed representatives. Loknayak Bapuji Aane was the main founder of the organization. While founding the organization He cited the main objectives as follows:

1) To provide honest information to public representatives so as keep the contact intact between public representatives and the people.
2) To make it a habit in every individual to think of local and national issues and problems.
3) to give information of rights, duties and responsibilities to citizens, to give information of public problems and guide society properly on public issues and the put the problems of people legitimately before the government.
4) The objective of the organization was to make India self governed state in the British Empire.
5) To take up legitimate and legal course of action to remove the problems put by the administration in public life of people and also to redress the public grievances against the government.

These aims and objectives clearly point out the urgency felt by Loknayak Ane for public awareness about the self governance. Inspired by his ideology, a movement of Berar Movement and Baluta Movement started in Berar. Berar Movement was launched during the period of
Home Rule Movement. During the British rule, the British officers took many works from Indian peasants and people. They used to exploit general people and used to take work by either underpaying or denying any pay. Similarly, their goods and other items were forcibly taken by the officers and government employees. It was termed as ‘Begar’. People in Berar were distressed with outrageous Begar. Though according to the Government resolution No 2377, dated April, 3, 1894, urge on Begar was strictly disapproved, the officers right from Police Commissioners to Police Patil used to adopt ‘Begar’ system to make their work done.\(^{87}\)

Consequently the members of the District Association decided to protest against the system of Begari. They took out many tours and educated people about the illegality of the custom. Shamrao Deshpande, Gopalrao Kothkar, Dadasaheb Kane, Tapswi Babasaheb Paranjappe were on forefront in the campaign. A proposal to ban the custom of Begari was put in the Council. Begar Niwarak Mandal was also formed.

It propelled the administration to appoint Hermiston committee on July 15, 1921.\(^{88}\) Though the committee took some useful public measures, the custom could not be banished. Pursing a legal battle against the custom, Begar Niwarak Mandal lodged thirteen civil and 2 criminal offences and at last the custom came to an end.

It is due to vigilant pursuance of Begar Niwarak Mandal the custom was came to an end. Rural people were afraid of the British rule. But gradually they became fearless. They came to understand their rights. It also created moral courage to protest against the atrocities and injustice. The successful campaign gave further momentum to the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930.

As a part of rural economy, Bara Balutedari was in fashion in Berar. The caste based professions were in practice. Mahar Balutedar used to serve the village and also keep vigil during night. As a part of his service, he was given ascertain quantity of food grains. It was called as Baluta.\(^{89}\) When the British appointed them to keep night vigil, they were called ‘Jaglya’. The farmers had to pay 6 paise tax for night’s vigil to the government. However, Mahar community men were not ready to be named as ‘Jaglya’. Therefore, the government had to appoint other people for the task. Farmers had to pay the tax as well as traditional baluta to Mahar.\(^{90}\) When the price of sorghum went up, the bulta was about the one forth of the agriculture tax. The farmers were against the exploitation. To solve the problem, Yavatmal District Association launched a movement to eradicate Baluta and formed a committee to address the
problem of farmers. The committee sought the replies from the government. Finally, the government appointed MacDonald committee. Loknayak Bajuji Ane, Tapswi Babasaheb Paranjape, Shamraodada Deshpande, Dadasaheb Kane toured Berar. A book let titled Mahar-Baluta was freely distributed. The committee in her report pointed out the greater percent of Mahar Balutedars and suggested to make it less. But it did not take steps to end the custom.

On this backdrop, agriculture production slipped down in 1920 putting more pressure on farmers. The government was adamant on collecting Baluta. Yavatmal District Association backed the farmers and launched non co-operation with the government. As a result, the government lodged cases on thousands of farmers for Baluta collection. Irate over the continued oppression, farmers stopped giving Baluta.

The question was tabled in the regional council. Bhausaheb Sane at Washim in Akola district put the question of banning Baluta in Legislative Council. It was passed in March 15, 1921. Some changes were made in the new law which lessened the plight of farmers to some extend. The government had to accept not to impose Mahar Baluta or Jaglya Sez more than 6 paise to a rupee.

Baluta Movement was a success. The government had to take back the rule only due to the active role played by Yavatmal District Association by creating awareness among farmers. It was a great work of the association.

Tapswi Babasaheb Paranjpe made honest effort to take Panchyat movement to distant villages for eradicating problems in rural parts. Raosaheb Nathmal Seth tabled the proposal of establishing Gram Panchayat at villages. Babasaheb Paranjape made a stringent campaign for it. It created awareness among public and finally the act came in to practice on Oct 1, 1923. The direct impact of the movement was that it curtailed down the fear of the British and they became more aware of their rights.

A bill of Ramchandra Kanitkar, a member from Buldana district was passed in the regional legislature directing district collectors to 441 Gram Panchayats in Vidarbha.

Municipality Act came in practice in Central Province and Berar in 1922, allowing election of members on Municipal Councils. New Municipalities began to form at the towns with around 10,000 population.

The public in Berar was gradually become aware of its rights. Their active participation was conspicuously seen in the national movement.
4.4.3 Farmers' Movement:-

During 1897 to 1899 and 1900 Great droughts occurred in Berar. Around same period, Malgujari Sambha was established. It started perusing the government for the relief schemes for the drought affected Berar. The government provided some schemes for the farmers. But the measures were scanty. It led Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh to form ‘Kisan Sangh’ in 1927. He was serious about the welfare of farmers. Barrister S K Deshmukh was made the president of the organization while Baburao Chaubak was the vice president. It spread widely and Kisan Sangh’s units were opened at district, tehsil and village places.

Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh not only served the farmers from his district but also the farmers from the whole country. He was elected as the president of Amravati district Council. He approved Aasra-Amravati Water scheme for farmers and made primary education compulsory. For the purpose, he increased District Sez from 9 paise to 14 paise and collected Rs 4.5 lakh and opened up 100 centres for compulsory education. Its direct result was seen when Amravati district grabbed the second place education extension in the country.

The impact of Kisan Sangh was not restricting to Amravati district alone. Its members chaired the four district councils in Berar. Later the post of president of Kisan Sangh was given to Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh. It gave momentum to Kisan Sangh and its public meeting garnered huge response from farmers. Jagdeorao organized Majoor Sammelan and Shetkari Melawa and made efforts to solve the problems of people. But Dr. Deshmukh, undisputedly played a great role in awareness of farmers and people at large.

Kisan Sangh started contesting elections. During the election of Regional Council held in 1930, Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh defeated Br. Ramrao Deshmukh. Governor Montague Butler appointed Panjabrao Deshmukh and Gajadhar Prasad Jaiswal as Ministers in the cabinet. During those days, the cabinet of Governors included mere two Ministers. He was administered oath on Dec 14, 1930 and appointed as Minister for Education, Agriculture, Public Work and Co-operation. He was Minister for 32 months and during his tenure, he made following works for betterment of farmers.

1) All round development of rural people through Berar Uplift Board
2) Passed the Village Panchayat Bill
3) Established Cooperative Society
4) Passed different bills regarding loan waiving which gave a lease of new life in the lives of farmers.\(^98\)

The condition of farmers was then miserable. World market saw a recession during 1930. It reduced the prices of agriculture items by 50 per cent. The agriculture income fell miserably low. Further occasional droughts also added to the woes. Rural industry was about to ebb due to the industrial revolution. Industrial and economical transaction went into the hands of the outsiders. Money lenders used to give loans with heavy interest and confiscate farmers’ land if he failed to pay back loan with interest. The society and the government had no concern for the farmers. But to save farmers from the plight, Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh tabled the loan waiving bill. It was a revolutionary step. It was brought to revive hopes among the defeated and dejected farmers. Fourteen local organizations opposed the Bill. The members of Middle Class community, money lenders and educated class were against the Bill. But Kisan Sangh made a stringent public campaign for the bill and the bill was passed as a law in 1933. Thousands of farmers took benefit of the law. More than 90 percent of agriculture land was saved from the trap of money lenders. The amount of debt was made less and no interest was charged. It generated optimism in farmers to attain their progress.

### 4.4.4 Acute Drought and agitations for weighing off agriculture tax:-

Acute drought occurred during 1892, 1894 and 1894-95 in Berar. The government helped the drought hit people, but it could reach only 6 percent people. During 1896, mortality rate was 49 behind every thousand individual while it went up to 70 during 1898. The drought of 1899-1900 was very acute.\(^99\)

Dadasheb Khaprde, Dada Jog, Sar Moropant Joshi, R. B. Mudholkar and other leaders in Berar worked hard to help the drought hit people. They produced the drought hit people before the collector. Khaprde demanded the government to give work to the drought hit people. The British collector did not accepted the demand and accused him of creating panic among people and wasted time of the Collector, clearly indicating the British attitude.\(^100\) One trader was selling food grains in less than market price. Instead of congratulating him, the tehsildar evacuated his shop from the market accusing him of lowering the market price. The following chart shows the rise in market prices of food grain during drought years.\(^101\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average weight of wheat against Rs 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During 1917, heavy downpour caused wet drought in Berar. Leadership decided to waive agriculture tax. Yavatmal District Association collected the data from farmers and made a memorandum to the government to waive the agriculture tax. As a result, the government waived the agriculture tax of 163 villages completely and 219 villages partially.  

During 1920-21, a drought occurred in Berar. This time also, Yavatmal District Association pursued the government to waive off agricultural tax and organized 19 Pargana Council. To make the meeting unsuccessful, the government arrested Loknayak Ane. But it caused a tremendous unrest among people. Intimidated by the public wrath, the government cancelled the agriculture tax amounting to Rs 1,05,674.

During 1936, the farmers who could not pay the agriculture tax for four years, did not take up sowing operation in fear lest the administration would take up their complete produce.

Vidharbha Congress Committee discussed on problem on farmers. Amravati District Political Conference was held at Amravati on Oct 23, 1936. R. A. Deshmukh, ex-MLC was the president of the welcome committee. N. V. Gadgil, MLA. (Pune) was the president of the conference. The conference was also attended by Keshavrao Jethe, (Pune), Dr. Patwardhan, Bhojraj, Wamanrao Joshi, Bamankar, S. V. Gokhale etc Congress members of Amravati were chiefly present at the conference. Though, the main objective of the conference was to prepare a list of the Congress candidates for the next election, it criticized the farmers’ exploitation, unemployment and other administrative short fallings. Following resolutions were passed in the conference.

1) Censuring the government for its land revenue policy and alleged failure to cope up with labour unemployment.

2) Urging the necessity of establishing more land mortgage bank for declaration that land revenue was not rent. It was contended that the land revenue should be assessed on the profit of cultivation analogous to income tax and should not be fixed impost.

Other political resolutions were passed. These resolutions gave voice to the problem of farmers. The government was criticized for its failure to address farmers’ problems. People became aware of the plight of the farmers.
On Nov 29, 1936, Shetkari Parishad was held at village Ugwa (district Akola). It was chaired by P. B. Gole. P. B. Gole and Durga Joshi were present as the main speakers. Around 200 people attended the meeting. The meeting protested against the government’s decision of collected forced land revenue from farmers. It protested against the wrong report of crops presented by the government officials to the government. The move of the Viceroy to introduce breeding bulls was no value; their existing cattle did not have enough to eat. The government had given orders of paying agriculture tax to farmers, but farmers had nothing to pay. Durga Joshi said that the government had no eyes to see, no ear to listen and no brain to think. The meeting passed the two resolutions

1) It requested the government to remit land revenue where crops had been damaged or washed away by floods.

2) It requested the government to grant tax levy liberally and to open test work.

The conference accused the government for the agriculture crises. After the conference the deputy commissioner at Akola visited the Akola and Balapur tehsil. After the visit of tehsildar, it was told that Akola tehsil would be granted remission of more than Rs 1000 while Balapur tehsil will be given not more than this amount. Washim tehsil was given no remission. Out of other tehsils, Akot and Manglurpir tehsils were given remission to some extends. Thus, it points out how the government ignored the plight of agriculture. The leadership made efforts for redressing the problems of farmers.

On Nov 8, 1936, Agriculture exhibition was held at Katrekheda in Buldana district. B. B. Deshpande, agriculture assistant abd B. V. Desai, Mehkar these two Congressmen were prominently present. Desai delivered a lecture against the government. He appealed people to vote to the candidates who make better agriculture condition. These like meetings created awareness among people. Farmers began to understand the dereliction of the government towards their problems.

Untimely rains during 1938-39 caused damages to standing crops. Agriculture conference was held at Kotha in Yavatmal. Gokhale, Revenue Minister inaugurated the conference. Different problems of the farmers were put. The agriculture conferences were also taken at different places in Berar. The demands of complete remission of land revenue were put. During 1939 to 1942, droughts occurred in some parts of Berar. Food prices went high. The agitation for complete land tax remission started throughout Berar. Similarly, non cooperation movement,
jungle movement, etc national agitations rocked the region. These cast impact on farmers’ movement and received impetus. The economical problems were related with the political movement. The agriculture crises were stringently surfaced the agitations.

The political awareness was seen in Berar. The confidence among farmers got increase to raise their problems with the government.

4.5 The British Rule and Impact of its policy of Indian Industry:-

After 1813, the British proclaimed Open Market policies in India as the industry in Great Briton saw a phenomenal rise. Industries based on cotton, iron and coal rapidly increased and had huge demand of cheap raw material from India. The trade of British goods received boost due to the octroi policies of the British. Heavy duties were charged on Indian goods while no duty was on the British goods.\textsuperscript{107}

After 1833, the British investors started investing in Indian trade and industry including Ship building, jute factories, railway building, Banks etc. Due to strained exploitation, Indian industrialists and investors were bereft of capital to start new industry or invest into it.\textsuperscript{108}

Berar region was far lagged behind the industrial development. Cotton was the only annual commercial crop recorded in report of 1891 Census. Besides cotton, following items were either imported or exported from Berar.
The above chart indicates that other than major crop of cotton, other items like cotton seeds, oil cake, hay and grass, sorghum, hides and skins, other oil seeds and other articles were exported.
Like export, different following items were imported as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>1902</th>
<th>1903</th>
<th>1904</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1906</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quantity (RDS)</td>
<td>Value (Rs)</td>
<td>Quantity (RDS)</td>
<td>Value (Rs)</td>
<td>Quantity (RDS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal &amp; cake</td>
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<td>881</td>
<td>2273</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3329</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cotton manufactured</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>229.97</td>
<td>446</td>
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<td>Turmeric</td>
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<td>Fruits and vegetables</td>
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<td>Gram &amp; Pulses</td>
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<td>Other grains &amp; pulses</td>
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<td>12.49</td>
<td>1114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerosene oil</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>33.99</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>1108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other oil</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>44.79</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linseed</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilseed</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provision</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>111.36</td>
<td>1123</td>
<td>14.42</td>
<td>1132</td>
</tr>
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<td>Salt</td>
<td>1137</td>
<td>55.13</td>
<td>1150</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>1158</td>
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<tr>
<td>Betal nuts</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>04.13</td>
<td>033</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chillies</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>11.32</td>
<td>011</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>111.37</td>
<td>0188</td>
<td>13.05</td>
<td>0193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>1118</td>
<td>33.95</td>
<td>0228</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>0287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wool</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>082</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other articles</td>
<td>2227</td>
<td>22.24</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>18.14</td>
<td>2227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22.555</td>
<td>11.5821</td>
<td>22.554</td>
<td>156.16</td>
<td>22.763</td>
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</table>

The above chart points out that the complete trade was in control of the British.

Local rich people were mere puppets in the hands of the British. Cotton pressing unit was started by Messrs Volkarts at Amravati district in 1870. 88 such factories continued its trade till 1907. Out of 88 mills, 60 were ginning mills and remaining 28 were pressing mills. There were four other companies were in Amravati district which included New Mofussil Company (1872) Messrs Ramji Kanav & Company at Amravati, Berar Match Company at Elichpur, The Berar Manufacturing Company Ltd. at Badnera. The principle shareholder in the company was Kasturchand Daga. The most important manufacture of the district was cotton yarn and cloth produced at Mills at Badnera which were started as early as in 1885.

Yarn and all other kinds of woven goods, both of Indian and European design and of durable variety including dhotis, pagris, dasotis, napkins, handkerchiefs and table cloths are manufactured. The mills steadily increased in prosperity and soon found a ready market for their products in Central Province & Berar at more distant stations.

The cotton boom during the first triennium after 1921 led to the establishment of a number of cotton ginning and pressing factories in the district. A cotton spinning and weaving mill, viz The Vidarbha Mills (Berar) Ltd was established at Achalpur in 1925. The abolition of excise duties and the impossible of successive tariffs pm foreign yarns and piece goods since 1925 helped the growth of textile industry. A further impetus was provided by Swadesh and Boycott movement in 1930-31. The Bidi industry also received encouragement from Swadesh and Boycott movements. The district was never an important centre for Bidi making.

Harve and Sabhapati Company established Ginning & Pressing factories in Amravati district for the first time. The factory started its work from Jan 1, 1879. Deorao Vinayak Digambar started Native Cotton Ginning, Pressing and Spinning Company in 1860. The company was given credit of establishing its first cloth mill in Akola district. On Aug 12 1903,
the mill started its work of spinning and weaving. After it, Mumbai traders started the mill of Akola & Mid India Spinning, Weaving and Manufacturing Company.

Two cotton mills started at Akola they were Mohta Mill and Savatram Mills. Sawatram Mill was started in 1912.\(^\text{116}\)

After Cotton Industry, oil industry also got impetus. Two oil mills were established in Akola in the twentieth century. The first oil mill ‘Berar Oil Works’ was started by Deorao Vinayak Digambar. The director of Lakshmi Oil Mills was Raobahadur Bhagwat.\(^\text{118}\) It was established in 1909. The manufactured oil was sent to MP and England.\(^\text{119}\)

In Yavatmal district there were 40 factories including 32 ginning and 8 pressing factories.\(^\text{120}\) There was no cotton mill in Buldana district. After abolishing octroi on foreign cloths, the condition of the cotton mills started improving.

Two units of Iron and Steel were started in Akola district in 1919 and 1928. Akot and Balapur tehsils were famous for carpets. Saries and blankets were made in Washim and Karanja. Patal was manufactured at Deulgaon Raja in Buldana district. Dhoti were weaved on handloom at Mehkar in Buldana district while other cloths like Pagdi, turbans etc were manufactured at Dongaon, some 17 km from Mehkar. The *patal* was raw thread and used by poor women. Weavers were also based at Achalpur, Ajangaon Surji, Daryapur, Kholapur, Balapur, Akot in Amravati and Akola district, but they had scanty income. The condition of the weavers was worse due to the recurring droughts occurred during the last decade of the nineteenth century. The condition of other trade was not also different.

The weavers were jobless during the global recession in 1930. The cotton price was reduced from Rs 250 per *Khandi* to Rs 30. (One Khandi means 784 pounds). But after the beginning of the World War II, the condition of handloom industry improved by 1939. The census of 1941 recorded significant increase in handlooms. The district wise it is as follows.

\[\begin{array}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Sr No & District & Handlooms \\
\hline
1 & Nagpur & 43,484 \\
2 & Chandrapur & 17023 \\
3 & Akola & 11226 \\
4 & Amravati & 6811 \\
5 & Buldhana & 1803 \\
\hline
\end{array}\]
Dhangar community men in villages used to rear sheeps and weave sweaters and blankets from the wool. During 1911, there were 11 handlooms on wool in Amravati district. But the cottage industry could not pick up momentum due to lack of trained work force and scanty availability of wool. The cottage industry did not developed due to age old techniques and outdated tools. Poor weavers could not purchase new tools. They required a hand of help badly. The condition of handloom industry was better when compared to other cottage industries.\textsuperscript{122}

In Amravati district there were 558 oil extraction units during 1911. Dadasaheb Soman had started his soap factory at Mehkar in Buldana district. It was well known as Soman Bandhu’s soap factory. Besides, soap, toothpowder, candles, furniture polish were also manufactured. Similarly, Vishnu Moreshwar Mahajani and Bhagwat had also started the same industry at Akola. It was continued even after Independence.

Match boxes factory was in Achalpur tehsil of Amravati district. If Amravati and Achalpur towns had been linked by railway, Achalpur town would also be developed.\textsuperscript{123} Ox bell preparing factories were at Amravati. Ajanta ranges started from Buldana district are spread to Akola and Yavatmal district. There were teak wood centres. Ghatbori and Khandala are the centres for teak wood in Buldana district. Pusad was a commercial centre. Other wood was used for burning. During 1906-07, forest revenue of Yavatmal forest was Rs 2,16,000.\textsuperscript{124}

Berar has huge stocks of minerals including iron, coal, calcium etc. If more research is made, the natural resources can help achieve further industrial growth here. British had laid stressed on transport system and modernization. But it was only to achieve their ends. They did not pay any attention to the rising industry in the region. The issue of retrograding policies for Indian industry was quite often taken up during the freedom struggle.

4.5.2 Impact of the British Industrial Policy

The impact of new trade and industrial policies adopted by the British had its negative impact on Indian industry. Before the British invasion, the cottage and rural industry was developed. The trade of cotton and silk cloth was rapidly growing. The artisans were famous for their traditional handicrafts. The British, intentionally, destroyed the Indian industry to bring their machine produced cloth and other material in Indian market. Indian industry could not withstand the machine produced goods which had no import duty. Thus, local industry ebbed permanently.
During the period of the World War I & II, there was some growth of Indian industry but the global recession adversely affected it and could not revive back. The condition of Berar was not different. The British started giving low price to weavers in Berar. As a result, they stopped their profession. It cast its brutal impact to other cottage industries as well. They could not compete with the machine produced goods.  

The British imposed free Market economy on India and imposed huge import duty on Indian goods in Great Briton. They took raw materials to England at cheap rates while huge export import duty was put for Indian goods. The European industrialists were given more facilities. These discriminating policies degraded Indian Industry. During early years of the twentieth century, local trades received impetus due to Swadeshi movement and shops of khandi and rural industries were opened up in cities. Due to the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi, rural and cottage industries received some energy to survive. Swadeshi Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi brought better days to rural industries in Berar.

The growth of Capital and machine based industries adversely affected traditional Indian industry, because they could not compete with the foreign industry. Though some opportunities were received for Indian industry during the World War I, the government policies, investment, markets and lack of modern machineries, the condition was not conducive of industrialization.

The British did not draft any industrial policy for the country. On the contrary, they destroyed the local industries. They made effort to make India as the great agriculture region for the England. In view of security reasons, they launched railway, post, roads, irrigation schemes, Banks, insurance companies. But they also used this machinery to exploit Indians. The railway was planned by Governor General Harding in 1846. It was put to take agriculture produced including cotton to Briton. Similarly it could also be used to promote European goods. Though railway gave impetus to local industry to some extent, its main benefits were ushered by the British. Therefore, the British capitalism did not give opportunities to Indian industries and at places restricted its normal growth. Its adverse impact was felt in rural and cottage industry and they were brought to the verge of collapse. It caused serious consequences of unemployment and immense poverty.

After 1911, the condition of Industry was gone beyond repair. People had to depend only on agriculture as other supplementary industries collapsed. The following table points out the decreasing percentage of people whose livelihood was based on some industry.
The above chart clearly points out the fact that instead of achieving progress, the industry saw a steady decline. The old cottage industry was rapidly closing down. And New Industries did not come up to fill the vacant gap produced by decreasing cottage industries. Therefore, agriculture had more burdens of workers against its decreasing yields. Thus, poverty, hunger, unemployment other problems made the public life more deplorable.

4.5.3 Rise of Labor Movement:

Industrialization in India began in the second half of the nineteenth Century. A new class of labourers also came up with the new Industries. The condition of workers was pitiable due to uncertain work and scanty wages and exploitation at the hands of industrialists. They had heavy burden of works besides the problems of indebtedness, diseases, illiteracy etc. Similarly, the British government also neglected the issue of workers welfare. On such backdrop, discontent in the minds of the labour class came out in form of strike since 1857.

25 strikes were held in Mumbai and Madras Industrial zones during 1880 to 1890. Similarly, some of the important unions like Workers’ Union, Printers Union, Post Employs Unions were established. First Mill Workers Union was established by Lokhande in Mumbai in 1890. The strike launched by Mumbai Workers’ union in protest against the life imprisonment of Lokmanya Tilak in 1908 was the expression of the nationalism created in workers’ class in India.

The World War I began in Europe in 1914. Despite any preparation, Russia also thrust along with the Friends Nations in the War causing disastrous impact and great socio-political upheaval. The unrestrained and despotic power of Czar came to end and composite rule of Moderates and Socialists was formed in Russia. Due to the best propagation by Lenin, Socialism was hailed in Russia. Food, Land and Peace, a threefold conviction was basis of his campaign.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population per hundred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>5.5 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>4.3 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>4.2 per cent</td>
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</table>
Finally without a single drop of blood, the Socialistic revolution garnered success. It was the Russian revolution which had cast far-reaching impact on the world. It also created a sense of optimism in workers unions in India. Third International Communist Organization established under the leadership of Lenin put the objective of Workers’ revolution throughout the world.

Indian workers welcomed the Russian Revolution. Manvendranath Roy represented India in the Third International Communist Organization. Russian revolution had a far reaching impact in workers world in Berar and rest of Marathi speaking state. It increased the organization power of these unions. Workers unions in Berar started celebrating Russian Revolution day enthusiastically. Its impact was felt as the workers’ class began to put their demands and plights of exploitation, poverty, health etc directly to the government. The Great Briton was opposed to Socialism. Therefore, it was necessary for the British Government to provide some concessions and protection to the working class. After the World War I, the Great Britain made different laws to protect interest of the labourers. Its impact was also felt in Berar. The neglected workers also started their organization and started agitation for their rights in law abiding manner.

All India Trade Union Congress was established in 1920. Its main objective was to bring uniformity in different labour organizations and unions’ objectives and policies and protect the economic, social and political interest of the labourers. After the formation of the Trade Union Congress, its objectives were hotly debated. Trade union leader like N. M. Joshi felt that the Congress should protect the economical and socio-political interests in legitimate manner while socialistic trade unions felt that the ideology of Socialism should be spread among workers to prepare them for revolution. From 1921, the socialistic leadership established its strong hold on Labour Unions in Mumbai. Muzzfar Ahemad, Shripad Dange, Husain and other made important work for unity of workers organization. Similarly, some of the British leaders like Mr. Sprat started to direct socialistic direction to the labour organizations in India.  

There were many coal mines in Vidarbha. The union of coal mine workers was also formed to solve their problems.

With formation of Mills and factories, the new labour unions were also set up. The labour unions wanted to meet their demands from the mill owners while political workers were seeking their participation in the freedom struggle. They also used to propagate their message of anti addiction to redress their poverty.
A meeting of Mill workers was held in Nagpur on April 26, 1908. Dr Munje, Swami Shankaranand, Dhundirajpant Hegdi called on workers to banish alcoholism from their lives and contribute money saved in national cause. Dhengdi, a workers leader, was entrusted union leadership.\(^{129}\)

Ruikar started his work in Labour movement from 1920. He joined the workers agitation with the national freedom struggle and exhibited the spirit of nationalism in the working class. He established himself as a successful union leader in Berar.\(^{130}\)

After release from prison, Rambhau Ruikar, leader of Akhil Bhartiya Majoor Party, he arrived for the first time in Amravati on May 20. He was felicitated at a grand function organized by Vidarbha Yuvak Sangh. Adv. P. Y. Deshpande chaired the function. Ruikar delivered a soul stirring lecture on workers movement.\(^{131}\)

To provide financial assistance to agitating workers who were on strike, Girani Kamgar Sampadak Mandal was formed under the leadership of Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh at Amravati. Adv Bhat was the secretary and other members of the mandal included Veer Wamanrao Joshi, Parvatibai Patwardhan, Dr. Bhojraj, Dr. Soman, Adv. Agrawal and Bamangaonkar etc.\(^{132}\) A wave of discontent immerged during 1930 to 1934 due to the conflicts in Industrial set up. It propelled the British government to think over it and Vitale Commission was formed to recommend the measures to solve the workers’ problem. Anusayabai Kale was entrusted charge of an assistant commissioner for CP & Berar province. She along with the Commission travelled Berar and visited Nagpur and Akola. She visited labourers colonies and showed the destitute condition to the commission.\(^{133}\)

It thus showed the impact of trade unions in Berar. In 1934, Factory Act was passed. Kakasaheb Bhagwat implemented the Act in his factory Lakshmi Mill.\(^{134}\) Thus, it showed that the Mill owners were aware of the new laws and began to work in accordance with the new law.

When the Bill on Factory was introduced in Legislative Council, R B Mudholkar opposed the bill. He demanded that the bill should give protection to women labourers and the labourers came from other state. He also protested against the government interference with the adult workers. He argued that the ascertaining work hours by the government, was to curtail the freedom of factory owners. He protested against the non inclusion of other trades in the ambit of the new law. He argued that the law should either be implemented comprehensively without eschewing farmers and private workers or not it should not be passed. He argued unless
socialistic principle was completely approved, it was not pertinent to give equal share in profit to labourers. It would not be right to think that Mudholkar was conforming the prevalent practice of deciding work hours by mill owners and allowing workers exploitation. He argued that instead of implementing partial act, the government should cover up workers in non industrial workers in the ambit of the law.\textsuperscript{135}

Thus, it revealed the awareness about the general plight on not mere industrial workers but also about the workers in non organized sectors.

“On May 19, 1936, three factories under district council and one under PWD have been closed down for want of labourers. Only Jamathi Quany continued with decreased attendance. It will also close down by 15\textsuperscript{th} by which agricultural operations will have in full swing.\textsuperscript{136}

Pursuing the unrest in workers, M. L. Jaywant came to Akola from Badnera for canvassing local hands and mill hands for membership of Labour Union.

At another public rally held at Pohi in Murtijapur tehsil (Dist Akola), Gangaram Sonaji Dahikar protested against the government policy of excluding handlooms and argued that it would escalate the poverty. Comparing wages in India and Briton, he argued that the government did nothing for the welfare of Indian people. Other speaker Gopalkhedkar said that the soil in Berar is gold. By imposing taxes on Indians, the huge revenue they plunder from India. England only produces coal and iron. They forced us to live poor. The government did not open the Banks for poor. Uttamrao Deshmukh, resident of Village Mana, (Distt. Akola) protested against the humiliating treatment to Indian people.

Election of Mill Workers Union was held on June 21, 1936 and the elected body was formed. It included

1. President- Jankiram Narayan Kothalkar of Akola.
2. Secretary- Damodhar Vinayak Sambhalkar of Akola.
4. Treasurer-Ramnath Jagganath of Akola.

The union received 60 members. And the new elected body took efforts to increase its membership.

Meanwhile, the two mills in Akola were declared to close down between Aug 1, 1936 to Sept 1 1936. Brijlal Biyani wrote in his diary “They really closed down (the mills) about 2,400 mill hands will be thrown out of work and situation might give rise to a certain amount of
anxiety, as it might also be exploited by communist agitators from outside. Outwardly the mill owners want to make it appear that they cannot continue to work owing to guilt and accumulated stocks which they cannot dispose of. But really speaking their idea is to cut down the wages which they say are higher than at Badnera or at Elichpur or even at Nagpur.

They have confessed to me that if the workers accept wages prevalent at Badnera or at Elichpur, they will not close down the mills. An effort will be made to see whether any compromise is possible. The chief difficulty, however, appears to be that the workmen have no accredit leaders of their own with whom one should negotiate.

25 August 1936. Mill situation is perhaps important in Akola at present. Apparently, in response to requests of local agitators, communists from outside are coming in. P. O. Marathe has already arrived and M. L. Jaiwant is expected today or tomorrow. Achyut Keshav Deshpande, a clerk at Sawataram Mill and also the secretary of Congress Socialist party has addressed Pramilabai Oak, secretary of Congress Committee, for help when mill hands are thrown out of work next month. The invitation to M. L. Jaiwant went from Jankiram Narayan Kothalkar, president of local Red Flag Labour Union. On 15th meeting attended by 2000 mill hands was held under the president ship of P. B. Vaidya. Resolutions were passed against the policy of mill owners in effecting wage cuts since the last strike, asking the workers not to accept any cut in their wages and decided under propaganda to ventilate their grievances. The workers were advised to organize themselves and further to continue to live within the mill premises even after mills were closed down but in no circumstances to agree to a cut their wages.

The labourers in roving department no doubt refused to work and as result the mill has had to be closed yesterday. But they gave up the idea of the stay in strike, which had they resorted to, would have cause needless difficulties. This is the situation at present. The Sawatram Mills have been closed while at moment of writing the Mohta Mills are still working.

26 Nov 1936 The Sawatram Mill started with 100 labourers. The meeting of the managers of both the mills was held with DSP. Akola, city Magistrate, City Inspector. Kisanlal of Sawatram mill also attended the meeting. The meeting decided that the wages could not be reduced due to increased price of sorghum. The labours should be given wages of Rs 12. Manager and the proprietor decided to think on the advice given by the administration at the meeting. Brijalal Biyani also visited the owners of both the mills and discussed the issue.
After further discussion with the city Magistrate and the city inspector and some of leaders of workmen, the Sawataram Mill decided not to cut wages of any of the workers and also abolish the dearness allowances only of some workers. The management of both mills decided to throw open mills and start working that wages were not reduced only the dearness allowances of some of the higher paid workers should be reduced. Thus laboures was given solace of justice.’

Under the guidance of Brijlal Biyani, Rashtriya Majoor Sangh was established in 1954. He became the president of the organization. He was also the president of INTAK, another workers union. When the freedom struggle came in prominence during Quit India Movement in 1942, large number of workers participated in the movement on the call of Brijalal Biyani.

Brijalal Biyani had humanistic thought about the labour movement. He appealed the established sections to do some help to lower sections of the society. He thought that the owner and workers relation should be based on mutual understanding and co-operation. Biyani thought that worker is the original producer of the wealth, therefore he should get proper share of his labour. It is the moral duty of the rich and owner sections to give proper share of the income earned through his labour. He did not believe in principle on the theory of class discontent. He had confidence on ‘equal social structure’ and he used to stress the principle of morality in human beings.

Thus, the workers unions sprang up in Berar and created awareness about workers rights in the society. Different notable works of the progress of labourers seen in Berar region.

After the British regime was imposed on Berar, the despotic and tyrannical misrule of Nizam came to an end creating peaceful and better governed administration. Different administrative facilities were provided to Berar. The British made the transport facilities for administrative reason. Similarly, different government buildings were built in Berar. The facilities of Railways, the Post, and the Telegram were introduced. The British achieved their trade policies by establishing railways. The administrative facilities and development was made initially in view of the military, administrative and development of the trade. Education department also started new schools.

The people in Berar had curiosity about the new development. People were becoming educated due to the schools. It ushered a new enthusiasm, new thoughts, new reforms in the society. The Courts were started during the British regime. A educated section of lawyers
achieved prominent place in the society. Teachers, lawyers, journalists, administrators started putting their views about reforms fearlessly through newspapers.

During the British regime, the impact of the western Education was felt to social, economical, political and religious life of people. Awareness was created against the inhuman practice of untouchability in the society, casteism, atrocities against widows, child marriage, child marriage with elders, rituals etc.

In Berar, the British rule was held as the regime of law and equality. But gradually people came to notice cruel racism of the British and their consequent despotic rule and atrocities. They began to understand that the reforms and peace in the British rule was only to foster their administration and their own trade. However, it is due to education department of the British, door of education were made open for the general people and they started creating national awareness.

Berar was essentially an agricultural region. Different mills were started due to the production of cotton. Besides cotton, tur, mug, ground nuts, sesame etc crops were cultivated. However, due to the ‘shetsara’ land revenue system of the British, larger parts of land was kept out of agriculture. Farmers became farm labourers. The price of cotton collapsed. Like cotton mills, oil extraction mills and other factories of processing food materials were started.

The condition of farmers continuously deteriorated due occasional droughts. The farmers had continuous load of paying land revenue. Yavatmal District Association stopped the land revenue of farmers. Dr Panjabrao Deshmukh tabled a bill to waive debt burden on farmers. Dr Deshmukh took relentless pains to improve condition of farming community.

Workers unions were formed to solve the problems of workers and farmers caused due wet droughts. Different Acts were passed to solve the problems of workers. The mutual contacts among people increased due to modern administrative services. Awareness was created among people about the backwardness of the region. Western Education and spirit of modernism gave impetus to social, economical, religious and political awakening.

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