CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE JALGAON DISTRICT

INTRODUCTION

Jalgaon district was known as East Khandesh till October 1960 and formed the eastern part of the earlier “Khandesh”. Khandesh by itself was known as “Raika” in the early history. It constituted a part of Saunadesa under the Yadavas in 10-12th century A.D., and later with the advent of Muslims, it was called as Khandesh—the country of Khans. This area was ruled by Pharuki Khans from 1370 to 1600 A.D. and thereafter it came to be known as ‘Khandesh’ till 1905, Dhule was the headquarter of Khandesh district which included the present area of Jalgaon district. In 1906 the Khandesh district was divided into East Khandesh and West Khandesh for administrative purposes. Amalner, Parola Peta, Bhusaval, Edlabad Peta, Chalisgaon, Chopda, Erandol, Jalgaon, Janmer, Pachora, Bhadgaon Peta, Raver and Yawal were separated from the Khandesh district to form East Khandesh district with headquarters at Jalgaon. Parola Peta, Edlabad Peta and Bhadgaon Peta were elevated to tehsil status in 1917. Thirteen villages of Chalisgaon tehsil were transferred to Aurangabad district in 1950. The East Khandesh district was renamed as Jalgaon district on 10th October, 1960.
The Jalgaon district comprised of 13 tehsils till June, 1999. The two new tehsils namely Bodwad and Dharagaon were added with effect from 23rd June 1999 and were separated from Bhusawal and Erandol respectively. As a result the Jalgaon district now comprises of 15 tehsils.

Present chapter is focus on the detailed prehistory, medieval history and modern history of the Jalgaon district.

3.1 PRE-HISTORY

The earliest mention of Rsika occurs in the Ramayana where Sugriva is said to have ordered the search of Sita to be made in Rsika associated with Vidarbha and Mahisaka. The tract is mentioned as Asika in the 2nd century A.D. inscriptions at Nasik, where it is associated with Asmaka (Modern Aurangabad district).

Until a few years ago very little was known about the pre-history of Jalgaon, but recent surveys of the Tapi and the Girna valleys have brought to light a mass of material which is in keeping with the adopted norms in the evolution of material culture and the history of man as a tool-using animal since his nomadic state.

Paleolithic tools made from Deccan trap and quartzite are known to occur on the banks of the Tapi in the regions now comprised in Dhulia, and it is natural to conclude that these may be present in Jalgaon also for which a careful search has yet to be made. Achulian hand axes and cleavers are known from Changdev in the open bed of the river.

Neolithic- No neolithic tools of any description are known from Jalgaon.
Microlithic- A comparatively recent form of a diminutive tool, which was in use well into historic times till about the beginning of the Christian era, popularly known as the microlith, is known to occur at a number of places both in the Tapi and the Girna river systems. The material for these tools is generally agate, chalcedony, jasper and crystal; the tools comprise of several forms like scrapers, points, trapeze, long blades, arrow-heads and fluted cores. In Jalgaon these are from Changdev near Chalisgaon, at the foot of the Satpuda hills, is the only place where these occur in a locality which is far removed from riverine tracts. Fluted cores of agate are found in a very large number.

No intensive search for pre-historic tools has ever been made in Jalgaon, but restricted surveys in Dhulia show that the land is full of promise and would afford a good deal of scope for the future archaeologists.

Chalcolithic 1st Millennium B.C. to 500 B.C- The valleys of both Girna and the Tapi have in recent years yielded a very valuable material for the Chalcolithic period (1st Millennium B.C.—500 B.C.). Excavations at Bahal and Tekevada (both on the right and left banks of Girna) lying about 18 miles north of Chalisgaon, have revealed that during the Chalcolithic times a painted black-on-red pottery was extensively used in association with a long blade industry. The painted designs on the pottery consist of hatched diamonds, criss-cross and wavy lines, ladders, etc., executed on necks and rims of domestic vessels. Shells and semi-precious stone beads were commonly used. Copper was very scarce and was used for artistic work and a few non-descript objects found in the excavations. The work at Tekevada has brought to light several new features such as urn. Burials and painted pottery with incised graffiti designs.
Pitburials were also practised. The vestiges lay directly on the black, cotton soil which is typical of Jalgaon district.

In 1960, another Chakolitic site was accidentally discovered near Vakad, about 12 miles south of Pahur on the Pahur Ajintha road, during the construction of a bridge over the Vakad river. A preliminary examination of the finds shows infant burials in twin jars placed alongside, painted pottery and microliths closely resembling those from the Godavari and Pravara basins in Nasik and Ahmednagar districts.

**Mauryan Period 400 to 200 B. C.-** The excavations at Bahal have also produced in the upper levels a kind of glass-ware, popularly known as the northern black polished (N. B. P.) were, attributed to 4th - 3rd century B.C. roughly corresponding to the period of Asoka, the Mauryan ruler. It belongs to an epoch about which nothing is otherwise known in the history of Jalgaon except for a meager evidence of punch. Marked coins obtained at Bahal and other places in Jalgaon district.

Early inscriptions at Pitalkhora, roughly lying on a straight line joining Paithan and Bahal, indicate that the Satpuda range on the southern border of Jalgaon was in early times selected by Buddhist for the carving of these caves. The Mahamayuri texts refer to Pitargalya as the place of residence of the Yaksa Sankarin, by which probably Pitalkhora is meant. The early series of Caves 22nd at Ajintha well nigh show the prevalence of Hinayana Buddhism in the Jalgaon region.

**Satavahanas-** Very little is known about the extent of the kingdom of the Early Satavahana rulers (2nd B.C. to 1st cent. A.D.) but the recent discoveries in the caves at Pitalkhora indicate that the Jalgaon region was probably included in their domain. King Satakarni I (Circa 194.185 B.C.) is said to have conquered Western Malva and
the territory to the south of it including Anupa (the Narmada region) and Vidarbha (Berar). Very probably Jalgaon was also included in it as is indicated by the high sounding title Daksinapatha pati assumed by him. Brisk trading activity between the western sea ports and the Indian peninsula are indicated in Periplus of the Erythrean Sea (A.D. 90.95). Wagon loads of goods were brought down to Barygaza (Broach) from Paithan and Tagara (Ter) and it is now more or less certain that the old trade was diverted through the important passes in the Satpuda range which marks the southern boundary of Jalgaon.

In the middle of the 1st century, or towards the close of it, there was a Ksatrapa invasion in Western India and Malwa. Like the rest of the Satavahana Empire, Jalgaon was probably held for a short time by Mahaksatrapa Nahapana. Gautamiputra Satakarni (A.D. 106-190) wrested the kingdom and amongst the territories conquered by him Asika (Rsika), Asaka (Asmaka) and Mulaka are specifically mentioned in the Nasik cave inscriptions. It is undoubted that these regions are now represented by Jalgaon and the modern Aurangabad districts. Gautam Tputra was succeeded by his son Vasisthiputra Sami Siri Satakarni. It is likely that the Jalgaon region remained in the hands of the Satavahana dynasty till its decline in about 250 A.D. Discovery of some new names of Satavahana kings in the Tarhala hoard (Dist. Akola, Berar) suggests that probably some portions of Jalgaon adjoining Berar were in the hands of a collateral Vidarbha family for a short duration.

Buddhism received a very great impetus in the Deccan during the Satavahana period and a majority of the Buddhist caves in Western India were a creation of this period. Jalgaon had its quota in the Pitalkhora group, where four new vihāra of this
period have recently been found. Some Satavahana pottery has also been found there during clearance.

**Abhiras** - Of the successors of the Satavahanas no records are available till about the fifth century (410) but inscriptions show that Nasik was being governed by Viransena an Abhira king. The Abhiras or Ahirs are of considerable importance in the history of Jalgaon as their chiefs are said to have held many leading forts (Gadhis) in Jalgaon and still form one of the main elements in the population.

**Vakatakas** - In about the 5th century A.D. a portion of Khandesh seems to have been ruled by the Vakatakas. The main branch of this family was matrimonially connected with the Imperial Gupta dynasty and were a powerful force in Vidarbha. It is, however, the Vatsagulma branch of the family which seems to have dominated the southern portion of Khandesh, from their capital at Vatsagulma (modern Vasim, Dist. Akola). Their inscriptions are the first authentic records in the history of Jalgaon.

Ajintha Cave No. 16th contains a record of Varsadeva, a Minister of king Harisena; another inscription occurs in the cave at Ghatotkacha, about 11 miles from Ajinta. Both these are attributed to about A.D. 475. Cave 17th at Ajintha, which is one of the finest caves in the Ajintha range, records that it was caused to be made during the reign of a Vakataka king (whose name is lost) by a certain Ravisamba, in the last quarter of fifth century A.D. This king is believed to be Harisena. The ancestors of Ravisamba may have served some rulers of Khandesh towards the end of 4th century A.D. but, who they were, cannot be said with certainty.

It may incidentally be noted that some copper plate grants of certain rulers named Svamidas, Bhulunda and Rudradasa, dated in their regnal years, are believed
to have nourished between A. D. 316 to 367. Two of these plates are issued from Valkha, which is identified as Vaghll, near Chalisgaon. Their contribution though useful for the reconstruction of the history of Khandesh is still problematical.

Towards the close of the 5th century, the Chalukyas, under Pulaks I (Circa 489 A.D.), passing south from Gujarat, conquered the Deccan and established their power as far south as Vatapi (Badami). Their sway in Khandesh is indicated by the Lohaner Plates of Pulkesi II, dated Saka 552 (A.D. 630) which mentions places from the contiguous portion in the Malegaon taluka of the Nasik district.

Sendrakas- The Sendrakas, who were related to the Chalukyas, are sometimes erroneously identified with the Nikumbha family. Four copper-plate grants of this family have been found in Khandesh (three in Jalgaon and one in Dhulia) and a fifth one in Gujarat. A feudatory ruler named Allasakti, who held the birnda Nikumbha is found to donate a village called Pippalakheta in his Kasare (Dhulia) plates, dated in Kalachuri Samvat 404, corresponding to 653 A.D. His Nagad (taluka Chalisgaon) plates, dated Saka 577 (653 A.D.) record the donation of a village situated in the Nandipuradvari vishaya (district) identified with modern Nandurbar. The Mundakhede (taluka Chalisgaon) plates of Allasakti’s son Jayasakti are dated Saka 602 (A.D. 680.81) and seem to record grant of villages on the western border of Jalgaon. The Mehunbare (Taluka Chalisgaon) plates, dated in Saka 624 (A.D. 702) reveal Dandiraja as the name of the son of Devasakti, who must have been a descendant of Jayasakti above mentioned. This charter was issued by Vairadeva, son of Dandiraja, for the donation of certain villages now located in the Chalisgaon taluka. It would thus seem that this family ruled over portions of the Chalisgaon
taluka in Jalgaon for 50 or 60 years, with contacts in Gujarat along with their overlords, the Chalukyas.

**Rashtrakutas**—Jalgaon, next seems to have come under the sway of the Imperial Rashtrakuta dynasty, with their capital at Manyakheta (modern Malkhed in Mysore State). Powerful rulers of this family extended their kingdom into the Deccan, Konkan, part of Gujarat and Central India up to the Vindhya and remained in power till overthrown by Chalukya Tailapa in about 970 A.D. A copper plate grant of Govinda III, found near Bhadgaon (taluka Pachora) is dated in Saka 732 (809 A.D.) and records the donation of a village called Bhaulavara in the Bahula vishaya, corresponding to the modern Pachora district. Earlier records of this family from Vidarbha indicate the possibility of Jalgaon being under the control of the dynasty even earlier. Contemporaneous inscriptions are known from Ajintha and in a less known Brahmanical cave of Jogesvari in the Ajintha range, about 12 miles west of Ajintha. Two small Jain excavations near Patan (taluka Chalisgaon) probably belong to the same period.

**Feudatories of the Yadavas**—After the downfall of the Rashtrakutas, Jalgaon was ruled over the some minor feudatory dynasties who owed allegiance to a new power, *viz.*, the Yadavits. Early inscriptions of this dynasty are distributed in the Nasik and Ahmednagar districts, but in Saka 991 (1069 A.D.) we find a ruler named Govindaraja, of the Maurya family, paying homage to Seunachandra II, as mentioned in the Vaghli (taluka Chalisgaon) inscription.

Three inscriptions from Patan near Chalisgan, mention the Nikumbha vamsa, which was perhaps a feudatory family of considerable importance in the region. The earliest record, dated Saka 1075 (1153 A.D.) records the construction of a temple,
begun by Indraraja, father of Govana of the Nikumbha vamsa and finished after his death. Another inscription of Saka 1128 (1205 A.D.) states that Changdeva, an astrologer of Yadava Seuna and the grandson of Bhaskaracharya, had founded a college for the study of astronomical works, which was endowed with lands by Soideva and Hemadideva, two members of the Nikumbha family. A third inscription found in the dry river bed at Patan is fragmentary and its date, lost.

Of the time of Singhana, we have yet another record at Bahal, dated Saka 1144 (1222 A.D.) which mentions the construction of a temple by Anantadeva, the astrologer of Singhana. No records of Ramchandra, the last of the Yadava rulers have been found in Jalgaon. But Chakradhara, the founder of the Mahanubhava sect and a contemporary of Ramchandra, is stated to have visited a number of places, which lie in the Jalgaon district. Sae Gavhan (near Chalisgaon) Vaghli, Kanasi, Bhad. gaon, Pachora (all in Pachora taluka) and Shendurni (Taluka Jamner) were included in his tours and thus show an interesting sidelight on the spread of that cult, which has many adherents to it in Khandesh even today.

A large number of temples, built without any mortar and erected by a very careful assemblage of large stone blocks piled one upon another, are popularly attributed to Hemadri, a minister of Yadava Ramachandra. Vestiges of such Hemadpanti temples are known from Patan (Chalisgaon), Vaghli (Pachora), Sangame. svara (Chalisgaon), Shendurni (Jamner), Lohara (Jamner), Kurhad (Jamner). Changadeva (Bhusaval) and Dighi (Pachora). In Jalgaon these are often ascribed to the Bavli rajas, legendary rulers of Khandesh and in spite of their general simplicity these temples mark an important stage in the temple architecture of the Deccan.
3.2 MEDIEVAL HISTORY

The present territory of the district was part of the independent Khandesh Sultanate ruled by the Faruqi dynasty from 1382-1601. Jalgaon district, also known as East Khandesh district prior to 21 October 1960, was earlier a part of Khandesh. According to Abul Fazal (Gladwin's Aine Akbari 1157), the name Khandesh is derived from the Khan title given by Ahmad-I of Gujarat (1411-1443) to Malik Nasir, the second of the Faruki kings. According to some sources, the name comes from the khandava forest of Mahabharata. The Mahabharata mentions Yuvanshava, the ruler of Toranmal (Nandurbar district) as fighting with the Pandavas. The rock temples and caves at Nashik and Ajanta show that during the first three centuries AD, Khandesh was under the rulers who patronised Buddhism. Thereafter, it was ruled by Saptavananas, Andhrabrityas, Virsen (Ahir King), Yawan dynasty, Chalukyas, Yadavas and then Alaud-din Khilji, Mohammad Tughlak, Malik Raja Malik Nazir, the Nizam of Hyderabad, and subsequently the Marathas ruled the region.

3.3 MODERN HISTORY

In the 18th century, Khandesh was captured by British troops from the Holkar regime with Dhule as the headquarters. Hon. Robert Gill was the first officer of British East India Company in the Khandesh District with headquarters in Dhule. In 1906 when Khandesh was divided, east Khandesh became present-day Jalgaon. In 1956 with the reorganisation of states, it was included in Bombay state, and with the formation of Maharashtra in 1960, Jalgaon became a district of the state.
**Titbits:** In the Parola Tahsils, there are remains of a fort believed to be belonging to the father of the great Rani of Jhansi. All India Congress Session of 1936 was held at Faizpur in Yawal Tehsil. In present times, legendary poetess Bahinabai Chaudhari of Jalgaon spread the fame of the Ahirani dialect across the seven seas. Sane Guruji awakened the labour class while Balkavi Thomre's poetry enriched socio-cultural life of the district. In present day the great farmer poet N.D.Mahanor has proved himself a golden quill in the crown of Jalgaon.

After annexation by Akbar in 1601, it became a part of *Khandesh Subah* of the Mughal Empire. Subsequently, the region was ruled by the Nizam and the Marathas. In the early 18th century, Khandesh was captured by British troops from the Holkar ruler and a new district, Khandesh District was formed with its headquarters at Dhulia. Robert Gill was the first administrator of the British East India Company in Khandesh District. In 1906, when Khandesh district was bifurcated into two district, the present territory of Jalgaon district became East Khandesh district with its headquarters at Jalgaon. In 1956, after the reorganization of the states, East Khandesh district was included in Bombay state and with the formation of Maharashtra state on May 1, 1960, East Khandesh district became a part of the state. It was renamed as Jalgaon district on October 21, 1960.