



MAHARASHTRA ON – THE EVE OF BRITISH CONQUEST

UNIT STRUCTURE

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- 1.3 Economic Conditions in Maharashtra before the British Conquest.
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1.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1 To understand Political conditions before the British Conquest.
- 2 To know armed resistance to the British occupation.
- 3 To evaluate Economic conditions before British Conquest.
- 4 To analyse Social conditions before the British Conquest.
- 5 To examine Cultural conditions before the British Conquest.

1.1 INTRODUCTION :

With the discovery of the Sea-routes in the 15th Century the Europeans discovered Sea route to reach the east. The Portuguese, Dutch, French and the English came to India to promote trade and commerce.

The English who established the East-India Co. in 1600, gradually consolidated their hold in different parts of India. They had very capable men like Sir. Thomas Roe, Colonel Close, General Smith, Elphinstone, Grant Duff etc .

The English shrewdly exploited the disunity among the Indian rulers. They were very diplomatic in their approach. Due to their far sighted policies, the English were able to expand and consolidate their rule in Maharashtra.

The Company's government had trapped most of the Maratha rulers in Subsidiary Alliances and fought three important wars with Marathas over a period of 43 years (1775 -1818).

1.2 POLITICAL CONDITIONS BEFORE THE BRITISH CONQUEST :

The Company's Directors sent Lord Wellesley as the Governor-General of the Company's territories in India, in 1798. He was destined to transform the British Empire in India into British Empire of India before he was recalled in 1805 for, charges of 'rapacity, Oppression, cruelty and fraud' and also overstepping the legal limits of the powers delegated to him. He used to system of subsidiary alliances to trap and isolate the powerful Maratha Chiefs.

The beginning of the nineteenth century opened a new chapter in the history of Maharashtra and for that matter consequently of India. The Company's new Governor General Lord Wellesley's arrival in India when the Company owed a debt of seventeen millions to the British Government. Napoleonic wars were being fought in Europe and the Egyptian expedition of Napoleon had created panic in the British dominion in India, Lord Wellesley was however fortunate to find that the Maratha Country was passing through a difficult period. The death of Pashwa Madhavrao II (Madhavrao Narayan) in October 1795 without a child had led to the civil war in Maharashtra in 1797. The succession claims to Peshwaship between the adopted son of Raghunathrao (the grandfather of the deceased Peshwa) and Reghunathrao's own son involved the Maratha Sardars-Shindes and Holkar in the dispute. The two families of Shinde and Holkar were traditional enemies of each other. Shinde supported Bajirao, son of Raghunathrao and Holkar supported adopted son of Raghunathrao named Amritrao. The illustrious head of the rival families of Shinde and Holkar namely Mahadji Shinde and Ahilyabai Holkar (Daughter in law of Malharrao Holkar) were dead and succeeded by Daultrao Shinde and Yeshwantrao Holkar who were in their twenties. Yeshwantrao Holkar attacked the combined armies of Bajirao II and Daulatrao Shinde and defeated them at Hadapsar near Pune in October, 1802. Peshwa fled to the Konkan and appealed to Jonathan Duncan, Company's Governor of Bombay. The Peshwa was given the protection by the English East India company. On December, 31, 1802 the Peshwa concluded a subsidiary treaty with the Company at Bassein. The Treaty of Bassein bartered away the independence of the Maratha Country to the Company for Protecting the Peshwa from his hostile sardars.

1.2.1 Lord Wellesly and his Subsidiary Alliances (1798 – 1805)

Lord Wellesley the Governor General (1798-1805) was extremely happy at the turn of events as now a lawful right was established to interfere in the preservation of the Peshwa's authority, wherever it should be attacked.... "As already referred to above the Peshwa was the defacto head of the Maratha State. The fugitive Peshwa's action was resented by the Maratha Chiefs-Yeshwantrao bitterly remarked "Bajirao has destroyed the Maratha State". It was however Daulatrao Shinde and Raghuji Bhosle of Nagpur who decided to resist the interference of the Company. They refused to give their accord to the Treaty of Bassein. Lord Wellesley's vigorous diplomacy succeeded in keeping Gaikwad of Baroda neutral and Yashwantrao out of spite for Shinde decided to proceed to Mahva to await the result of the struggle. The two allies decided to declare war in August 1803. We are not concerned with the details of the wars and the activities of the Peshwa and the other Maratha Chiefs that forms the part of Maratha History paper. We shall however point out whatever is relevant to our particular purpose of describing the political conditions in Maharashtra.

The Capital of the Maratha State that is Pune had put on a miserable look during the two decades after the death of Madhavrao II. The war between the Company holding the fugitive Peshwa under its arms and the two Maratha Chiefs ended in failure of the two allies - Shinde and Bhosle. The war was fought in two different zones. In the south General Arthur Wellesley and in the north Lord Lake the commander - in - Chief of the Company's forces were leading the campaigns. There was no glory in the victory of the Company as the treachery of the European officers precipitated the defeat of the Marathas. The strong fort of Ahmednagar was surrendered to General Arthur Wellesley by Shinde's European officer who went over to the English Company. At Assirgarh the Keeper of the fort received seven lakhs from the English and surrendered the fort. Many European officers in Shinde's service changed his side.

In the north also the European officers played the same trick. Perron the Commander of Shinde's forces who should have fought against Lord Lake surrendered Aligarh without firing a shot. Grant Duff expressed surprise. He says "the rapidity of the conquests and the speedy termination of the war surprise all India". His information not upto date at that time.

The defeat of Shinde and Bhosle and the consequent treaties concluded in December ,1803 changed the political equation. The Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II was now placed under Company's

protection and thus end of Mughal Empire was signalled in 1803. Yeshwantrao Holkar after wasting the precious time in the "wait and watch" game stirred up and attacked Jaipur which had entered into an alliance with the Company in 1803. The Company Government started war with Holkar in April, 1804. They fought the war for two years. In the meanwhile Lord Wellesley was recalled in 1805 as the shareholders of the Company had become nervous because of the dangerous policy of wars of expansion in India. The Company's debt rose from 17 millions in 1797 to 31 millions in 1806. The Company reversed its policy and once again followed the policy of non-intervention.

1.2.2 Role of Mountstuart Elphinstone as Resident in 1811

As a result of the change in the policy of the Company, Peshwa Bajirao II enjoyed a subdued peace from 1805 to 1811. Colonel Close had accompanied the Peshwa in 1803 and restored him to his Peshwaship at Pune. He was resident upto 1811. Then came Mountstuart Elphinstone as Resident in 1811 and Bajirao's troubles started. The jagirdars who were harassed by the Peshwa sought the intervention of the Resident. The grievances of the Jagirdars were settled by Elphinstone by his Pandharapur Award in 1812. The jagirdars were assured full protection by the Award. Elphinstone also helped the rulers of Kolhapur and Sawantwadi to be practically independent of the Peshwa.

Elphinstone had a very low opinion about the abilities of the Peshwa, and considered him timid and lazy. Bajirao II now turned his attention to the work of strengthening his state army (Huzarat) by raising a disciplined corps of infantry with the permission of the Governor General Lord Minto (1807-1813). He put Captain John Ford in command of that corps on the conditions that he would remain loyal to him. The Peshwa needed large amount of money to finance such a programme. He adopted a new system of raising funds for that. He was able to collect a handsome amount. He now felt confident that with a strong and well-equipped army he could seize the right opportunity to get rid of the white masters. He was however not at peace with his own men. He had added to the sufferings of common man by his exactions and the political climate was filled with suspicion, deceit, fear and intrigues. Peshwa Bajirao II began to rely more and more on men of doubtful character, like Mankeshwar Raste, Modi, Pingle and Trimbakji Denge. Their activities hastened his downfall.

1.2.3 Murder of Gangadhar Shastri (1815)

The incident which created a sensation throughout Maharashtra was the murder of Gangadhar Shastri in July, 1815. He was deputed by

Fatesingh Gaikwad the ruler of Baroda to settle the outstanding claims of payment to the Peshwa in February, 1814. The latter had claimed the share of revenue from Baroda to the Central Government at Pune. The amounts were to be paid from 1753 onwards. The envoy from Baroda was unable to agree to the unreasonable demands and thus the negotiations continued for a long time. Peshwa who had successfully extracted money from the land - lords by his system of farming of taxes would not brook any further delay. His unscrupulous advisor Trimbakji Dingle Who was engaged in organizing an anti-British front by persuading the discontented Maratha Chiefs, instigated the Peshwa to get rid of the Shastri. The Baroda envoy was found dead in July 1815. Elphinstone suspected Trimbakji's involvement in the murder. He requested the Peshwa to institute an enquiry into the matter. In the beginning the Peshwa declined the request but because of pressure he detained Trimbakji in the fort of Vasantgad and then removed him to the fort of Thane. In 1816 Trimbakji escaped from Thane fort. The Peshwa was busy organizing a united front of the Maratha Chiefs against the Company.

At the time Peshwa Bajirao II was making secret preparation for a concerted move to dislodge the Company's overlordship, Raghuji II of the Bhosle family of Nagpur died in March 1816. He was succeeded by his imbecile son. Raghuji's nephew Appasaheb was aspiring for the position as the Chief of the Bhosale family of Nagpur, and became the Regent. Lord Hastings who had succeeded Lord Minto in 1813 exploited the situation and forced Appasaheb to conclude a subsidiary treaty with the Company in May, 1816. This treaty of Nagpur deprived the Bhosles of their independence and struck at the unity of the Maratha rulers.

The Peshwa was relying on Bhosle for a concerted move against the Company. Trimbakji was at large and the Company's Government was pressing hard for his custody. The hostility of the Peshwa provoked Elphinstone the Resident, to compel the Peshwa to sign a new treaty at Pune in July, 1817. The Pune treaty made the Peshwa renounce his headship of the Maratha Empire. According to this treaty the Peshwa had to cede to the Company territory worth thirty-four lakhs as a compensation for not furnishing troops as agreed before. The Peshwa could not negotiate with other Powers except through the Resident at Pune. The Company had isolated the Peshwa and forced him to surrender his overlordship of the Indian Chiefs. He had to give up claims on all territories outside Maharashtra. The treaty dissolved the Maratha State led by the Peshwa.

Bajirao made hectic efforts to mobilise anti-British powers for a concerted move to resist the tentacles of the Company's political power. The Governor-Generals Lord Hastings had launched his campaign against the Pindaris. Jadunath Sarkar has pointed out that at the end of the 18th century, there were a million mercenary soldiers seeking employment at any Indian Court that would have them.

1.2.4 Supression of Pindaris, free-booters

These Pindari free booters, who lived a life of brigands were mostly from North-India. As Grant Duff points out "To the unemployed solidery of India, particularly to the Mohammedans, the life of a Pindari had many allurements". They were generally controlled by the Pathan Chief Amir Khan. The Pindaris were connected with Shinde and Holkar, therefore, the campaign against the Pindaris would also affect the Maratha rulers in the north. Lord Hastings therefore concluded a treaty with Daulatrao Shinde for co-operating in the suppression of the Pindari menace.

1.2.5 Armed resistance to the British Occupation.

The Treaty with Shinde was signed by the Company in November 1817. In the same month the Peshwa burnt the British Residency at Pune and attacked the British camp at Kirki. The Peshwa was betrayed by his European Commander Captain John Ford, and the Company's army defeated Peshwa's army led by Bapu Gokhale in the battle of Ashti in the Sholapur district in February, 1818.

In the meantime Appasaheb Bhonsle made a common cause with the revolt of the Peshwa. He attacked the company's army in November, 1817 but was defeated at Sitabaldi in November and again at Nagpur in December, 1817. He fled to the north and later on died in 1840 in Jodhpur. Another Maratha Chief Malharrao Holkar II also revolted in sympathy with Peshwa and Bhosle. He put up a stiff fight but was decisively defeated at Mahidpur in December, 1817.

The Peshwa ran from place to place, except for Shinde and Gaikwad the other two Maratha Chiefs Bhosle and Holkar had joined him in the war for preservation of independence. The Peshwa had to surrender to Sir John Malcolm in June, 1818 and was exiled by the Company to Bithur near Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh. He died there in 1851, His vices, failures and weakness of character seemed to have been wiped off in the last ditch battle he fought against the foreign aggressors. He can be easily blamed for many omissions but his defiance and his desperate efforts to put up a fight against the foreign overlords was the last flicker of the flame of freedom that was dying out. The English

Company and their able soldiers and diplomats served their country by enslaving Maharashtra. During the same time General Arthur Wellesley, elevated to the position of Duke of Wellington, had defeated the Child of the French Revolution-Napoleon Bonapart at Waterloo in June 1815. He had impeded the revolutionary spirit in Europe before the fall of the Marathas. Maharashtra and all the lands controlled by the Maratha rulers lost their political freedom; the other parts of India were enslaved in the next four decades or so.

1.2.6 Other centres of political power in Maharashtra.

When the East India Company was struggling to bring the Maratha Empire to its end there were other centres of power where princes of old dynasties were wielding authority over the people of Maharashtra. The descendents of Shivaji were confined to Satara. Although the Peshwa had desposed him of his realm, his family received the traditional respect and public esteem. Besides Pune, Nagpur, Kolhapur, Sawantwadi and Janjira were the important centres of political power.

Since the time Yeshwantrao Holkar started his campaign against the Company in 1804, Kolhapur and Sawantwadi had become a nest of pirates. The trade of the East India Company was suffering because of the piracy. Raja of Kolhapur was following a different policy from that of the Central Government of the Maratha State. The Sangola conference of 1749 had divided the spheres of influence between the senior and junior lines of the House of Shivaji. There was known enmity between the Maratha Government in Kolhapur and the Peshwa Government at Pune.

When the Company's Government was fighting the last war with Peshwa Bajirao II in 1817 Sawantwadi affairs were under the Regent Rani Durgabai, a spirited lady who defied the English authority. She threatened to invade the British territory in the neighborhood of Sawantwadi. The Company had to send Sir W. Grant Kier to resist the invasion. He took the fort of Yeshwantgad and Nivti in 1818. The army of occupation forced the Rani to come to terms in 1819. She died soon after and the widows of Khem Sawant III were busy fighting for their claims, when the Maratha Empire was dissolved.

The State of Janjira also known as Habsan or Abyssynian domain was bounded on the north by the River Roha and to the South by the River Savitri. The founder of Ahmednagar, Ahmad Shah had established an Abyssynian as captain of Janjira (1490-1508). The Abyssynians or Siddis of Janjira later on co-operated with the Mughals to check the progress of the Marathas. They became commanders of the Mughal Fleet on the West Coast. The rise of the Maratha sea-power and the

supremacy of the English on the seas restricted the piracy on the West Coast. The Siddis were on friendly terms with the Company and were used by the English as a counter-weight against the Marathas. The Marathas throughout their long career of a hundred and fifty years even with the establishment of their power on the West Coast under the leadership of the Angrias could not conquer Janjira. The Siddis of Janjira were not inclined to co-operate with the English during the period of war between the English and Marathas. Janjira was subjected to British power only in 1834.

The other region which had historical importance was the modern Raigad district, then known as Kolaba. The traditional admirals of the Maratha Fleet were the Angrias. Their power was the English Company at Bombay to check the activities of the Angrias. The Angrias were not amenable to the discipline by the Central Government of the Marathas at Pune. The disputed succession had rendered the naval power of the Angrias ineffective. However Mahad enjoyed important position. Nana Phadnis had concealed his private treasure at Mahad. The Peshwa Bajirao II when Yeshwantrao Holkar was chasing him in 1802 escaped to Mahad on the way to Raigad. Shinde's Commander in-Chief Buburao was controlling the region. The Peshwa sent his wife with his private treasure to Mahad. The Angrias with their enclave at Raigad were in a miserable condition. Manaji Angria died in 1817 and Raghuji, a boy of 14, succeeded him. Lieutenant Colonel Prother and Major Hall held the charge of the region. The Claims of the Angrias were settled in 1822 and the company brought the region under its power.

During the Napoleonic Wars in Europe the English were struggling to control the whole west coast from Surat to Goa. The British Government had already dispatched four battleships to safeguard the coast as Napoleon had invaded the Iberian peninsula (Portugal-Spain). In fact the Portugese had become nervous at the unpleasant turn in the relations with the English and Goa was disturbed because of 'Pinto Revolt' and the risings of the Ranes of Satari. The English had posted a Part of their army in Aguada until 1815. This had affected the neighbouring territory of Sawantwadi and Vengurla. The atmosphere was tense and filled with anxiety and fear.

There were other places; petty states, pilgrim places and those centres with past glories but not in the political limelight and still enjoying a pride of place in the public mind. They were sangli, Miraj, Mudhol, Akalkot, Aundh, Jath, Phaltan, Bhor, Jawahar, the Dang with political privileges. Nasik, Theur, Pandharpur were places where the Peshwa and his sardars visited on many occasions. Ahmednagar, Aurangabad,

Khandesh, Kalyan, Thana, Bassein and Sholapur were once powerful centres but subsequently declined in political power were individually of little consequence.

They reflected the vicissitudes in the political fortunes of the Central Government at Pune - the political and military adventures and economic calamities. The Pindari menace had created terror in northern Maharashtra and the pirates on the West-Coast had created panic. The Central Government of the Marathas and the many centres of political power were pulling in different directions and were helpless to alleviate the' misfortunes of the people. The tragedy, of the city administration of Pune would give a better idea of what was going on at lesser centres of political power,

1.2.7 Administration of Pune

The Capital of the Peshwa's Government was Pune. It had suffered all the misfortunes a capital in the medieval time used to suffer. The plunder and destruction had come to stay and violent attacks during the civil war between Bajirao and Amritrao weakened the administration. The terror that was created by Yeshwantrao when he wanted to avenge the murder of his brothers was still fresh in the memory. The spectacle of how the north-Indians, Arab and Pathan guards had acquired ascendancy at Pune was evident when Nana Phadnis died in 1800 and the Arab guards refused to allow the removal of the dead body unless their salaries were paid.

The Kotwals (Police Administrators) of Pune enjoyed high Position. They were controlled by the Peshwa directly. After the death of Madhavrao I, the control of the Central authority slackened and Nana Phadnis was responsible for appointments of some unworthy persons. The two notories, Kotwals were Ghashiram Savaidas from Aurangabad and his brother Anandrao. They administered Pune between 1777 and 1797. Prof.M. R. Kulkarni has furnished the following information about their position and function.

The Kotwal was supposed to perform the following duties.

- (a) Attend to petty causes.
- (b) Supply labour force to the government.
- (c) Keep record of rates to be-maintained daily.
- (d) Make collections of duties charges from Pindari and Bajekari according to turn-over (Udim).
- (e) Stamping of weights and measures.
- (f) Record of census to be compiled.

- (g) Control over gambling houses to be exercised.
- (h) Maintaining of the accounts of the township and its submission to the Phadnis every month.
- (i) Purchase and sale of housing property.
- (j) Petty expenses on entertainment of officers.
- (k) Street-lighting.
- (l) Expenses on entertainment of men of ranks.

He was assisted by scribes, riders, messengers, spies and guards. The notorious two who occupied that high position, carried on oppressive administration for full two decades or so. The famous protest lodged by the Pune citizens in August, 1791 against the atrocities of Ghashiram created great sensation throughout the Maratha State. It happened when twenty-two Telang Brahmins died in the police custody of Ghashiram. Nana Phadnis the *de facto* ruler of the Central Government connived at the crimes of Ghashiram and replaced him by his brother Anandrao, who was more degenerate and oppressive than Ghashiram. This gives us an idea of the state of affairs at the centres of political privileges and power before the British conquest.

1.2.8 Check your progress :

Q.1. Give an account of the political condition on the eve of the British Conquest.

1.3 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN MAHARASHTRA BEFORE THE BRITISH CONQUEST :

During the time of the Maratha Empire agriculture was the main occupation of the majority of the people in Maharashtra. Some of them had taken to the life of a military career. These soldiers who were employed in the Maratha army did not dissociate themselves with their agricultural activities. During the period of Shivaji's Swarajya the soldiers were farmers first and soldiers afterwards. Shivaji used to arrange the programme of military campaigns - the mulkhgiri - to suit the needs of the agriculturists; the soldiers commenced their campaigns on Dasara Day (usually in the month of October) and returned to their village homes by holi (April-May) This practice was continued in the subsequent periods also.

1.3.1 Agrarian Economy :

The economy of Maharashtra like most of the other regions in India was mainly based on agriculture. The methods of cultivation were with the use of the same primitive ploughs drawn by bullocks. The techniques of irrigation, seed storage and marketing were the traditional life-irrigation, insufficient stocks and distress sale of seeds during bad seasons. Large tracts of land in Satara, Pune, Ahmednagar, Sholapur and the Kokan were treated as uncultivable waste lands. Lack of agricultural policy and the destruction of standing crops either by the marauding Pindaris in Khandesh or the marching of enemy armies during the Anglo-Maratha wars or the wars of succession had ruined the agricultural economy of the Deccan. The severe famine in northern Deccan in 1802 -03 and its visitation in other parts in the subsequent period had added to the misery of the people. The political instability following the second Anglo-Maratha war had unsettled agricultural activities.

The acceptance of subsidiary alliance made with the Company by the Peshwa, aggravated the sufferings of the agriculturists. In his anxiety to raise funds for his state army under Captain Ford, the Peshwa resorted to farming out of the land revenue; the highest bidder got the right to collect the money from the farmers. In Ahmednagar, Bajirao II's desperate effort to collect the maximum possible land-revenue made it necessary for the farmers to bring fallow land under cultivation. The pressure on the jagirdars however created great tension in the domain of the Peshwa.

The jagirdars vigorously resisted the Peshwa's policy of grabbing their patrimony. Most of the Jagirdars were the holders of 'surinjams' (tenures with political privileges and power) holding lands worth Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000. The Peshwa's policy entailed attacks on the rights of the 'deshmukhs'; 'deshpandes' and the 'inamdars' to a great extent.

The bad agricultural policies of the Peshwa were resented but the condition of agriculture before the British Rule in Maharashtra was not relatively much miserable with all sorts of adverse forces influencing it. It had latent vitality as was witnessed in the valleys of Sahyadri, the country south of Ahmednagar and the areas controlled by Patwardhans in the Southern part of Maharashtra. They were well-populated and richly cultivated.

1.3.2 The Prices of food-grain

Elphinstone gives the following description of Maharashtra when he was passing through Chhattisgarh to the boundaries of Maharashtra.

“The country seems still an abundant one, Ghee, owing to the number of cattle, sells at the rate of 7 or 8 seers for a rupee, rice at 60, wheat flour at 80 and at Rypore and Dhundha they say a man live poorly for half a pice but very comfortable for a pice”. This was the description of the country in which he was travelling in the first decade of the 19th century.

The fall of Peshwa Bajirao II brought about a steep fall in the prices of grain even when the harvests were poor. The reason for that phenomenon was the natural consequence of diminished demand. The merchants had hoarded the grain expecting better prices but as there was no effective demand, the prices began to fall. This worsened the condition of the cultivators of the land. The farmers faced a grim prospect of uneconomic returns and heavy land-taxes. They had to sell their land or borrow money to pay the new masters. The rural community was under the shadow of a great calamity as famine was threatening the eastern parts of Godavari and the whole of Khandesh.

The condition in the towns was worse than the rural regions. The disturbed conditions and the greedy officials like the Kotwals in the capital city had created panic in the towns. The conditions in the cities which were the seat of political power like Kolhapur, Sangli, Miraj or Janjira, Sawantwadi and other smaller towns were not free from the interference from the officials in the sale and purchase of goods. The merchants of the towns like Paithan, Pune, Thane or Kalyan had links with the rural areas and the disturbed conditions made business difficult. The transportation and movements of goods were impeded because of geographical conditions. The middlemen also created many problems. The raids on the rich areas made by the Pindaris especially in northern Maharashtra made the life in the cities and towns miserable.

1.3.3 Check your progress

2. Write short note on Economic condition in Maharashtra before British Rule.

1.4 SOCIAL CONDITIONS BEFORE THE BRITISH CONQUEST :

In dealing with the social conditions of Maharashtra we will concentrate on the Hindu population in general. There were Muslim settlements and they were confined to those regions once ruled by

Muslim rulers such as Khandesh, Daulatabad, Ahmednagar, Janjira and the port-towns on the West-Coast. The population of Maharashtra at the end of the Maratha rule would be a matter of conjuncture because of lack of reliable data.

1.4.1 Population of Maharashtra

W. H. Sykes, Statistical Reporter to the Government of Bombay estimated the total Population of Khandesh, Pune, Ahmednagar and Dharwar around 27 lakhs in 1828. This gives us a general idea of the population figures. If we ignore the non-Marathi-speaking areas and include the areas like, Nasik, sholapur, Kolhapur and the Kokan, we can safely arrive at a figure of between 35 to 40 lakhs. It may not exceed fifty lakhs even if we include the princely states covered by the Marathi-speaking regions. This is of course a tentative estimate of the population a hundred and fifty years ago. The religion wise figures are more difficult to arrive at. The areas ruled by Muslims did not have Muslim majorities; so the population of Muslims scattered throughout Maharashtra in 1818 may not be more than three to four lakhs on the conservative estimate.

1.4.2 Religion

The Hindu Society was tradition-bound. It had become more conservative as we approach the end of the Maratha period. It was spiritually and intellectually exhausted. The people reposed implicit faith in the wisdom of the religious literature especially the Puranas as only an insignificant number was reading the scriptures or the 'Shastra'. Their ignorance about the world affairs was monumental. The teachings of the saint philosophers had driven the idea of 'Fate' deep into the soul of the people. They'd found solace in the rituals and listening to the religions discourses, the 'Kirtans' and the devotional songs, the 'Abhangas'. The scholar gentry was complacent in reciting the Sanskrit verses and formulae, mantras, at ceremonial functions, patronized by the Peshwa and Maratha nobles. Those who lived in Pune, the seat of the Central Government of Marathas, came in contact with the foreigners, diplomats, soldiers and the Pindaris. The Guards or Gardis or Gardi' belonged to non-Marathi- speaking people who came to Pune for services.

The society of the time is described by G. S. Sardesai as follows:-
 "The religious outlook of the society and especially of the upper classes of that time was directed to pursuits of a superstitious nature, making caste restrictions rigid, enjoying various practices as the only means of happiness and salvation, and introducing thousands of minute rules and practices entirety antagonistic to the material interests of a progressive community. The Bhakti cult or the Bhagavata religion had the same effect, especially among the uneducated masses."

The Society was enslaved by superstition and insisted on duties appropriate to the castes. The upper classes or higher castes demanded that the lower classes, the untouchables must serve the high caste people. The forced labour demanded by the higher castes and the degradation of the Mahar, Mang and other low castes is adequately described by N. G. Bharve in his research paper 'Peshwekalin Dalit Samaj' published in the journal of B. I. S. M. Pune, Year, 1983.

1.4.3 The Casteism - (Social Structures)

The traditional caste-ridden society manifested its ugly features during the declining period of the Maratha rule. The outcastes like Taral, Ramoshi, Chambhar, Mahar, Mang, Berad were treated very harshly. If the members of these castes committed any crime, a heavy fine was imposed on them and inhuman punishment was awarded to them. They were treated as unfit for the protection of law. Most of these outcastes were treated as criminal castes. The inequality of the castes was the main feature of the social structure. All were not equal before the law. Even among the high-castes there were many sub-divisions. It was generally believed that the Hindu Society was a graded society. Some of the Vedic Pundits would declare that there were only two self-exclusive groups of Hindus, Brahmins and Shudras. There were no Kshatriyas or Warriors by birth and the merchants were treated as among the Shudra caste only. The Brahmins however had the privilege to follow any trade or profession. They were appointed to civil and military offices and many a Brahmin was engaged in the gold and jewellery trade. Some of them were rich money-lenders who lent money to the sardars and the Peshwas.

1.4.4 Rural Society

The rural society was a well-integrated and compact society. Elphinstone and Metcalf praised the self-sufficiency of these Village Republics. The caste and the-family were treated as important units. The individual person had no independent position; he was a member of a particular family and castes and was bound by the caste-regulations.

The rural society established interrelation by the time honoured method of the cultivators receiving services and goods from occupational castes in the scheme of social scale. Besides the upper castes that is the Brahmins and the ruling elites, the others had to render public service. Their work was given remuneration by the voluntary payment of goods at the harvest time by the farmers. The recipients of such goods were known as 'Balutedars'. They were twelve in a number depending upon the size of the village and its population. The important Balutedars were:-

Carpenters, blacksmiths, shoe makers, Maharas; Guravs, Potters, barbers, gold-smits, fishermen etc. (more about this in the next lesson). They were treated as men eligible for the benefit proper to that 'Baluta' or 'social service' which the occupational-castes were supposed to render. Among the untouchables, village servants-the Mahars had two important functions.

They were used as private labourers and village servants doing government duties. They had to discharge duties as watchmen for the village and they were forced to work on the fields of certain mirasdars or men of high station. The Mahars had acquitted themselves with high credit in the military service risking their lives in daring adventures. They were however not sufficiently rewarded. In the battle of Kharda in 1795, Sidnak Mahar was commanding a battalion against the Nizam. The English Company recruited them as sepoy in their army.

1.4.5 Position of Women

The position of women during the first decades of the nineteenth century was deplorable in general. Barring a few high-castes women and family members of ruling classes the rest of the womenfolk had to live in an undignified way. The widows of soldiers, the prostitutes, the 'devadasis' or women throne at the mercy of the society in the name of God, the dancers, musicians and women who entertained men in public are frequently mentioned in the folk literature of the time. This creates an impression that the country had reached the lowest depth of moral decay. It is sufficient to point out that "women convicted of adultery were employed as prostitutes to raise a body of female slaves for the use of the state".

1.4.6 Crime and Punishment .

The conventional law based on, the Manusmriti and the Yajnyawalkya Smriti was implemented with all severity. The Brahmanas were let off with light punishment but the severities of the punishment progressively increased as the law was applied to the criminals lower down the social scale. The uncertainties of fortunes and weakness of the political authority rendered the life of women insecure and sale of women slaves was practiced at some places. The treatment of the prisoners was most cruel. In Kolaba dark underground dungeons were used for prisoners. In other places dark cells in some forts were used. The punishments were barbarious such as cruel mutilations, throwing down the prisoners bound hands and feet from the high spurs of the Sahyadri or simply blowing him out from the mouth of the guns. The deterrent punishments might have kept down the number of revolts and risings. However the terrors of the punishments in Hell for violating

religious practices tormented the minds of the general mass of the people more than the known punishments for crimes. Nevertheless, bribery and graft in many forms in the public life relived the horrors to a great extent. Bribery appeared to be no crime.

1.4.7 Cultural Condition.

The strength of the government and the caste-system lay in keeping the people poor and ignorant. There was no first rate literature and no new development of Hinduism. It was a declining period of arts. There were no saint-philosophers like Eknath, Tukaram or Ramdas. There were no independent compositions. The only names that figure as written in the 18th century are those of Mahipati and Moropant, and some Lyrist like Ram Joshi. We do not come across any creative talent. The economic dissatisfaction was widespread. The small middle class, the merchants and money lenders were at the mercy of unworthy rulers and pillage bandits. The conditions could be summed as full of 'Ladhai (wars)' 'Pundai' (depredations) and 'Bandai' (revolts).

The Maratha Polity during the previous century before the British conquest had gradually absorbed some of the cultural trends which prevailed in North India. Peshwas' territory was in Maharashtra but he supervised and controlled the 'Sardars or Chiefs' who ruled in the North. The Shindes and Holkars had come under the influence of some of the cultural trends in modern Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Mahadji Shinde had introduced the fun and frolic of "Rang Panchami" the festival of colours during the Phalgun month. Peshwa Nana Saheb had also inspired some of the artists to develop performing arts, the painting of portraits of the Peshwa, Mahadji Shinde, Nana Phadnis and other chiefs. But the buildings and structures were demolished by the mercenaries during the time of war and the plunder and pillage of the Pindaris. The temples and palaces that have survived the attacks are witnesses to the grandeur of the Maratha period.

The Marathi language was slowly being developed as a state language and the Modi script had been accepted as the script for important documents. Although the Marathi language of the 18th century was influenced by the Urdu and Persian language which was the court language of the Mughals, it continued to use more and more Sanskrit words in official documents. The conquest of the Maratha territory by the English did not change the cultural pattern. However the introduction of western ideas and institutions had influenced the important cities of Maharashtra namely Pune, Nasik, Nagpur, Kolhapur and the city of Bombay. The work of the Jesuit missionaries on the west coast in the 18th century had influenced the minds of the educated people of

Maharashtra and slowly the western culture and civilization was influencing the Maratha society.

1.4.8 Check your progress:-

Q 3. What were the social and cultural condition of the Maharashtra on the eve of the British Conquest ?

1.5 SUMMARY :

After the defeat of Mughal Emperor and the Nawab of Bengal and Oudh in 1764 and the Sultan of Mysore in 1799; Britishers defeated Maratha ruler with subsidiary alliance in 1818. Later on Peshwa, Bhosle and Holkar revolted against British rule except Shinde and Gaikwad. At the same time Maharashtra's Economic Condition was backward. Peshwas collected high revenue after subsidiary alliance. Social condition of Hindu and Muslim became miserable, because of casteism it was divided into number of units. People were poor and ignorant villages were self sufficient.

1.6 QUESTIONS :

1. Discuss the Political condition of Maharashtra before the British conquest.
2. Evaluate the economic conditions in Maharashtra before the British conquest.
3. Tress the socio-cultural conditions in Maharashtra before the British conquest.

NEW INFLUENCE AND TRANSITION UNDER THE BRITISH RULE- I

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Land Tenures
- 2.3 Revenue settlement and administration
- 2.4 Revenue collection during last days of Peshwaship
- 2.5 Transition under the British Rule.
- 2.6 Education and the Press
- 2.7 Summary
- 2.8 Questions

2.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1 To understand Land Tenures.
- 2 To observe revenue settlement and administration.
- 3 To trace the transition under the British Rule.
- 4 To study the Introduction of New pattern of Education.
- 5 To know the introduction of Press.

2.1 INTRODUCTION :

Basically Englishmen were traders, later on they became rulers. They were imbued with the modern ideas of humanism, Liberalism and scientific outlook. They allowed to continue the old land tenures for sometimes. The Marathas were following the system of Malik Amber in revenue settlement. Land was classified and measured and tax was fixed periodically. Revenue was collected by village headman Patil, Patil, Kulkarni, Deshmukh, Deshpande etc.

Britishers followed the Rayatwari system in Maharashtra. Land-tax was high and ryat had to incur debts which ruined the peasantry.

According to term 'Whiteman's Burden' Lord Elphinstone took interest in giving education to native people. Christian Missionaries had already started the work of learning regional languages and Sanskrit.

Charter Act of 1813, and Bombay Native Education Society gave boost to education in Bombay and Maharashtra.

There were two groups of learning. One was the oriental learning and other was western learning. The Charter Act. of 1853 and 'Wood's Despatch provided for the expansion of education in India.

Because of Western Education many public spirited men like Jagannath Shankar Sheth, Janshetji Jeegibhoy, Jambhekar, Lokahitavadi started journalism for awakening of mass people.

2.2 LAND TENURES :

The collapse of the Maratha Power was a sad event in the life of the people of Maharashtra. They had experienced the vicissitudes of political fortunes. The disaster of the Panipat (1761) was still fresh in the memory of the old generation. The new generation however had not forgotten the good old days of expansion of Maratha Power. Their armies were marching throughout India. The army of the Peshwa was defeated and the people were silenced for sometime.

The East India Company in their hour of victory did not perpetrate any atrocities on the people. That was the practice of the victors of the Medieval Age. These Englishmen though basically traders, merchants and soldiers of the Company were imbued with the modern ideas of humanism, Liberalism and Scientific outlook. They championed the ideas of 'Free Trade', 'Western Learning' and the 'Whiteman's Burden'. They were obsessed with the belief that the people of the East are unfit for self rule, their religion is mere superstition and they lack spirit of nationalism as understood in the West.

The Company was fortunate to have at that time a band of brilliant men in their service. They carried out their duty with a sense of mission but could not rise above their low objective of colonial exploitation and denied rights and privileges which their own people demanded in their home country. We shall now attempt to describe their efforts to fashion the Indian people according to the ideals envisaged by them during the transition under their Rule.

We shall study the first two topics in this unit namely (1) Land Tenures and Revenue Settlement and (2) Education and the Press. Before describing the new influence and transition under the new rulers it would be instructive to give a brief account of the pattern generally followed by the Marathas upto the end of their rule.

2.2.1 Main features of the Maratha system of Land Tenures

There were two systems of Land Tenures and Revenue Settlement followed by the Marathas, the one was for their home territory and the other for other lands. They termed the former as 'Swarajya' and the latter as 'Samrajya'. We are not concerned with territories outside Maharashtra. Prof R.V.Oturkar has provided us with useful information on this subject.

(1) The Todarmal system modified by Malik Amber for Nizamshahi of Ahmednagar in the 17th century was adopted with slight changes to meet the needs of time.

(2) The emphasis was on safeguarding the interest of the cultivator as he was regarded as the backbone of the national economy.

(3) Land - Tenures were divided into two broad categories i.e. (a) 'Thal' land and (b) 'Watans'. The land cultivated by original settlers was known as 'Thal' land and the tax free land granted by the king in recognition of the services to the State was known as 'Watan'. This was prized land tenure as it was hereditary and carried many benefits and high status.

(4) Miras and Upari – Lands was another classification for the purpose of revenue collection. Land assigned by the State to the Original settlers was known as 'Miras' whereas land assigned to new settlers for cultivation was known as 'Upari' land. Usually the new settlers were given fallow, unused or waste land for cultivation. They would lose their lease-hold if they could not make satisfactory payment to the state. They were regarded as tenants at will whereas the Mirasdars were treated with respect as they had the responsibility to pay the revenue for the whole village or villages under their charge.

(5) The Jagir system was discouraged by Chhatrapati Shivaji but during the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu this system became popular. In fact it became an instrument of territorial expansion as the Jagirdars were allowed to collect 'Chouth' and 'Sardeshmukhi' on behalf of the king in territories outside Maharashtra. In Maharashtra itself the Jagirdars had civil as well as political responsibility.

2.3 REVENUE SETTLEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION:

As already mentioned above the Marathas followed the time-honoured Malik Amber System of revenue settlement. Land was classified and measured and the land tax was fixed periodically. The Maratha government was more concerned with more yields from the fields and extensive cultivation. It helped the cultivators during bad seasons by remission of taxes and offering "tagai" or loans to tide over difficulties.

The administration of revenue was handled competently by the village headman and the accountant known as Patil or Patel and Kulkarni respectively. The district level officers were 'Deshmukh' and 'Deshpande' who in turn were under the control of the 'Sarsubah' equivalent, to a provincial governor. The financial transactions were supervised by the finance minister or 'Phadnis'.

The farmers in their villages also had to pay in kind for the services rendered to them by the village social servants called 'Balutedars' and 'Alutedars'. This was an integral part of the village economy.

2.4 REVENUE COLLECTION DURING LAST DAYS OF PESHWASHIP :

Bajirao II the last Peshwa was in dire need of the funds to raise an army to fight the company's forces. He resorted to farming of land-taxes. It meant he offered the commission to collect taxes to private agents who would make the highest bid. No doubt huge amounts were collected but it ruined most of the farmers in Maharashtra.

2.5 TRANSITION UNDER THE BRITISH RULE :

The final victory of the East India company was a foregone conclusion as the Maratha Chiefs at Nagpur, Baroda, Indore and Gwalior had already accepted the subsidiary alliance with the company. The problems of peace were many the private treasure of the Peshwa had to be discovered and seized to prevent him from further mischief. The Company's officers were anxious to under take that activity as they would be rewarded with a portion of the hidden wealth either from the Peshwa or his protégés. Captain Robertson and Colonel Protter found gold 'Mohars' and cash worth several millions. The temptation was too great. Briggs and Rind two junior officers had a scuffle over the discovery of Peshwas's fabulous wealth.

Professor R.D. Choksey has described the sorry state to convey idea that the new rulers had to discipline themselves before they could establish their authority over the defeated enemy.

2.5.1 Work of reconstruction

The gains of the military victory had to be prudently consolidated. The new rulers could not allow their preconceived ideas and prejudices about the fallen enemy to colour their vision of strong and stable government in an alien country. They experienced many handicaps. They came from a distant land, they did not know the language of the people. They represented a trading company but they had to tackle the problems of an agrarian economy. Mountstuart Elhinstone who was a Company

commissioner of the Bombay Deccan led a team of his dedicated officer to act with vigour and firmness. He exercised considerable restraint and avoided repressive measures. He devoted much of his time as a Governor of Bombay from 1819 to 1827 to Land Revenue settlement, Education and Law and Administration.

We shall now discuss Land Revenue settlement and Education in this lesson and Law and Administration along with other two topics of this unit in the next lesson.

2.5.2 Land Revenue Settlement

The new rulers had to give priority to the settlement of land tenures and revenue collections as the people of Maharashtra as in other part of India mainly depended on agriculture.

The success in this regard would determine the measures that could be contemplated in accordance with current ideas about humanism, liberalism and modern science. Some of the guiding principles for the programme of reconstruction were as follows:-

(1) The old land tenures would be allowed to continue for sometime.

(2) The model of Permanent settlement of revenue was not to be adopted. The Madras Model of Ryatwari adopted by Thomas Munro was to be followed with changes needed in the particular condition of Maharashtra.

(3) The Company's Government believed that the English officials were competent and not corrupt whereas the Indian revenue officials of the old regime were clever only in misappropriating the Government collections. Hence, their salaries should be kept low and they should be vigilantly watched.

(4) The Western ideas of land tenure and right to the property should be applied in determining the ownership of land.

(5) While assessing the land-revenue the rent of lands not sown by the farmer was to be deducted as lands which were not actually ploughed. The loss of crop of one year was to be regarded as compensated to the 'ryat' by the advantage of another year. In case of general stress and pressure a general relief was to be granted to the 'ryat'.

2.5.3 Administration of the revenue matters

The regime made vigorous attempts to centralise resources. The officers looked at the farmers with mistrust and suspicion. Hence while fixing the rate of land-tax there was over assessment which created tension among the cultivators and unrest everywhere. It was not because of malice or ill-feeling towards the people but it was the result of misunderstanding the complex system of land - tenures and assessment

in Maharashtra during the previous regime of the Marathas. The English officers got confused with the system of identical rights in land. For property became simple and homogenous and land was regarded as a factor of production. The land revenue system of the Marathas applied the squeeze on the Mirasdars and the jagirdars that is the upper strata of the land holders whereas the Ryatwari system of fixing the rate sapped the energy of the ryat and in many cases they had to incur debts.

Remission of land taxes during bad seasons was a time honoured system. The English authorities however were obsessed with the idea that the Indian employees in the Revenue department need not be paid more; they must be supervised more. Thus their recommendations of granting remissions were treated with distrust. In 1824 when there was a famine, the Deccan Commissioner instructed the collectors as under.

“.... If the crop of one of his (ryats) field is only indifferent and the other field for want of rain has been left fallow, remission shall be given in full for the latter. But should the crop of one field have been good and the other adjoining field have been left waste for the foraging of cattle or in consequence of mere neglect or contumacy, he should be made to pay for it as far as his ability will permit.

2.5.4 Inam Commission

The Company's tax-collectors gained more confidence with the passage of time. The depression period from 1820 to 1850 passed off without any major peasant rebellions. The trading Company was obviously more concerned with cash-crops and therefore wanted more land for cultivation of sugar cane, cotton and such other crops. The Watanders therefore preferred to pay money in lieu of service to the Government. The Revenue Department had to be paid out of the revenue from hereditary watans. The Government therefore instituted an enquiry of the titles of the “Inamdars” in the 1850s. Many Inamdars were dispossessed of their lands for want of written evidence.

2.5.5 Evaluation of the Company's Ryatwari System

Transition from freedom to colonial rule of British people was bound to be painful. The nature also was not favourable both to the new rulers and their subjects in Maharashtra. There was a bad season in 1818-1819 and drought in 1820-1821. The periods of depression was followed a cholera epidemic. The ryat was completely exasperated. R.D.Choksey writes “Remissions were yearly in demand. The assessment was anything but a success”.

The ignorance of the hereditary rights and the over enthusiasm to bring more land under cultivation created a sense of insecurity. The hereditary revenue collectors knew the ryat as they lived among them.

The white saheb wanted more collection of revenue. The Company's demand for cash crops favoured the rise of money lenders and lawyers as land litigation was to be a routine affair which ruined the peasantry

2.5.6 Check your Progress:-

Q. 1. Write in brief 'Land tenures and revenue settlement' new transition under the British rule.

2.6 EDUCATION AND THE PRESS :

The new influence of the British rulers was clearly perceptible in the sphere of Education and the Press. The officers of the Company were imbued with liberalism and humanism and wanted to translate them into action to the extent possible on a restricted scale. Mountstuart Elphinstone was an outstanding example of the noble spirit during the transitional period. He was governor of Bombay Presidency from 1819 to 1827. He considered that it was easy to rule ignorant people under his charge but in the long run it would be benevolent to educate and enlighten them even of the risk of losing the Empire. He was aware of the risks and shortcomings of the situation. He took great care to stop the Christian Missionaries from their proselytizing activities. He restrained his officers from treading on the susceptibilities of the Maratha people especially in religious matters.

2.6.1 Education

The American Christian Missionaries had managed to enter India and they had undertaken the work of learning regional languages and Sanskrit. In 1815 a Hindu boys school was started by the American Mission in Bombay. It was the first school started on Western lines. They also opened schools for boys and girls at Bankot and Harne in Kokan. They had done the ground work for providing facilities for education on Western pattern.

2.6.2 Charter Act of 1813

The charter Act of 1813 provided for a small amount "for the revival and promotion of knowledge of science among the inhabitants of the British Empire". Thus a small beginning was made by the Company's Government for the education of people in Bengal and other parts of the Empire including Bombay. As already mentioned above the Christian Missionaries had started schools in Bombay and other parts of Maharashtra before Mountstuart Elphinstone assumed the Governorship

of Bombay. He wanted to move cautiously in introducing Western learning. In 1820 'Sanskrit Pathashala was established in Pune mainly due to his efforts. He asked the district collectors to collect data on the need and facilities available for starting Primary Schools with Government assistance in areas under their jurisdiction. The reports could be compiled only in 1832, Elphinstone had already gone back to England five years before that.

2.6.3 Role of Bombay Native Education Society

This was a non-Government body but most of the Government officials, the chaplain of Bombay, the clergy and businessmen from Bombay came together to establish this Society. It was inaugurated by Mountstuart Elphinstone in August 1820. It was named 'Bombay Native Education Society. It raised contribution for providing assistance to the existing schools, publishing school text-books and starting new schools. The Court of Directors of the East India Company allotted \$5000 (Appr. Rs. 50,000/-) to the Society for printing of books and awarding merit scholarships to students of those schools. The Society continued functioning for about 16 years and then had to wind up for want of funds in 1836.

Hindshala school text books Society was established under the Chairmanship of Elphinstone. The Society owned a lithopress and printed school text books in Marathi. He carried Marathi books with him when he returned home. His zeal for educating the people of the Bombay Presidency was great but he displayed greater statesmanship in pleading with the Company's Directors to start a college in Pune and institute 'Dakshina' scholarship for the 'traditional learning'. He wanted to preserve the records of the erstwhile Maratha rulers. Grant Duff, a true disciple of this scholar-administrator wrote 'The History of the Marathas' and published the same in England at his own cost.

2.6.4 Education, with Government aid

After the passage of Charter Act of 1813, the Company's directors wanted to decide the type of education to be imparted to the Indian people and the medium of instruction. There were two groups; one favoured the oriental learning and Sanskrit and Persian languages, the other group wanted Western learning and science through English medium to be propagated. They were known as Orientalists and Anglicists. Elphinstone favoured the latter view. On March 7, 1835 Government General William Bentinck decided on the recommendation of Lord Macaulay to Promote European literature and science through 'English medium'.

Charter Act of 1853 provided for the expansion of education in India. Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of control sent a comprehensive Educational Dispatch on July 17, 1854. This is known as 'Wood's Dispatch'. He wanted the promotion of Western science and literature in India. The vernacular or regional languages should be developed and English medium should be provided only if demanded by the people. A department of public instruction was set up. The first Director of public Instruction for Bombay was appointed in 1855 and University of Bombay founded in 1857.

2.6.5 Medical Education

Mountstuart Elphinstone during his tenure of eight years as Governor of Bombay could not do much but he created a favourable climate for promoting western science. The establishment of Elphinstone College in 1828 was a tribute to the popular Governor paid by the people of Bombay. His example inspired an assistant surgeon to the Bombay establishment Dr. John Maclaron. He established in 1827 a Native Medical School in Bombay to impart instruction in Western Medical Science in Marathi. He got six books translated into Marathi on various aspects of health care. He secured the necessary permission from the Directors of the Company. The experiment failed and the school had to be closed down in 1832.

In March, 1835 Sir Robert Grant became the Governor of Bombay Presidency. He took up the cause of medical education. He held long discussion with the Indian leaders among whom Jagannath Shankar Sheth, Framji Cowasji, Sir Jamshetji Jeejibhoy were prominent. He also consulted Dr. Moreland and other English doctors. Sir Robert Grant died suddenly in 1838 but Jagannath Shankar Sheth and others pursued his goal and founded the Medical College in November 1, 1845 and named it after Robert Grant the late Governor.

2.6.6 Role of the Christian Missionary

Although much could not be accomplished in the transitional period of two decades after the end of Maratha power, the new rulers set the pace for the modernization of Maharashtra. Mountstuart Elphinstone and his successors created a favourable climate for the western learning and science to grow. The American and Scottish Missions evinced remarkable energy in educating the people of Bombay Presidency. Their interest was however spreading Christianity. The efforts of the Company's administrators and the Christian Missionaries however fired many public spirited men like Jagannath Shankar Sheth, Sir Jamshetji Jeejibhoy and social reformers like Bal Shastri Jambhekar, Gopal Hari Deshmukh (Lokhitavadi) and others to welcome the change.

2.6.7 The Press

The new spirit of enquiry was no where more evident than in the field of providing information to the reading community and awakening eager attention among the masses of people to receive education it should be borne in mind that the people of Maharashtra before the British Rule were not devoid of learning. The oral tradition of education was well established what was lacking was the availability of written material in the form of printed books, news papers and journals.

2.6.8 Printing Press

The American Mission set up a printing press at Bhendi Bazar in Bombay in 1813. Thomas Graham was the manager. He printed books in Marathi and Gujarathi with a view to propagating Christianity. The Americans also set up Lithopress at Harne in Ratnagiri district. In the American Press at Bhendi Bazar a Bhandari youth Ganpat Krishnaji learnt the technique and opened his own press at Bori Bandar. He printed ephemeris (panchang) and religious books in Marathi and Gujarathi. The Brahmins would not touch the printed books for fear of getting contaminated by the printed ink mixed with animal fat. Ganpat substituted ghee for the fat and made moulds for the types himself. His example was followed by others.

2.6.9 Journalism

The East India Company of England had established its political authority in Bengal in the middle of the 18th century. Many British journalists published weeklies or monthlies and expressed their opinions on the current topics. In Bombay the 'Telegraph', 'Courier', 'Bombay Gazettee' 'Bombay Times' and the 'Times of India' had been in circulation among the English reading public but there were no Marathi periodicals. The first Anglo-Marathi periodical was edited and published by Bal Gangadhar Shastri Jambhekar better known as Balshastri Jambhekar in 1832. It was modelled after the Anglo Bengali periodical 'Samachar Darpan' which appeared in 1818. The name of the Anglo-Marathi periodical edited by Balshastri was 'Mumbai Darpan'. It opened the way for a whole series of periodicals, magazines and books in the next two decades. The first printed Marathi monthly was edited and published by Raghoba Janardan Gavankar - Vasaikar in 1840. In 1841 Govind Vithal alias Bhau Mahajan published his weekly 'Prabhakar'. This weekly was issued every Sunday and it held the central stage.

2.6.10 Important role of the news paper and periodicals

The Weekly 'Prabbakar' became more popular when Gopal Hari Deshmukh (Lokahitavadi) published a series of a hundred letter called

“Shatapatre” critical of the orthodoxy of the Brahmins and evil practices in the Hindu Society. Bhau Mahajan also edited and published a low-priced weekly ‘Dhumketu’ to compete with Bhavani Vishwanath Kanades ‘Vartamanpatra Deepika’ written in lively scintillating style to expose evil practices in the society. Bhau Mahajan wanted to present stream of thoughts even on such sensitive matters as conversion to Christianity. He showed great courage to allow Baba Padamnji, the famous compiler of dictionary and a literary personality who had embraced Christianity, to explain his position through the columns of ‘Dhumketu’.

The efforts of Balshastri Jambhekar to enlighten the people were ably undertaken by Bhau Mahajan in his monthly journal ‘Digdarshan’. This magazine provided knowledge on many subjects. It was a monthly encyclopaedia and the objective was to create a sense of enquiry among the readers. In 1854 he started a quarterly magazine ‘Dnyanadarshan’. The mouthpiece of Christian Missionaries was ‘Dnyanodaya’ in Marathi which was started in 1842 and survived till the middle of the 20th century. There were some periodicals to counteract the Christian propaganda but such periodicals were short-lived. The focus of Marathi journals and periodicals was on spreading knowledge and also enlightening the Government on matter of public interest.

2.6.11 Freedom of the Press.

Before 1818 many English journals conducted by Englishmen freely criticized the Company’s officers. The Supreme Court of the Company in Bengal checked such criticism through English journals issued from Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. In 1835 Sir Charles Metcalf who held office of Governor General granted freedom of the Press which continued for the next forty years or so. In the first fifty years under British Rule and educated middle class in Maharashtra concentrated on social matters. They admired the Western Science and literature. They hardly criticized the foreign government.

2.6.12 Check your Progress:-

Q.2. State the important role played by western education and press

2.7 SUMMARY :

After the end of Marathi power, the new rulers started their new administrative policy in land revenue matters and also set the pace for the modernization of Maharashtra. Mountstuart Elphinstone and his successors created Scottish Missions evinced remarkable energy in educating the people of Bombay presidency. The American Mission set up a printing press at Bhendi Bazar in Bombay in 1813 and printed books in Marathi and Gujarati. For providing information to the reading community and awakening mass people Marathi journals and periodicals were started. They were spreading knowledge and also enlightening the government on matter of public interest.

2.8 QUESTIONS :

1. Give an account of Land tenures and land revenue Settlement during the British rule.
2. Assess the important role played by western education and press on the eve of the British rule.
3. State the important role played by western education and press

NEW INFLUENCE AND TRANSITION UNDER THE BRITISH RULE II – II

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Law and 'Administration'
- 3.3 Transport and Communication
- 3.4 Christian Missions : Encounter with Christianity
- 3.5. Summary
- 3.6 Question

3.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1) To provide the students with a brief insight of law and administration of British East India Co. in Maharashtra
- 2) To understand the Transport and Communication system.
- 3) To know the important role played by the Christian Missions and encounter with Christianity.

3.1 INTRODUCTION :

After the fall of Marathas, the East India co. gained a lot of territory. They became powerful and gradually became active in administrative affairs of the Maharashtra (i.e. in Bombay Presidency). They introduced several changes from time to time. Several Governors were also responsible for tackling these issues. Lord Cornwallis the first Governor General laid the foundation of law and administration in India in (1786-93). The new influence of modern ideas and the spirit of liberalism made them work out plans for better administration of justice and also provide better means of the transport and communication. The non-government Western Christian Missionary of America and Scotland worked for the social welfare of down trodden and unprivileged people.

3.2 LAW AND ADMINISTRATION :

3.2.1 The British law system in England :

The Englishmen had unwritten constitution but the decisions of the courts and the Common Law had given them a highly developed legal system. There was well organized machinery for enforcement of laws and a body of professional lawyers to help the courts to interpret the laws. There were settled legal procedures and the people know where to file their cases in the first instance and where to appeal.

The system of laws and the legal procedures followed in Maharashtra as in other parts of India were rudimentary.

3.2.2 The Hindu law system prevailing in Maharashtra

The Hindu Law books based on Manu-smriti provided for unequal justice but the Panchayat system had drawn the attention of Mountstuart Elphinstone. The inequality of justice in the Hindu Community was based on caste-considerations but the prevalent laws in England were equally bad and as severe as the criminal law of the Muslim rulers. Sir Spenser Walpole has criticized the whole system. He points out that members of Parliament could make any offence a capital felony. A man stealing forty shillings could be awarded death penalty.

3.2.3 Code Elphinstone

Mountstuart Elphinstone when he was a commissioner for Deccan had come across many difficulties in the administration of the revenue system and administration. When he became the Governor in 1819 he wanted to establish "Rule of Law", the proud legacy of Englishman, in the foreign land under his charge that is Maharashtra. He wanted to check the power of money and high birth. He appointed a senior officer Mr. Borradiere to prepare a catalogue of decisions given by the (learned men) in Hindu Law in cases referred to them by the courts and the statements of the witnesses regarding the customs as well as the caste records in the books. Mr. Borradiere was to be advised by the 'Sadar Adalat'(Court of Appeal in civil and criminal cases as organized by Lord Cornwallis) in the compilation of the records.

Elphinstone directed the, committee set up for this purpose with Mr. Steele as its secretary to scrutinize not the question of the doctrine contained, in a particular law-book but to ascertain and concentrate attention on the degree of esteem in which it was held by the common people. He wanted a concise digest of these matters.

The Committee in association with the Sadar Adalat compiled as Code of Regulations in 1827. It came to be known as Code Elphinstone

and became the Law. It was published on January 1, 1827 and contained 26 Regulations as follows.

Preliminary = 1; Civil Justice Regulations = 9
 Criminal Justice Regulations = 5; Revenue Board
 Regulations = 6; Military Regulations = 1;
 Miscellaneous Regulations = 1; Total 26.

This code remained, in operation from 1827 to 1835 and thereafter it was modified to suit the changing circumstances.

3.2.4 Administration of Law and Justice

As already referred to above Lord Cornwallis had, set up a machinery to enforce law and order in Bengal during his tenure as Governor-General. According to the old practice revenue collectors of districts were empowered to preside over civil and revenue courts. They were allowed to exercise magisterial functions including administration of criminal justice. Under the influence of Cornwallis Code the collectors were relieved of judicial duties and the civil courts were, placed under District Judge. City courts and District Courts were established each presided over by an English Judge to deal with civil and revenue matters.

3.2.5 Comments :

In the initial period that is from 1818 to 1828 the attention of the rulers was more on the maintenance of peace and order in the large Presidency of Bombay. Besides Maharashtra it covered parts of Gujarat and Karnatak. The systems and practices that were followed in the Botany island and the port of Surat, the two big centers of trade and commerce of the Company were kept as models especially for urban areas like Pune. In the rural areas they were more concerned with litigations and problems concerning revenue collections. The troops of the Company were kept in readiness to meet any contingency. The new laws, law courts and the general administration were all geared up to maintain peace and order.

3.2.6 Check your progress:-

Q.1 Write in Brief New influence and Transition in law and administration under the British Rule.

3.3 TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION :

3.3.1 Introduction of New Techniques in Transport

The wind of change began to blow over the Maratha country when the new rulers began to introduce new techniques and sophisticated means of transport and communication. England had reveled in the new confidence when Industrial Revolution began in England in the middle of the 18th century. England had emerged victorious from the Napoleonic wars in Europe and had become the undisputed “mistress of the seas”. England began to stabilize her position after defeating Napoleon and a treaty with her old colonies in America that is the U.S.A. The Steamship, railways and postal services made great strides in the home country along with expansion of industrial products. The new rulers therefore started sharing some of the benefits of their inventions, discoveries and new techniques with their subjects in Maharashtra, always keeping in view the prospects of commercial profits and consolidation of their political power.

3.3.2 Shipping:

English and American inventors and engineers had successfully harnessed steam power to propel ships and carriages. Steam-boats and locomotives had become a reality in Europe and America by the end of the first quarter of the 19th century. Navigation was in a primitive stage in India. However the ship “Trimali’ built by Wadia brothers In Bombay in 1817 had clearly demonstrated what the Indians could accomplish even with the old techniques. Incidentally this is the only ship preserved by the British Government in the naval dockyards at Portsmouth (England) as the artifact of the 19th century craftsmanship.

It used to take a months time for a vessel or a ship with sails from London to Bombay. In 1828 the first steam-ship arrived in Bombay Port. Earl of Clare, Governor of Bombay was the first governor to arrive in Bombay by a steam-ship in 1831. It became convenient for the British rulers to establish speedy contacts with Eden and other middle-eastern ports because of steam-ships. Bombay acquired a pre-eminent position not only in the Western Coast but also became a great centre of trade and commerce after the introduction of steam-ships.

3.3.3 Road Transport :

A network of road transport and maintenance of roads in good repair was absolutely necessary for movement of troops, military goods and wheeled carriages. The Deccan plateau posed many difficulties in linking the cities and important towns with Bombay, the headquarters of

the Presidency the Sahyadri mountain stood as a great barrier between the Konkan and the main land of Maharashtra.

In 1824 the commissioner of the Bombay Deccan called for the opinion of collector of Ahmednagar regarding the opening of Thal or Pimpri Ghat for road transport. The Commissioner of Pune was also interested in the building of a new road from Kalyan to the Thal Ghat and also showed keen interest in the construction of roads in the vicinity of Dhulia. More than twenty-passes in the Sahyadri could be used to connect Konkan with the rest of Maharashtra by construction of roadways. Important passes in the Ghats are Par, Malsej, Diva, Ramghat, Nana, Thal, Bor and Balaghat. The Commissioner of Pune was more interested in the Thal and Bor Ghats for vehicular traffic.

The repairs and maintenance of the existing roads was also important. The roads in the rainy season with big pot-holes were of little use. The mending of roads, metalled roads with the use of tar which had been in vogue in Europe was a far cry. The Bombay Government however could do very little to improve the condition. The military insisted on quick supply of goods for its use and also demanded services of men to carry headloads and cartloads of their material.

3.3.4 Railway:

In the home country of the British rulers steam propelled 'Rocket' had made a successful run in 1830. In period of the next ten years about 800 mile-long rail-roads were built in England. The railway service became a reality in England. Most of the European countries followed England's example. The business community in Bombay was enthusiastic for such a revolutionary transport. However the British Government was not enthusiastic about it. The Government thought in terms of profit and loss. They also hesitated to make heavy investments in this adventure. In the 1840 Jagannath (Nana) Shankar Sheth and other businessmen seriously mobilised public opinion and opened talks with some British industrialists. They formulated plans and brought pressure on the Bombay Government to start a Railway Company as speedy movement of goods and passengers by railway trains would be of immense help to the people of India and also to the East India Company's Government. In 1843 "Great Eastern Railway Company was established in Bombay. Among the promoters the outstanding businessmen were Nana Shankar Sheth and Jamshetji Jeejibhoy.

The demand for railway in India took a concrete shape when sir Erskin Perry the Chief Justice of the Company's Supreme Court assumed leadership in presenting a memorandum to the Government of the E.I. Company on July 13, 1844. This attracted the attention of British

investors and statesmen. The investors wanted to utilize huge amounts which were lying idle with them and the British statesmen wanted to use rail-roads to fortify the expanding Empire in India. English capitalists established 'Great Indian Peninsular Railway' incorporated in England. They brought pressure on the hesitating Directors of the East India Company, the rulers of India and secured their assent for starting such a venture. The Government granted permission to construct rail-road from Bombay to Kalyan a distance of 57 km (35 miles) in July 1848. The actual construction work started on October 31, 1850.

As no Indian contractor could undertake such a big work the famous Fabil and Fowler Company of England took up the work. The rail-road between Bombay and Thane was completed on August 16, 1853 under the able supervision of the famous engineer James Berkeley.

The section between Thane and Kalyan was completed on May 1, 1854. G.D. Madgaonkar has given the details of the historic journey of Lord Elphinstone (nephew of Mountstuart Elphinstone) the Governor of Bombay with officials, businessman and prominent citizens on the 28 wagon train pulled by a steam-engine.

Later on plans for linking Pune with Bombay by rail-road was undertaken. As already stated linking the 'Konkan' with the 'Desh areas even by roads was a formidable task; to construct railroad by cutting a number of tunnels was a stupendous performance. The challenge of the Bor Ghat was ably met by English engineers, technicians with full co-operation from Indian labourers. The first railway train from Bombay arrived at Pune on March 23, 1864. A new era in transport and communication began. The volume of trade and commerce between Bombay and Pune increased tremendously. Before the construction of railway, the movement of goods was slow. Pune was then regarded as a big "Port" for loading and unloading of goods from Ahmednagar and Satara. The rail link between Bombay and Pune obviously changed the whole Scenario. In the beginning doubts were expressed by the business community in Pune that their interest would be ruined by such a trade link. They were proved wrong. In a matter of few years Pune and neighbouring cities and towns began to make a roaring business thanks to quicker movement of goods.

3.3.5 Communication :

During the Maratha period communication between the Peshwa and the Maratha chiefs was through couriers. Riders on the horseback with a security force were entrusted with the work. Correspondence between individuals living in different parts of Maharashtra was meagre. With the advent of the Englishmen the correspondence between Bombay

and England increased. The acquisition of power by the Englishmen in India gave impetus to correspondence both on the government level and among businessmen. The repairs to roads and laying of new roads to link many cities and towns and the publishing of periodicals increased correspondence among various sections of the community. Postal service on western lines was on the anvil. The introduction of Telegraph based on Morse Key revolutionized communication. It was the telegraph wire that did a great damage to the cause of the war of independence in 1857.

3.3.6 Check your Progress:-

2. Give an account of the British influence on transport and communication in Maharashtra

3.4 CHRISTIAN MISSIONS : ENCOUNTER WITH CHRISTIANITY :

The forcible conversion of the people of Goa and Bassein to Christianity by the Portuguese in their possession on the Western Coast of India in the 16th century had made many people flee from those territories. The Jesuits in the 16th century in the Portuguese possessions on the West Coast had struck terror into the hearts of the people in the neighbourhood of Goa. The Maratha Rule in the 17th and 18th centuries checked forcible conversions. The British had played safe and desisted from interfering in the religious matters of the people of Maharashtra. They wanted their Indian Soldiers to remain loyal to them and only interference in their social customs or religious matters meant a threat to their power.

3.4.1 Early Christian Missions

Early Christian Missionaries came to India along with foreign invaders i.e. Portuguese, British, French, Dutch to fulfill their religious needs . When they perceived the miserable condition of downtrodden in India, their missionary zeal could not remain quiet. They started helping needy and poor people in the society. They improved the condition of masses through education and health services.

They criticised Sati system , child marriage, infanticide, and other bad practices prevailed in the society. They started number of schools and provided useful knowledge. These were the general reforms of the missions. The Jesuits had propogated Catholicism and were satisfied

once the people accepted their religion. They left to their fate after conversion. They were boycotted by the Hindu community of which they were a part. These converts continued their old social customs.

The Protestant Missionaries could not do much in the territories ruled by the East India Company. William Carey who came to Bengal in 1793 was a member of the Baptist Missionary Society; Although he did not go to Maharashtra for his missionary work his influence was felt in Maharashtra because he had become a model for missionaries who came to Bombay Presidency in later years. He functioned from a Dutch factory at Serampur in Bengal. He had learned many regional languages including Marathi. He had printed and published an English-Marathi dictionary. He had translated a portion of the New Testament into Marathi as well as Bengali. The other Missionaries and the English rulers of Maharashtra saw the advantage of the knowledge of Marathi for different purposes which they pursued.

3.4.2 Missions in the 19th century

The Charter Act of 1813 was a landmark in the history of Maharashtra. The Company's government allowed Christian Missions to function in the territories ruled by it. A couple of American Missionaries had entered Bombay in the first decade of the 19th century. They were however sent packing by the English authorities. In 1813 the first Protestant Mission was that of the Americans. The English Methodist Missionaries came in 1817 followed by Anglican Church Missionaries in 1819. The Scottish Mission sent its followers in 1823 and the Irish Presbyterians arrived in 1841. Thus British and American Missionaries started their work. Their proselytising work was carried on with the work of educating the people. In order to establish contacts with the masses they had to learn the local languages. They established schools and colleges in cities and taught through English; they used Marathi medium in the rural areas.

Schools: The first Christian school for Hindu boys was opened in 1815. The American Mission opened the first school for girls in 1824. Mrs. M. Wilson opened six schools for Indian girls in 1829 and in 1840. She established five schools for high class Hindu girls in and around Pune. They prepared school reading books and printed them in their own presses. They translated many European books on Science and literature and also printed and published Bible in Marathi and Gujarati. They provided useful knowledge on many worldly and philosophical matters.

As Christian Missionaries they had to undertake the work of social service. They carried out that duty by establishing hospitals and providing

medical help. Service to suffering humanity was the goal before these Missionaries. Some of the scholarly missionaries like Dr. John Wilson and Lt. Col Vans Kennedy made in depth studies in Sanskrit and other literature. They also started newspapers to propagate their views on various matters.

3.4.3 Encounter with Christianity

In the wake of loss of political freedom by the people of Maharashtra, English rulers and Christian Missionaries were out to shape them according to the objectives envisaged by them. The rulers wanted to enforce law and order and demanded loyalty the Missionaries wanted to spread the message of Christ and promised Salvation. The masses of the people were confused by the activities of both.

3.4.4 Methods of the Missionaries

The methods of the 17th century Missionaries were more conciliatory than those of the 19th century. Fr. Roberto de Nobili of the 17th century was satisfied with Christianity in Indian form. According to the method of the 17th century a Christian should remain in Hindu Society but he should accept the Christian moral law and Christian teaching. The method of the 19th century Missionaries like Dr. Wilson was to westernize them. They criticized religion of the Hindus, Muslims and the Parsis. The 19th century Missionaries were obsessed with the idea that they carried a whiteman's burden to civilize all those who were non-white. They saw that Hindu religion was a 'system of error.' They attacked their customs and rituals and could not find any virtue in Hinduism. This was bound to provoke counter criticism and hostility towards the activities of the Missionaries.

3.4.5 Reactions and Progressive movements

The attack on religious sensitivities of the Hindus produced two different consequences. The progressive elements in the Hindu Society began to examine the religious doctrines and social customs. Dr. John Wilson called it a "system of error" and Mrs. M. Wilson a tissue of absurdities." According to her it was founded upon principles so base and so sinful that it perverts their understanding and destroys the best affections of their hearts.

A frontal attack on Hindu religion and social practices by over enthusiastic Missionaries aroused an equal and opposite reaction from orthodox Hindus. They had viewed the activities of the Missionaries with distrust. Vishnubuva Brahmachari and Vishnushastri Chiplunkar voiced their vitriolic criticism through the columns of news papers and open debates with Missionaries. (This is separately discussed in subsequent unit).

The activities of the Missionaries and their forceful arguments also made the progressive English-educated gentry like Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar, Lokhitavadi Gopal Hari Deshmukh and Dr. Atmaram Pandurang Tarkhadkar to think in terms of monotheism. “Paramahansa Sabha” and “Prarthana Samaj” were founded to present Hinduism in pretine pure form as was being done in Bengal by Ram Mohan Roy and Dayananda Saraswati in Gujarat and Punjab. (See unit regarding them)

3.4.6 Indologists

The contribution of the Missionary scholars and European researchers of Ancient Indian history, art and archaeology cannot be over-emphasised. Dr. John Wilson who carried on his researches in the Vedic literature wrote about Zoroastrians of India the Parsis. Lt. Col. Vans Kennedy published a treatise on Vedanta. Wilson Jones had translated into English Kalidasas famous drama “Shakuntala” H.T.Colebrook and H.H.Wilson had carried out studies in Sanskrit language and ancient Indian Culture, They stimulated Indian scholars to study their own history and culture.

The establishment of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society was another great factor in the awakening of spirit of enquiry among the citizen of Bombay. Dr. John Wilson was its president from 1835 to 1842. The growth of this Society brought the Indian Scholars from Bombay and Pune in contact with other scholars and gave them an opportunity for independent research. Bal Shastri Jambekar in the “Bombay Darpan” in 1836 expressed the hope that the membership of the Asiatic Society would not be denied to the native people.

The discovery of Ancient India’s glorious civilization and researches into vedic and Puranic Hindu religion gave the natives of Maharashtra a new sense of equality with other nations including their erstwhile rulers. The studies by Missionaries, British officials and the Indian scholar gave the native people a motive force of nationalism. The then leaders of Maharashtra while indulging in self-criticism began to find fault with the rulers and put a stubborn defence against the ridicule of their religion and social customs.

3.4.7 Check your Progress:-

Q. 3. Assessed the important role played by Christian Missionaries in the upliftment of masses.

3.5. SUMMARY :

In this lesson we have discussed Law and Administration, Transport and Communication and encounter with Christianity. Of course new influence was felt in every field where the British rulers and Christian Missionaries operated. The army was kept ready. Competent and dedicated British officers kept strict vigil, and Christian Missionaries eager to spread their religion served the ignorant and the poor. However Maharashtra did not meekly succumb to their arrogance. The risings of Ramoshis, Kolis and peasant revolts showed the chinks in the British armour. The Missionaries met their match in Vishnubva and Visnu Shastri. The Missionaries could hardly transform the Hindu Society. However it cannot be denied that the British rulers and Missionary Scholars created a new spirit of enquiry and modern nationalism in this ancient land.

3.6 QUESTION :

1. How did the British ruler introduced their law and administration in Maharashtra ?
2. Write in detailed about the British ruler improved the means of transport and Communication in Maharashtra?
3. Give an account of the works of Christian Missions?
4. Assessed the important role played by Christian Missionaries in the upliftment of masses.



BEGINNING OF REFORM AND RESISTANCE

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Reform from within Bal Gangadhar Shastri Jambhekar
- 4.3 Intellectual Resistance and economic nationalism.
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 Questions

4.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1) To understand reform from within, Bal Shastri Jambhekar.
- 2) To acquaint the student early intellectual resistance to British Colonial Rule.
- 3) To make them aware about the rise of Economic Nationalism.
- 4) To know the work of Bhaskar Tarkhadkar, Ramkrishna Vishwanath and Bhau Mahajan.

4.1 INTRODUCTION :

In this lesson we will discuss the thoughts and ideas put forward by educated middle class leaders from the city of Bombay in the first half of the 19th century. It must be remembered that Bombay was already enjoying a premier position in the East India Company's trade with the East. The contact with Western Civilization had given the inhabitants of the city of Bombay a new outlook and new interests which in some respects differed from those of the people in the rest of Maharashtra at the time of the British Conquest.

The contact with the Western thought and civilization had produced two streams of impulses one was to bring about social change and reform the society and bring it on level with the countries of the West. The second was to resist the foreign rule which exploited the people and resources of Maharashtra to enrich their home country and

consolidate their power to keep the Indians under their subjugation. The first category of people was represented by Bal Shastri Jambhekar and the other category was represented by Bhaskar Pandurang Tarkhadkar, Ramkrishna Vishwanath and Bhau Mahajan.

4.2 REFORM FROM WITHIN BAL GANGADHAR SHASTRI JAMBHEKAR [1812-1846] :

He was born at Deogad in the old district of Ratnagiri, now a part of present Sindhudurg district. Like his contemporaries Dadoba Pandurang and Bhau Mahajan he was educated at the Elphinstone Institute. As he began to learn more and more about Englishmen and their civilization he was inspired to advocate social reforms, like his counterpart in Bengal Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Soon he came to be regarded as the Father of Modern Marathi and the Pioneer of the Renaissance in Western India.

Jambhekar did not approve of the surrender of Ram Mohan Roy to the Western influence. He wrote in the Bombay Darpan with the love of general literature, he (Ram Mohan) indulged also in reflection on religious subjects, which induced him at last totally to forsake the faith in which he was born and to embrace Deism. This may sound strange as Jambhekar was closely associated with Bhau Mahajan (Govind Vitthal Mahajan) and Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar who showed inclination towards reforming Hinduism.

Jambhekar however did not favour obscurantism in religious matters. He wished to correct the ways of the die-hard reactionaries. He did not hesitate to oppose the activities of the Christian Missionaries whenever he thought that they were exploiting the weaknesses of the Hindus. In 1843 a Brahman boy of 18 Narayan Govind Paralikar, was converted to Christianity. He began to stay with Rev. Robert Nesbit. He also took his younger brother Sripat aged 12 with him. Narayan thought that as his brother stayed and ate with the Christian he would not be taken back into the Hindu society. Narayan's father wanted to take back his younger son with him. Rev. Nesbit was not willing to let him go. Bal Shastri Jambhekar sought the support of a very influential merchant Jagannath Shankar Sheth and they began to move in the matter, in spite of the opposition of another group of Brahmans supported by a wealthy merchant Seth Sakji Dadaji-Jambhekar took Sripat to Varanasi to perform the purification rites. After the return of Jambhekar with Sripat from Varanasi, the Brahman community declared boycott against Jambhekar, and Sripat was not fully accepted in Hindu Society. Jambhekar however did not revolt against his community. He had

attempted to restore a minor to his original faith till he attained majority. Jambhekar had to face the social boycott for about five years.

Another event which provoked the opposition of high classes of the Hindu Society was when he fearlessly explained the phenomenon of eclipse in terms of astronomical process. It was a stunning blow to the so-called traditional knowledge of the elites of the closed society. He knew that his boldness would incur their hostility. He was prepared for such bitterness and boycott. He was however not prepared to compromise his rationalism for the sake of their goodwill.

4.2.1 Jambhekar's Attitude towards Religion

Renaissance in Maharashtra and for that matter in the entire subcontinent of India, had to be rooted in the attitude towards religion. Any change in the ritual would mean a new way of thinking which had to get a favourable response. If there were to be opposition, even then, there was an attempt to mobilise the support by reasoning or an appeal to higher spiritual values. Balshastri Jambhekar did not wish to offend the religious faith of his fellowmen. He wished to remove some obvious absurdities and set the process of rational thinking in motion. He took a broad view of all religious faiths and maintained that the fundamental principles of all religions are the same. He did not wish to hurt the religious sentiments of the orthodox people. He was guided by Lord Krishna's message in the Gita i.e. 'It is better to die with one's faith' (sva dharme nidhanam sreyaha). He never doubted the existence of God Almighty. He nevertheless talked disparagingly of the priests reciting the religious formulae (mantras) without understanding their meaning. He insisted that everybody should know the meaning of the holy words uttered at the ceremonies. Otherwise the Sanskrit words become a barrier between the priest and the performer of a ceremony; simplification of the ceremonies he believed would remove many misconceptions.

4.2.2 Three-sided approach to Reforms

The distinction of planting the seeds of social reforms in Bombay and in Maharashtra goes to Bal Gangadhar Shastri Jambhekar. The reforms that he attempted were three-pronged 1) Religious, 2) Social and 3) Humanitarian. In the religious field he had attempted to instill rational approach among the priestly community. The social reforms that he attempted were by advocating widow- remarriage and better treatment to women. The humanitarian activities contemplated by him were of the nature of providing asylum to the socially condemned women. Jambhekar was not a revolutionary and his attempts in these three directions were not successful. He wanted to accomplish something to

improve the existing condition of the people of Maharashtra. The effective instrument for bringing about the change was his weekly “Darpan” and the monthly magazine “Digdarshan”. In this respect he was pioneer. His appeal might be limited only to the readers of his journals. The dynamic approach to reform the society that he initiated was of immense potential. His ideas about the condition of women and the absurdities associated with religion and the influence of superstitions appealed to many educated young men. They would not remain silent.

Jambhekar awakened a sense of enquiry among the Western educated gentry. He wanted them to lead the society as they were benefited by the new education and enlightenment. The Literary Society of Bombay established in 1804 by Sir James Mackintosh and incorporated into the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1830 had stimulated the intellectual life of Bombay. Jambhekar while appreciating the work of the foreign scholars and rulers to enlighten the people of Maharashtra wanted his countrymen to take more interest in that activity. He wrote in The Bombay Darpan, on May 7, 1836.

“We should be glad to see many of our countrymen as much interested in the antiquities of India, as the strangers, who have come to sojourn among us, and whose curiosity, industry, and research, are worthy of the highest commendation. As there cannot be a doubt that membership in the Branch Asiatic Society would not now be denied to intelligent and well instructed natives we indulge the hope that some will make it a matter of consideration”.

Jambhekar was intensely aware of the importance of new education. He was a distinguished educator. He was appointed Assistant Professor of Mathematics in Elphinstone College in Bombay and later on educational inspector in south Maharashtra. His study was not limited to his Subject only but he wanted to unravel so many mysteries. He marvelled at the profound store of knowledge in the European languages and he wanted to assimilate as much of it as was possible. He remained a diligent student throughout his short life of thirty-five years. He was highly impressed by the material progress and the intellectual attainments of the West and held Mountsuart Elphinstone in high esteem. His appreciation of Elphinstone is epitomised in his remark “India has not seen a great Statesman or more enlightened and liberal minded man than Elphinstone”. The remark does credit to both.

4.2.3 Check your progress:-

Q. 1 Evaluate the role of Bal Shastri Jambhakar.

4.3 INTELLECTUAL RESISTANCE AND ECONOMIC NATIONALISM :

The full title of the topic as noted at beginning of the lesson is 'Early intellectual resistance to British Colonial Rule and the rise of nascent economic nationalism. It would be instructive to get clear idea of the meaning of the terms used here. Intellectual resistance is the expression of opinions and arguments to point out defects or shortcomings of the rulers etc. Nationalism can be described as a strong feeling of oneness, togetherness, a sense of belonging to the people in a definite area or country, under the same government having a common history and heritage. An economic nationalism is thus a feeling of pride in the progress and prosperity and dejection or sorrow at its losses and failures.

Now colonial rule is not mere political and military domination like that of khaljis and the Tughluqs in the Medieval history of India. It may be described as a practice or system of government imposed on another country after military conquest or peaceful occupation. The rulers exploit the inhabitants and the natural resources of the subject country to subserve the interests of their mother country.

It will be clear from the above that the British rule in India was that of a colonial empire. A trading Company political and military ascendancy in India was bound to enrich itself and its mother country. The popular philosophy of 'Free Trade and 'Division of Labour' had helped the East India Company to consolidate its position in India. The British Crown used to revise the Company's Charter every 20 years, with progressive checks on its powers.

The people of Maharashtra did not feel the rigours and humiliations after the conquest as an enlightened governor like Mountstuart Elphinstone was at the helm of affairs of the Bombay Presidency. Things changed when Sir Robert Grant became the governor of Bombay and Lord Auckland succeeded Lord William Bentinck in 1836. Intellectual resistance began from that time.

4.3.1 Bhaskar Pandurang Tarkhadkar (1816-1847)

Among the first critics of the East India Company's Government in India were the British journalists themselves. Some press restrictions were imposed from 1823 to 1835. Sir Charles Metcalfe who was officiating as Governor-General of the Company made the press free of all restrictions. This freedom of the Press continued for the next forty years or so. The educated people in Bombay city availed themselves of that opportunity. Bombay city in 1816 had a substantial number of Europeans and the indigenous Christians. They numbered about 10%

of the total population of Bombay city which was 1,65,000 at that time. The Bombay Gazetteer was a weekly conducted by Englishmen. It was subsequently transformed into a daily. The liberal editor and publisher wanted Indians to voice their grievances if any through the columns of the Bombay Gazetteer. Bhaskar Tarkhadkar was one of those who availed himself of that opportunity and wrote under the pen-name of One Hindoo.”

Bhaskar was younger brother of Dadoba Pandurang which came to be known from a reference in the auto biography of D.P. Tarkhadkar. He was educated at the Elphinstone Institute like his brothers Dadoba and Dr. Atmaram. He did not enter Company Government Service but sought employment in the firm of Jamshetji Jeejibhai. He had a good command over English and could express his thoughts forcefully with complete ease in English. His writings revealed his analytical mind and an in-depth study of the subject he discussed. He wrote eight articles in the Bombay Gazetteer from July to October 1841 and created a sensation in Bombay.

Bhaskar wrote under the pen-name of one Hindoo. Then the assessment of the British rule was made by Hindoo-two, followed by Hindoo three and Hindoo four. In the article written by Hindoo-four the Company's government was praised and all that was written by the other 'Three Hindoos' was dismissed as non-sense. Then Bhaskar wrote sarcastically that Hindoo four should be ashamed to call himself a Hindoo. No son born of a Hindoo mother would be so mean and slavish to shower false praise on the rulers. In fact the writer (Hindoo four) was an Englishman who wanted to demolish the adverse opinion expressed by other 'Three Hindoos'. The English Community in Bombay brought pressure and the editor and publisher had to resign.

a) His Nationalistic Fervour

His eight articles are written with the single object of showing the true nature of the British rule. In one of his articles he remonstrated with James Mill for his derogatory remarks about Hindoos in his book 'History of British India' published in 1817 in England. James Mill had condemned the Hindoos as devoid of manliness and of a slavish mentality. He put the record straight.

b) His grievances against the British Rule

He made certain searching enquiries to find virtues of the Company's rule in India and found none. He examined the different claims made by the Company and scrutinized various aspects of the Company's government. He exposed the ugly features of their political and economic policies and trade practices.

He pointed out that the Company's Court of Directors and the British Government's Charter Acts lay down a policy but the authorities in India behave differently. They say that Company's Government should not interfere in the religious matters. They provide some amount for the education of the natives. Actually the money goes to the Missionary Schools and the work of proselytizing is indirectly encouraged.

The Company's claim that all measures are taken to promote the welfare of the people was hollow. The improvement in transport and communication was not for satisfying the needs of the people in the Presidency but roads and other facilities were provided to meet the needs of the military.

He was severe in his criticism about the conspiracy of the governor and the Resident at Satara in depriving the Raja of Satara Pratapsinha of his legitimate rights. The Directors of the Company allowed Raja Pratapsinha to exercise his power to decide the issue of adoption of his jahagirdars. The Governor Sir Robert Grant and Resident at Satara Charles Ovens managed to depose the Raja and sent him into exile.

He complained about the unnecessary Afghan War of 1838-39. The fear of the British Government about its expansionist policy caused Lord Auckland to interfere in the internal affairs of a neutral state of Afghanistan. The failure of his policy and the unprovoked war showed the British Government and the Company's Government in lurid light.

Bhaskar therefore summed up "We cannot look on *your* Government in any other light than the most bitter curse of God ever visited with such was his assessment of the Company's policies and actions. His observations regarding the Company's Government may sound audacious but the truth had to be told in an emphatic way which he continued to do.

Bhaskar compared the Company's Government with the Government of the last Peshwa and the Mughal rule. He said even with the plunder and loot the farmers were spared the agonies of losing their lands. The Mughal rulers might have imposed restrictions on the Hindus but they did not discriminate while offering government jobs to the Hindus. The administration of justice under the British rule is a travesty of justice.

c) Impoverishment of India

The economic nationalism of a kind was evident through his articles on the trading policy and practices of the company. He said the worst feature of their trading policy was discrimination against Indian goods and Indian traders. The rulers talk about 'Free Trade' when it suited their object. The imports into India from England are lightly taxed but the

Indian goods especially textiles are not allowed free movement into England as heavy custom duties were imposed.

Industrialised England did not encourage mechanisation of means of production in India. The company's Government had ruined handicrafts in the villages and dumped machine made goods into India. Many cultivators had lost their lands and craftsmen were thrown out of their jobs. The country was getting poorer every day.

Dadabhai Naoroji later on developed the 'Drain Theory'. While addressing a meeting of English elite in England in 1887; his subject was 'Englishman's duties to India'. He referred to the ground work that some Bombay economists like Bhaskar tarkhadkar had done which became very useful for his Drain Theory.

This brilliant spokesman of economic nationalism of India died very young. In the early decades of the Company's rule in Maharashtra people suffered silently. The Ramoshis, the Kolis and the Bhils rebelled. The need of the hour was not an armed resistance but resistance on intellectual plane. Bhaskar Tarkhadkar, Ramkrishna Vishwanath, Bhau Mahajan and Lokahitavadi tried to keep the flame of nationalism burning.

4.3.2 Ramkrishna Vishwanath

He was a contemporary of Bhaskar Tarkhadkar. His book, a monograph on "The Ancient and Modern condition of India and thoughts on future developments (Hindustanchi Prachin va Sampratchi Sthiti Va Pudhe kaya Honar Ya Vishayi Vichar in Marathi) is a source of information about the views of eminent thinkers of Bombay city on economic and political affairs of the Bombay Presidency and of India in general. The four economists mentioned in the volume edited by D.K.Bedekar are 1) Ramkrishna Vishwanath 2) Lokahitavadi Gopal Hari Deshmukh 3) Hari Keshavji Pathare and 4) Krishnashastry Chiplunkar.

Most of these scholars of Elphinstone Institute were influenced by the theories of Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham the utilitarian philosophy and the slogan of 'Free Trade' were reverberating in Europe and educated Indians were debating some of the aspects of those theories.

The influence of the ideas of John Stuart Mill on Ramkrishna Vishwanath is not evident for the simple reason that John Mill's 'Principles of Political Economy' was published in 1848 and Ramkrishna Vishwanath's monograph was published in 1843 in Bhau Mahajan's Prabhakar' Press.

Lokahitvadi's 'Laxmi Dnyan', Pathare's 'Deshavyavahara Vyavastha' and Krishnashastry's 'Arthashastrya Paribhasha' show how Adam Smith and Mill had influenced them. Ramkrishna Vishwanath had

an excellent grasp of the essential features of the colonial rule and there could be easily pinpoint the evils of the British Rule and put forward before the people his own ideas.

Ramkrishna Vishwanath was forthright in his assessment of the economic policy of the East India Company's Government in India. He condemns the colonial mentality of the British rulers. He cites the example of cotton purchases of cheaper rate in India and the sale of cotton cloth in India at exorbitant rates. He says the company purchases cotton at the rate of one anna for a pound of cotton which was equal to 1.25 pence of England's currency. After manufacturing cotton cloth it sold it at a little more than Rs. 2/- per pound (Note : old one anna was equal to 1.25 pence, 12 pence make one shilling and twenty shillings made one pound"). In weight one pound is equal to 0.454 kg. Thus in this example a twenty paise worth of cotton could fetch Rs. 8/- per kilo gram of manufactured cloth from that cotton.

a) Prosperity of England and Poverty of India :

In his monograph he states that prosperity of England depends on the sale of goods manufactured in England. The 'Industrial Revolution' had given an advantage to England over other European countries. England's colonies are captive markets for its manufacture. The British Government in India deliberately discourages indigenous industries. The Company's directors say Indian cotton had to be refined so that good cloth could be manufactured. The textile mills in the U.S.A. are functioning with the locally produced cotton and they do not send it to England for refinement.

The Company's Government has placed so many restrictions on the export of Indian goods. The Government imposes a heavy duty on Indian textiles which had a world market before the Company's rule. The same Company allowed imports from England without any duty. The market for British goods in India has ruined the Indian cottage industries and handicrafts.

b) Discrimination and exploitation

The Government, he says, has not only ruined the native handicrafts by importing machine made goods from England but has violated the provisions of the Charter Act of 1833. The Company has entered into an illegal trade in salt and opium. He also criticised the Government for discrimination of native in respect of recruitment to Government service and administration of justice. A white man was paid many times more salary than a native. He complained that the avenues for promotion for natives were blocked. He says, in the past a clerk in the Government service used to get Rs. 50/- per month, now he gets Rs. 12/- per month.

At this rate he would get RS. 5/- per month in the next few years. On the contrary, the salaries of the white men are progressively increasing. The Governor-General of the Company's Government is not satisfied with Rs. 40,000/- as his salary.

c) His remedy for economic malaise

Ramkrishna Vishwanath was not an arm-chair philosopher. He had travelled in the south and had learnt about the prospects of gold mining between North latitude 9 and 13. He exhorted his people to change their mentality and take up occupations which their forefathers had avoided due to prejudice. He wanted the people of Maharashtra to grow cotton on large scale. He advocated mechanization of industry to withstand the foreign competition. In order to achieve primacy in textile manufacture. Our people should first form an association and raise share capital. A single share may be of the value of Rs. 2000. If purchase of the full share was not possible members may be allowed to buy half a share or a quarter of a share.

A far-sighted economist and an ardent nationalist he wanted the people of Maharashtra to be self-dependent in industrial development. His nationalist fervour was evident when he condemned the colonial rule. However he was a constructive reformer. He wanted his people to be hearless and hard working. Little is known about his life but his book has let a rich heritage to posterity.

4.3.3 Bhau Mahajan (1815-1890)

His full name was Govind Vithal Mahajan but he was popularly known as Bhau Mahajan. His family's surname was Kunte. He hailed from Pen in the old Kolaba District which is now known as Raigad district. He was related to an aristocratic Chhatre family in Bombay. He spent his school days in the company of Bal Shastri Jambhekar and Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar. Kashinath alias Bapu Chhatre, the head of the Chhatre family died in 1830 and thereafter Bhau's economic difficulties started. After some interruption he joined the Elphinstone Institute in 1837 for his higher studies.

Bhau's academic career was less important than the special training in different fields that he had received at the house of Bapu Chhatre. He had employed the best talented men to impart instruction to his son in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic languages as well as musicians both for vocal and instrument music. Bhau had made the full use of that opportunity. He had mastery over Sanskrit and had assimilated the best features of the Indian tradition. He kept his mind open and never allowed any prejudice to cloud his vision. He was not overwhelmed by the evasive "blessings" of the British Rule. His penetrating mind tried to fathom the

realities of the colonial rule. He wanted to know the world as it was. He wanted to examine the prevailing theories and systems in Europe and especially in England. His breadth of vision and liberal attitude marked him out as an outstanding social reformer and a nationalist journalist.

a) Bhau Mahajan as a journalist

Among the pioneers of Marathi journalism of the first half of the 19th century Bhau Mahajan outshone the others. Bal Shastri Jambhekar had the distinction of having started the first Anglo Maratha weekly 'Mumbai Darpan'. The first Marathi monthly magazine was started by Raghoba Janardhan Vasaikar. The name of the Magazine was "Digdarshan" and Raghoba started publishing it on the Vijaydashmi Day in 1840. Bhau Mahajan regularly wrote in that Magazine. His idea about the role of journalism was however very broad based. When he started his Marathi Weekly 'Prabhakar' on 28 October 1841 he was full of enthusiasm to enlighten his readers on the events at home and abroad. Like Bal Shastri Jambhekar he wanted to provide his readers with an possible information on physical and social sciences. His approach however was not that, of a school teacher but an intellectual guide to inspire people with nationalism. In order to maintain an independent outlook he did not enter into Government or private service. He started publishing his weekly Prabhakar. In the beginning he used to get his periodical printed at the lithopress set up by that brilliant mechanic Ganpat Krishnaji Patil who hailed from his home district. Then in 1853 he started another weekly 'Dhoomketu' and in 1854 a quarterly magazine named "Dnyanandarshan!"

b) Intellectual Resistance to Colonial rule

Bhau Mahajan was a man of independent means and for twenty-two years from 1841 to 1863 he occupied the central stage of intellectual resistance to British Colonial rule in India. He performed his self-imposed duty of creating national consciousness when things around him were changing fast. The P and O Steamship Company began functioning in Bombay from 1830. There were improvements in transport and communication culminating in the construction of a railway between Bombay and Thane in 1853. The sea-route between England and Alexandria and between Bombay and Suez were open for traffic. Telegraph lines were being laid.

Along with these revolutionary changes there was a significant change in the political and economic philosophy of the West Englishmen Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill had put forward utilitarian philosophy and Principles of political economy respectively.

The watchful eye of Bhau Mahajan did not miss the significance of these outwardly enchanting events and ideas. They had an immediate bearing on the Indian economy. The British Colonial Empire was being consolidated and India was getting poorer day by day. The Industrial Revolution in England and the improvement in transport and communication had affected indigenous industry and trade. He asked through the columns of his periodicals why India was getting impoverished when England was prospering as a result of Industrial Revolution. Bhau Mahajan along with Bhaskar Tarkhadkar and Ramakrishna Vishwanath were in fact the fore-runners of the Drain Theory- developed by Dadabhai Naoroji in the 1870 s. Bhau Mahajan had thrown light on the financial aspect of the unnecessary Afghan War (1830-40) and how Lord Auckland was responsible for the drain of India's wealth. That was one instance of bad government which resulted in the sufferings of the Indian people.

c) Company Government's Credibility

Bhau Mahajan and his colleagues were very severe on the Company's Government in Bombay. The deposition of the Raja of Satara Chhatrapati Pratapsimha proved the treachery of Governor Sir Robert Grant and Resident Charles Ovens. The disaster of the Afghan War had exposed the fear-complex and the incompetence of the company's Government. Bhau was not much impressed by the Queen's Proclamation of 1858. He simply asked what was so great about it and compared it with the Proclamation of Begum of Oudh one of the leaders of the War of Independence of 1857.

d) Bhau Mahajan's other contribution

Bhau's reputation does not rest merely on the Intellectual resistance to the British Rule but on his direct and indirect socio-religious reforms that he encouraged. He published Lokahitavadi's 'Shatapatre' in 'Prabhakar' from 1848 to 1852. He allowed Babab Padamanji a convert to Christianity to explain his stand through the columns of "Dhoomketu" dated 18-8-1854. He also published the biography of Napoleon Bonaparte in his quarterly magazine - 'Dnyan Darshan', a daring act at that time by an Indian writer. He retired in 1863 and died in 1890. His work in journalism did not receive the attention of his people for a long time.

4.3.4 Check your Progress:-

Q .2. Briefly Discuss the work of intellectual during 1816 to 1847 ?

4.4 SUMMARY :

Because of the western education Indian Renaissance started in the 19th century. Jambhekar was the pioneer of the modern Marathi. He propagated religious, social and humanitarian reforms. He was supporter of western ideas and science but he also attacked on the dark side of the British rule.

Intellectual resistance gave birth to economic nationalism. Tarkhadkar, tore off the mask of the 'British rule' and good government of Co. and revealed the true nature through his eight articles. Ramkrishna Vishwanath threw a light on prosperity of England and poverty of India. Bhau Mahajan as a Journalist wrote many articles in his own magazine 'Prabhakar' for awakening of the people.

4.5 QUESTIONS :

- 1 Bal Shastri Jambhekar regarded as the father of 'Modern Marathi' Justify the statement.
2. Explain the term 'Economic Nationalism' and write in detail intellectual resistance in Maharashtra
3. Evaluate important work done by Bhaskar Pandurang Tarkhadkar in the resistance to British rule and awaking of economic nationalism.
4. Examine the contribution of Ramkrishna Vishwanath and Bhau Mahajan.

RELIGIOUS DISSENT AND SOCIAL PROTEST

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.3 Lokhitwadi (1823-1892) - Gopal Hari Deahmukh
- 5.4 The Prathana Samaj
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Questions

5.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1) To know the contribution of Dadoba Pandurang and the Paramahansa sabha.
- 2) To understand Lokhitwadi's thoughts.
- 3) To evaluate the work of Prarthana Samaj.

5.1 INTRODUCTION :

The Western Learning, propaganda of the Christian missionaries and rationalism had made the educated Indians look at their religion and society as others see it especially in comparison with ideas of the Western people on religion and social structure in India. Like their Bengali counterparts and English educated people of Maharashtra began to express dissent against idolatry and protest against caste-system. They started a movement of reform based on monotheism and humanism.

The educated men who advocated change were afraid to call themselves 'reformers'. That word meant a person who broke the caste regulations, drank liquor, ate meat and live a free life. Dadoba Pandurang and his friends therefore had to work with caution and in secrecy. We shall first review the work of Dadoba Pandurang.

5.2DADoba PANDURANG TARKHADKAR (1814-1882):

Dadoba Pandurang was associated with Bal Shastri Jambhekar when they studied together and lived at Bapu Chhatre's house. He outlived Bal Shastri by thirty-six years. He acted as a link between the reformers of the early forties and was also associated with reformers of the eighties. He was very much influenced by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and other leaders of the Brahmo Samaj. The movement that he started had however an origin and growth of its own.

Like Bal Shastri he was essentially an educator. His grammar book acquired great popularity in Maharashtra. He was, Principal of Gujarati School at Surat, then a part of Bombay Presidency. There he was joined by Dayaram Manchharam, one of the teachers of that school in promoting social reforms.

They founded the Association of Religion of Mankind (Manava-Dharmasabha) in 1844. In his book 'Dharma Vivechana' published in 1843 he had expressed his ideas about God and religion. The Association which was founded in 1844 practically borrowed its contents and formulated them as the tenets of the Association of the Religion of Mankind. The Association represented a universalism in religion and social life. This new religion was given a broad base of rationalism. This Association could hardly survive after the departure of Dadoba from Surat in 1846. What was of importance was not the founding of a new religion based on rationalism (which has self-contradictory terms) but Dadoba's interest to reform the social life of his times by an appeal to rationalism. Jambhedkar had already attempted to remove some absurd features and superstitious beliefs under the name of religion. Dadoba went one step ahead and wanted a rethinking on this very sensitive and vital subject of common interest.

It would be clear that the traditional Hinduism could hardly suffer the slightest modification either in respect of performance of worship or in the structure of the society, the conception of one religion for all was beyond any practical programme in Maharashtra. This led to a founding of a new association, the Paramhansa Sabha in 1850. (The details of this would be discussed in the next lesson).

Dadoba's rationalism makes a special contribution to the thought of the western educated gentry in Bombay and the cities in Maharashtra. His campaigns against sorcerers, and enchanters suggested that he considered it a duty of the educated people to clear the cobwebs of superstitions from the minds of the mass of people. The foundation of the Paramhansa Sabha showed the way for others to follow. It was not religion that was the chief concern of the sabha but the rational attitude that was provoked in the public mind against unscientific ideas was its chief objective.

There were quite a number of educational people entertaining ideas to reform Hinduism and save the society by eradication of all sorts of defilement. Among those who held identical views on religious and social matters were Dadoba's younger brother Dr. Atmaram Pandurang Tarkhadkar, Ram Balkrishna Jaykar, Moroba Vinoba, Tukaram Tatyā, Balubhau Shintre, Sakharam Shastri, Laxmanshastri Halve, Bhikoba Laxman and Sakharam Laxman Chavan were prominent. They regarded these two features of Hinduism as highly objectionable.

5.2.1 The Paramahansa Sabha

The principles of social equality that is equality between man and man and man and woman might have been accepted in the abstract forum but those principles were not recognized in the Indian Society. The British rule and Western learning rational thoughts on social matters tempered with humanist outlook.

In Maharashtra, the nineteenth century witnessed the development of social and religious societies and movements all driven by the motive to reform the society and religion.

The Paramahansa Sabha, the Prarthana Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society appeared on the scene.

In 1836, Acharya Balshastri Jambhekar launched his first Anglo Marathi weekly the 'Bombay Darpan' with the purpose of spreading Progressive and Scientific Western ideas among its readers. He had in view the 'Samachar Darpan' of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He wanted to undertake similar reforms in Maharashtra. Being a leading professor of Mathematics in Bombay's famous Elphinstone College, and a social progressive, he pointed out how within a few decades of British administration of Bengal, the Bengalis were discerning their blind beliefs and marching on the path of reason and progress. He emphasised that they could become progressive like the Bengalis. They discarded superstitions, blind faith, and orthodoxy, and embraced the path of modernity. From 1830 until his untimely death in 1846, Jambhekar used his pen and paper for educating the people of Maharashtra and his efforts bore fruit in Bombay.

Despite strong criticism and opposition from the self-styled defenders of the Hindi society, Jambhekar tried, with some success, in arousing young educated Maharashtrians to free the Hindu society from the iron-grip of religious and caste leaders. One of the prominent persons among the socially conscious young men was Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar (1814-1882). He was a student of the Elphinstone Institution and later a teacher there. A well known Sanskrit scholar, he was acquainted with Christian teaching and philosophy. His education

and reading had convinced him of the need of demolition of caste system which he regarded as an obstacle to all social reform. He gathered round him a number of his students and established in 1850 a sacred society called the 'Paramahansa Mandal' dedicated to overthrow the caste system and its attendant evils. According to Reverend Baba Padamji, apart from opposing the caste system Paramahansa Mandal or Sabha stood for the following - widow remarriage, prohibition of idol worship, toleration of other faiths and religions, and promotion of equality and fraternity. Although Dadoba Pandurang was its founder-member he did not personally attend its meeting. Nevertheless, as Massalos remarks, "Dadoba's enthusiasm was contagious". The Society, espousing the ideals of equality and fraternity, soon spread among several educated persons.

Acting strictly in secret, members of the Sabha or Mandal sought in their closed door gathering to change social and outdated practices, specially to bring about "the abolition of caste, the introduction of widow remarriage, and the renunciation of idolatry". The proceedings of the Mandal began and closed with hymns or prayers in Marathi, most of which had been composed by Dadoba Pandurang. According to S.D.Javdekar, "these early social reformers, like political revolutionaries, were compelled to conduct their activities in secret because they were apprehensive of persecution by social conservatives and caste leaders". It is, important to note that among the members of the Sabha, there were Christians and Muslims and it had branches outside the city of Bombay. Some anti-social elements had also penetrated into this secret society, perhaps to discredit it.

The Paramahansa Sabha, under the circumstances, could do little more than conduct initiations and discussions. Nonetheless to quote Christine Dobbin, "it furnished a refuge for those who found a wide gulf between their liberal Western education and the society in which they lived". By 1860, membership of the Sabha in the City of Bombay and the mofusil had reached 500. It had established branches in Poona. Ahmednagar and elsewhere, the Poona branch being the most radical and atheistic in character. However, when its activities were exposed to the public in the fifties and sixties. its leaders were criticised and ridiculed for the impracticability of their ideas and lampooned for their views. Consequently, several of its members chose to remain away from the Sabha. In the absence of morally courageous leadership, the Sabha collapsed and disbanded itself. Thereafter, the Bombay reformers eschewed further criticism of Hindu traditions and practices in general

instead; they favoured concentrated attack on a specific evil. The cause exposed by them, thereafter, was widow remarriage.

After the disappearance of the Paramahansa Sabha, a period of soul searching ensued. Some reformers, particularly those belonging to Lokhitawadi's "Satyashodak" or "Seekers after Truth" increasingly identified themselves with Christianity. In doing so, they moved out of the mainstream of the period. The remainder, consciously and deliberately, began to search for an alternative system that could combine "the European scientific outlook with that of their own society". A few of second generations graduates and have a wider appeal outside their elite circle. This search led to the establishment in 1867, according to N.R.Phatak, to the establishment of the Prarthana Samaj or "Prayer Meeting".

5.2.2 Check your Progress:-

Q.1 Describe briefly the work of Tarkhadkar and the Paramahansa Sabh

5.3 LOKHITWADI(1823-1892)-GOPALHARI DEAHMUKH (1823-1892) :

Bal Shastri Jambhekar had planted the seed of liberalism in Bombay and it was spreading its influence gradually in the centers in education elsewhere. Another great man who shares his faith in the effectiveness of education to dispel the mist of superstition and ignorance among people, was Gopal Hari Deshmukh better known as 'Lokhitwadi' i.e. (Champion of the good of the people.)

Jambhekar had to use his journals for propagating his views. He had to start a weekly and a monthly for that. Deshmukh was fortunate to use Bhau Mahajan's 'Prabhakar' for that work of social transformation. He also wrote in two other journals, 'Induprakash' and 'Vritavaibhav'. He was a gifted writer and wrote with conviction. His passionate appeal to the emotions of the people was more forceful than the cogency of his arguments. He handled the same topics as other reformers of his time were projecting before the educated classes. He attacked ignorance and superstitions. He ridiculed the irrational behaviour of the priestly class. He condemned the brutal practices. He was usually carried by emotions in treating the customs and institutions in Maharashtra as devoid of any significance. His vehemence in criticising the high class Hindus at times led him to admire the Europeans. His volatile mind was

however tempered by far sightedness and prudence. He also criticised the English rulers and found fault with their motives. The source of his energy was the liberal ideas which the English rulers and the missionary scholars had introduced in India.

The history of India had a different course than the history of any country in Europe. The British rulers in India treated their subjects more freely than the Muslim rulers who from 13th century upto the arrival of the English had done. The comparatively lighter rule of the British which was embellished by liberalism and utilitarianism won the hearts of the important sections of the society. The Governor Mountstuart Elphinstone had shown great statesmanship in introducing the Maharashtra society to the modern influences especially of Western Education and liberalism. His sympathetic approach had disarmed the veteran opponents.

5.3.1 Life Sketch

Gopal's father was an inamdar of the Peshwa regime. After the overthrow of Peshwa's rule Sardar Hari Deshmukh Gopal's father, was appointed by the late Peshwa as his representative in Pune. The inam was restored to sardar Deshmukh but it was to continue only during Sardar Hari's life time. Gopal was born in 1823 and was brought up in the old traditional manner in Pune. His parents had to reconcile with the new regime. Gopal was married in 1830 at the age of seven. His father died in 1836 and according to the previous settlement Gopal was not allowed to inherit the family Inam. However the Government granted a stipend to his mother and himself. This was to be paid till Gopal earned for the family. Gopal studied at the Pune Government English School from 1841 to 1844 and then joined government service. He worked in the judicial and revenue departments at different places-Pune, Wai, Bombay, Nasik, Ahmedabad and other places in the Bombay Presidency. He served as a small causes Judge at Nasik and Ahmedabad. After his retirement he became a member of the Legislative Council in Bombay in 1880. He spent the last years of his life in Pune and died in 1892.

Even a cursory view of the events in his life would attract our attention to the many-sided personality of the Lokahitwadi. The period from his entry into the Government service till his retirement in 1880 shows gradual promotion and wide experience of life. Jambhekar and Tarkhadkar were essentially teachers by profession and disposition whereas 'Deshmukh was a bureaucrat who was appointed 'Justice of the Peace and Fellow of the University of Bombay in 1877'. He had also the distinction of becoming a member of the Legislative Council.

Lokahitwadi had an open mind. He did not resent the loss of his family inam after the capture of power by the British. In fact he considered the British rule in India as a great blessing. He therefore was very much influenced by their liberalism and social progress. The utilitarian philosophy of Jeremy Bentham had a powerful influence on Lokahitawadi. He was very much interested in the reform of his society. He tried to use his pen to correct the faults in the social and religions life of his people. He wrote a number of booklets on a variety of problems faced by the society in the first half on the 19th century. His short articles 'Shatapatre' (one hundred letters) written between 1848 and 1850 and published in series in the weekly 'Prabhakar' were collected in 1860 as part of 'Lokahitwadikrita Nibandhasangraha'. The collection was printed in a book form in 1866. He published a book entitled 'Svadyaya Athava Aryavidyancha Krama, VilChar ani Parikshana' (study or sequence of the Aryan learning, Thought and Review) in 1880. This book gives his opinion on the traditional learning.

5.3.2 Shatapatre (One Hundred Letters)

According to N.R.Inamdar the 108 letters written between 1848 and 1850 could be classified as follows ;-

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------|
| a) Introduction | - | One article |
| b) Learning | - | twenty-three articles |
| c) Brahmanas | - | fifteen articles |
| d) Religion | - | eighteen articles |
| e) Social questions | - | Twenty-five articles |
| f) Politics | - | fifteen articles |
| g) Native officers | - | seven articles |
| h) Economics | - | four articles |

The analysis of the 'Svadyaya' contents show that most of the questions refer to religious matters some to philosophical, social and ethical and only two out of 31 questions to political affairs. The above analysis will give us a glimpse of Lokahitavadi's universal interests. His progressive thoughts were mainly known to the people when he published his short-articles through the columns of the weekly 'Prabhakar'. His liberal ideas on social matters acquired great importance in the second half of the 19th century. His articles present a penetrating analysis of the ills of the society. They reveal his restless energy to expose the inhuman practices in the name of religion and he suggests his solutions. We shall review his contribution to social, political and economic thought of Maharashtra in the latter half of the 19th century.

5.3.3 The Dark Deeds of the Brahmanas

Lokahitawadi condemned the dark deeds of the Brahmanas with a vehemence that was never attempted before in Marathi language. He points out in his article No. 104 that the callous attitude of these so called learned pundits and highly respected preachers is worse than that of the butchers. The miserable condition of thousand of helpless and unfortunate women does not evoke are in their teens had to pass through such agonising experience them to remarry. If anybody wished to reform the condition of these unfortunate women these pious men would consider him as a devil. Nowhere in the world would you come across such learned men devoid of the milk of humanity.

He emphatically maintains that it is no religion, no principle, no virtue and no wisdom, that they continue in the tradition mechanically, without any thought. They should realise the limits to such practices. When thousands of women have become the victims of these oppressive customs these Brahmanas take a devilish pleasure in the informant of these practices. His heart was burning when he saw the plight of the miserable women and the outcastes. The force of his liberalism was nowhere so evident than when he wrote those fifteen articles on the Brahmanas. His castigation of the Brahman community obviously aroused the hostility of his caste, as he himself was a Brahman by birth. Deshmukh's invectives were to meet with equal counter-attack from Vishnushastri Chiplunkar through the series of essays (Nibandhmala) from 1984 onwards. Vishnushastri the master of Marathi prose could silence the voice of Lokahitavadi and create a strong resistance to Lokahitwadi's liberalism but that was a time when he retired from service.

5.3.4 Learning

Like Jambhekar he exposed the ignorance of the traditional scholars, who wasted their time in idleness. The priests are only beggars. There are people who patronise these purveyors of 'religion', and thus encourage these stupid priests'.

Lokahitavadi writing about superstitions observes - some say the earth is like a lotus, others say that the Greeks (Yavanas) existed from the beginning but they had no country of their own, there is some small territory in the sea where they reside. The end of the earth is near the Himalays; there are seven islands around the earth. There are seas of milk and butter". He comments that our old predecessors were stupid to the extreme and there is hardly any difference between these irrational and uniformed men and animals.

He suggested a way out of this impossible situation and advised that these religious bigots should endeavour to acquire learning and

knowledge like the Englishmen. When all the people will show their determination to make progress and abandon their barbarous superstitions, there would be real progress. Lokahitawadi depended on his rationalism. He pointed out that in case of conflict between customs and scriptures (Shastra) the ancient masters said the custom should be given precedence over the scriptures. Lokahitawadi asserted that in such a question you have to use your reasoning and resolve the conflict between customs and scriptures (Shastra) by rational thought.

5.3.5 Social Questions

His belief in the liberty of the individual compelled him to denounce untouchability. He was pained to find the Brahmanas keeping the 'Mahar' community in permanent degradation in the social scale. He argued that these men of high castes were defiled by the shadow of the member of these low castes but these very men consider it as a special privilege to sit with the Europeans. In fact the Mahars should be closer to them than the foreigners. He wrote, "all are children of the same God and such social distinctions should be abandoned". He was the advocate of equality of the sexes, the remarriage of widows and the women's right to education. He wanted equal treatment of all castes among the Hindu people. They should have equal rights in respect of education and selection of occupation and trade. He wanted to diminish the authority of the Brahmanas in religious and spiritual matters. He made a spirited plea to adjust the religious taboos to suit the circumstances. In changing the social morals only rational ways must be adapted.

5.3.6 Views on Economic Matters

Lokahitawadi had acquired a varied experience in the course of his official duties in different parts of Maharashtra and a place like Ahmedabad which formed a part of Bombay 'Presidency. His rationalism inspired him to spot out inconsistencies, preventions and absurdities. Just as he critically viewed the social conditions of the Hindu Society he also turned his attention to the inequalities and injustice perpetrated by the native and English officials in matters of taxes and levies. The excise on liquor gave the exchequer a substantial amount. Drinking was being encouraged so that more money would be available to the government. He condemned the attitude of the government to ruin the health of the people for filling the coffers of the government. He declared that the people are the mother of the Government. If the Government disregarding the health of the people and would attempt to encourage drinking, it would result in the poverty of the people, then Government finance would be adversely affected.

In 1894 he wrote 'History of Gujrat'. He added an appendix entitled 'Comparison of Governments' (Rajyatulana). He compared the merits and demerits of the native and foreign rule. He concluded that in the British regime taxes, customs, excise duties and other charges were excessive as compared to the late Government. It does little credit to the enlightened Government of the East India Company that they have kept the ryot dissatisfied with their revenue policy. It would be better if this Government would adopt welfare measures as the Marathas had done. He also denounced the policy of favouritism and distinctions followed in dealing with native and European persons. In the course of his official duty he came across many instances of partisan spirit and economic injustice to the people of Maharashtra.

5.3.7 Swadeshi and Boycott

Padhye and Tikekar would consider Lokahitawadi as a pioneer of the Swadesh and Boycott movements of later years. While analysing the poverty and unemployment in Maharashtra he focussed light on the dumping of goods by the Englishmen in our markets to the detriment of native merchants. Our people buy their goods as they are cheap and thereby deprive our merchants the opportunity to earn legitimate profit. Our people should resolve not to buy goods of other countries and buy only indigenous articles even though they may be of inferior quality. The cotton buyers should decide not to sell raw cotton to the foreigners and sell them only textile goods. He advised to stop buying English goods or at least sell them our finished products. We should shun the foreign goods and patronize indigenous goods even if they might be coarse textiles. It is remarkable for Lokahitavadi to show the audacity to hurt the rulers at the most vulnerable points inspite of his being in the service of the English Government. However, the approach was amateurish.

5.3.8 Political Matters

Lokahitawadi's admiration for the British rule, British justice and liberalism was unbounded. He had exhorted the people in the early period of his journalism to treat the Englishmen as their preceptors, and learn many things at their feet. His association with the English officers and his promotions had enabled him to form a favorable opinion about the political wisdom of the British rulers. He had worked on the Inam-Commission in a subordinate capacity from 1856 to 1861 and did not find any compunction of the mind when several inamdars were dispossessed of their hereditary privileges. His own men, Brahmans and other elites of the late regime, would not share his ideas about the benevolence of the foreign masters. His reliance on rationalism at times led him to advocate some revolutionary changes. In his article No. 25,

he proposed that the poor and rich people of India should submit a joint petition to Queen Victoria to remove the inequality between the native and Englishmen and convene a Parliament of representatives from both the groups. That would show the comparative times to come Indian people would demand a Parliamentary Government as it existed in England. If the Englishmen would persist in their autocracy, the Indian people would follow in the footsteps of the Americans.

He was also having the French Revolution and its achievements at the back of his mind when he proposed liberty of the individual. He went to the extent of warning the rulers that in the country of ignorant men only the Government behaves in a paternal manner in a fairly progressive country government is the friend of the people and in a highly advanced country it is the servant of the people.

5.3.9 Philosophical Outlook

His philosophical outlook was that of the Prarthana Samaja. He believed in one God. The human soul and the Absolute Being are essentially different as the human soul is of inferior nature. He believed that the human intellect is capable of reaching God.

In political philosophy he drew his inspiration from Jeremy Bentham, James Mill and J.S. Mill. He had mentioned the utilitarian function of the Government in the propositions in the analysis of the Svadhyaya. He laid emphasis on the idea that it was the duty of the Government to protect the freedom of the individual.

Lokahitavadi's interest was not limited to one field only. As already mentioned above his intellect was capable of exploring weakness in different facets of public life. His admiration for the Englishmen did not inhibit him to dream of self-government and independence on the pattern of American colonists of the 17th century. His advocacy of rationalism was of a restricted perspective. He was very much attached to old Vedic culture and believed that the scholars of the later-Vedic period had corrupted that culture. His attempt to reconcile his loyalty to the British regime, practically treating British regime as divine dispensation compromised his rationalism. He was not a revolutionary and did not possess that desperate courage to defy the society to the extent of being prepared for an all out sacrifice. When he was under a social boycott for expressing censure of the orthodoxy he submitted before the religious leaders and did penance. These and similar weaknesses in his position restricted his influence to a limited number of educated people.

Jambhekar, Tarkhadkar and Deshmukh the trio. were great intellectuals but they lacked the courage of their conviction. Jambhekar submitted before orthodoxy in famous Sripat case. Tarkhadkar carried out the Paramahansa mission in secrecy and Deshmukh hesitated to go beyond a certain limit although his conscience wanted to cross the

barrier. These eminent thinkers of the 19th century could not arouse masses to a new line of thinking. Their influence was limited to a small group western - educated middle class people only.

5.3.10 Check your progress:-

Q.2. Evaluate the role of Lokhitwadi to irradiate ignorance and superstitions in Maharashtra.

5.4 THE PRATHANA SAMAJ :

Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj had done pioneering work in the social reform movements in India. The object of the Brahmo Samaj was to liberate individual from the shackles of irrational religious practices and outdated social customs. The evil practices in the name of religion such as “sati” and untouchability had ridiculed by foreigners. The Theory of “karma” and polytheism had strangulated initiative of the individual and created confusion in the mind of the common Hindu. The followers of Brahmo-Samaj wanted for reaching social reforms. They criticised caste-system but concentrated more on the status of women in the Hindu Society. Abolition of the practice of “Sati” was vigorously advocated by those reformers. They believed in constitutional measure to bring about change in the Hindu Society.

However after the death of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1833 the Brahmo- Samaj split into factions. The younger members of the Sabha reorganised themselves under the, leadership of Keshav Chandra Sen and advocated not only far reaching social reform but also application of the test of reason to the fundamental articles of religious beliefs. Influenced by the Western and Christian thought, Keshav Chandra Sen and his followers mounted attacks on the caste system and all the evils arising out of it. They worked tirelessly for the complete reform of the Hindu family emphasizing that this reform was vital for the moral and religious regeneration of India. The activities of Sen and his friends received enthusiastic response in Bengal though their progressive views estranged them from Devendra Tagore, a prominent leader of the Samaj. Nevertheless, their missionary zeal and devotion to the gospel of reform was appreciated by the educated circles not only in Bengal but also in Bombay and Madras Presidencies. Consequently, the Brahmo Samaj movement gradually spread outside Bengal though it failed to take roots anywhere except in Maharashtra.

K.C.Sen visited Bombay in 1864, but he attracted little attention. According to Christine Dobbin “... it was not until his second visit in

1867 that he received a really enthusiastic reception". Members of the earlier (now defunct) Paramahansa Sabha such as R.G. Bhandarkar, were greatly impressed by K.C. Sen's socio-religious views. Reformers in Bombay, until Sen's visit, were of the view that social reform was impossible without religious reform; after his visit, they came under the influence of his thought. Likewise, Mary Carpenter, an English social reformer, who was also visiting Bombay at the time, influenced their thinking. The outcome was the founding of the Prarthana samaj in 1867.

Mathew Lederle and James Masselos point out that the catalyst in the establishment of the Prarthana Samaj was not K.C.Sen but Dr. Atmaram Pandurang a brother of Dadoba Pandurang, and Mary Carpenter. According to Masselos, through Sen the ideas of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and of the Brahmo samaj had gained a great currency in Western India, but his programme was viewed with suspicion as a smoke-screen under which the foreign religion might be spread.

The intellectuals favoured a form of Deism, shorn of the accretions of orthodox Hinduism and encompassing the Code of moral inherent in Christianity. It was felt that this could not be achieved through the Brahmo Samaj. To do so involved alienation from the mainstream of Hinduism, and meant discrimination, antagonism and the loss of any possible influence upon the people of the Presidency. In fact, as Lederle writes, it was the Monotheistic Association of Dr. Atmaram Pandurang which became known as the Prarthana Samaj or Prayer Society. This religious minded medical practitioner and his association longed for a form of religion which would satisfy their hearts and minds, yet would not require their breaking away from the Hindu religion, remarks Lederle.

5.4.1 Principles of the Prarthana Samaj

The principles of the Samaj were similar to those of the Brahmo samaj of the early part of the nineteenth century. It claimed to be a theistic movement - a product of Western learning and ancient Vedic literature and philosophy. It stressed the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, implying its opposition to the worship more than one deity, idol worship, sacrifice, the belief in a single "infallible revealed book", and caste distinctions. But the members of the Sabha always regarded themselves as Hindus, and their movement as a Protestant movement against later accretions to the pure ancient form of Hinduism.

The Samaj also had social reform objectives, specially the abolition of child marriage, and the introduction of widow re-marriage, the encouragement of female education, and the obliteration of caste distinctions. However, leaders of the Samaj concentrated upon religious reform for they felt that religious reform must precede social reform; upon the success of religious reform, subsequent social reform would

be based. The religious activities of the Prarthana Samaj included the Sunday Services, the Sunday School, the Young Thiests' Union, and the Postal Mission, which sent religious literature by post. The Subodh Patrika was their mouth piece. An annual Theistic Conference was held which brought together activists of the Brahmo and Prarthana Samaj.

5.4.2 M.G. Ranade (1842-1901) and R. G. Bhandarkar (1837-1925)

Mahadev Govind Ranade and Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar were the moving spirit behind the activities of the Prarthana Samaj. They elaborated on the philosophical basis of the Samaj and clarified its religious beliefs. Ranade, in his essay, "A Thiest's Confession of Faith", attempted to give the Samaj something more than a theology. He, alongwith Bhandarkar, based the Samaj's philosophy upon the teachings of the Bhakti saints of Maharashtra such as Tukaram :

At the same time, he gave a great message which was in the form of a severe but timely warning to the excessive zeal of some Indian reformers. According to him, what India required was a comprehensive reform, not a mere revival or a revolutionary change but a thorough remolding of the entire life of the nation. He was convinced that the old moulds had outlived their usefulness and therefore needed replacement. However, he spoke of changes not as an innovation but as "a return to and restoration of the days of our past history". Ranade stressed that a reformer should not sever his connections with society and sit on a high pedestal, but attempt at comprehensive change, comprising all aspects of an individual's activities.

It is interesting to note that members of the Prarthana Samaj, though English-educated and high-caste individuals, conducted their meetings and services in Marathi and not in English or Sanskrit. To quote Dobbin :

".... it was natural of Marathi-speakers to turn to the great Marathi saints, particularly Tukaram, whose verses often best expressed the type of personal devotion sought by Samaj members". Ranade later explained that this devotion to the Bhakti saints was a means of showing to the people of Western India that the Prarthana Samai was not merely a movement of the English-educated in the urban areas, but deep-rooted In the country's' past, and unconnected to any particular religious or caste group.

N.G.Chandavarkar, a later day President of the samaj, found in the monotheism of the Samaj and their stress on the brotherhood of man, the fundamental principle of one God and one humanity as the foundation of all modem progress. He wrote in 1909 -

“Those who founded this institution (Prarthana Samaj) felt that until we realised the oneness of men, until we expanded our ideas of Brotherhood so as to feel that we are all creatures of the same God. India must be what she has been, low in the scale of nations, divided against herself, and without the ability to hold her own. with the more enlightened races of the world ”.

5.4.3 Decline of the Prarthana Samaj

For a decade or so the Prarthana Samaj flourished and attracted significantly large number of Hindus and non-Hindus to it. In 1868, the Bombay paper, 'Hindu Reformer', claimed that the religion of Prarthana Samaj was destined to be the religion of the whole world. And though the day is still very far distant from us when such a glorious result would be consummated, that it will come cannot admit of a doubt.

“Despite such exaggerated hopes, the Samaj remained a preserve of English-educated Brahmins of the region. Apart from Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, all the leading personalities of the samaj were either Chitpavan or Saraswat Brahmins. Its newspaper, the 'Subodh Patrika', occasionally reflected this Brahminical predominance claiming that “ the Brahmins have always been the intellectual aristocracy of India, who had lost their supremacy politically, but socially and intellectually they still retain their superiority to their fellow country men”. The paper advised social reformers to attend more to the material conditions of non-Brahmins than to their education.

Therefore, the Sabha was never a popular movement. By 1872, it was reported to have had 68 members and about 150-200 sympathisers. Its practical programme was not much. R.G.Bhandarkar was forced to admit that after six years of its existence, it had accomplished little. Attempts of Ranade, Bhandarkar and other leaders to appeal to a wide audience in the region did not produce results. Despite their efforts at evolving a synthesis of ideas and their desire for popular contact many of the English educated members of the Samaj felt divorced from their fellow-men in Western India. As pointed out by M. M. Kunte in 1869, the Marathi society had separated into three main divisions i.e. the English-educated, the Shastris with their traditional sanskrit-based learning, and the mass of uneducated men and women.

The strains between these three strata were considerable; these became apparent during the late sixties in a bitter and acrimonious debate over social reform and widow remarriage, in particular. While many upper class and influential Brahmins and Maratha Sardars opposed changes in the society, the lay Brahmins and Maratha followed their priests. The Western educated argued that Hindu widows and child

marriage as a social reform, did not represent social change but rather a return to what might be termed as “true orthodoxy”.

5.4.4 Significance of the Prarthana Samaj

On the whole the Samaj failed to achieve any marked popular impact and remained very much a gathering of elite. However, it did exercise, especially during the life-time of M.G.Ranade and R.G.Bhandarkar, considerable influence. It was mainly due to its members that a new social consciousness, extending to all fields of human activity, began to take root within the Hindu society in Maharashtra. The widow remarriage movement continued under the auspices of the Sabha and remarriages were affected from time to time. As a token of its zeal for reform the Samaj took over a foundling home in 1881 and an orphanage in the same year at Pandarpur. It established a maternity home and a home for homeless. It did laudable social and educational work among women since 1882 and provided for scientific instruction of groups of women associates.

The Samaj set up branches in Poona, Ahmedabad, Surat, Karachi, and elsewhere. Its members called social and religious abuses by their proper names, and helped to purify to some extent, Hinduism and strengthen its self-respect. Their religious universalism was a response to the challenge of a widening world and the onslaught of Christian missionaries. This universalism to quote Lederle. “Refused to be bound by fetters of orthodoxy; it was based on man, his reason and conscience”.

Leaders of the Prarthana Samaj recognised the need for activity of a more practical kind. In 1872, it established a Theistic Society under the Presidency of R.G.Bhandarkar. It was dedicated to “the spread of right views on religion, supplemented by practical reform and right conduct”. The Association appointed several committees to look after specific social objectives such as the spread of education among workers and artisans. Although the aims and programmes of the Prarthana Samaj and the Theistic Association were more ambitious than their performance, their members genuinely dedicated themselves to practical, though gradual, reform. They sought in earnest to provide a religious foundation for the social reform. In 1887, Ranade founded the Indian Social Conference. The members of the Prarthana Samaj like Bhandarkar and Chandavarkar played a leading part in the activities of the Conference.

5.4.5 Check your Progress:-

Q. 3 Examine the important role of the Prarthana Samaj in the social reform movement in Maharashtra ?

5.5 SUMMARY :

The western learning gave birth to the Indian Renaissance. During this period great changes took place in the socio-cultural, religious and political field in India.

Indian thinkers began to look at the evils and weaknesses in Indian Society. They realised that the backwardness of Indian society was mainly due to the evil customs practices, religious and social convictions etc.

5.6 QUESTIONS :

1. Give an account of the work of Dadoba Pandurang with special reference to the Paramahansa Sabha.
2. Critically evaluate the work of Gopal Hari Deshmukh.
3. Stress the important role played by the Prarthana Samaj in eradicating social evils.



SOCIAL REFORMS - I

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Emancipation of Women
- 6.3 Justice Ranade And Social Reform (1842-1901)
- 6.4 Summary
- 6.5 Unit End Questions.

6.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1) To realise the issues concerning emancipation of women and efforts made towards its realization
- 2) To understand the work of Justice Ranade and the Indian National Social Conference.

6.1 INTRODUCTION :

The issues connected with emancipation of women are fully discussed here as the social reformers who showed moral courage to handle the issues found them too formidable for their generation. Men like Ranade who could not devote their full time for that work had to establish Social Conference to attract more men. We have given details about his work in this lesson and the contribution of other reformers is dealt with in the next lesson.

6.2 EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN :

Society in Western India, as already noted, on the eve of the British rule in 1818, was "hide-bound" and stagnant. A hundred years of Peshwa administration had made little significant change in the conditions of the people. Economically Maharashtra was poorer than Bengal. In Agriculture, industry, trade and commerce also it lagged behind though there was homogeneity between its rulers and the subjects, the Maharashtrian society, like its counter parts elsewhere in India, was

caste ridden. People, in general, were tradition - bound and superstitious, despite the progressive teachings of Saints like Tukaram and Namdeo. There was little movement in thought, no progress in beliefs and institutions, including in the developing city of Bombay. Not only the orthodox people and priests were opposed to any social change, but also the economically rising section of each caste and groups, who had prospered in Bombay under the British presence.

The status of women was equally bad. As S. Natarajan has pointed out, the social customs and laws relating to marriage, family- property, inheritance. position of widows, etc. were loaded against women. Women were the most sufferers in the social system because “here as well as in all societies the rigorous of the conventional community bore most heavily on Women”.

This plight of women attracted the attention of some European Christian missionaries and a handful of Western-educated persons including Brahmins and Parsis. Bombay gave the lead to rest of Maharashtra. Great social reformers like Mahadeo G. Ranade, B.M.Malabari, S.S.Bengali, Karsondas Mulji, Jyotiba Phule, Pandita Ramabai and D. K. Karve rendered yeoman service to the cause of the emancipation of women. For instance, Ranade and his Indian National Social Conference worked steadily (with some success) against such glaring social evils as child marriage and the prohibition of widow re-marriage. As it is possible to discuss in detail all aspects of the movement for the emancipation of women in the 19th Century. it is proposed to concentrate on : female education, widow re-marriage and child-marriage in detail as follows :-

6.2.1 Female Education

The establishment of the Prarthana Samaj gave the impetus necessary for reform. It is true, as R.C.Majumdar writes, “In Bombay Presidency the women led a comparatively freer life as there was no Purdah, among the Marathas, yet, like their counter parts in other Presidencies, women in Western India were not encouraged to receive education”. Naturally, some English-educated young men launched a determined movement to spread ‘female education through schools in Bombay and Poona. In this laudable attempt, they were encouraged by their European professors in Elphinstone Institution in Bombay (1848). These enthusiastic youngmen established the “Students Literary and Scientific Society.” The Society espoused the cause of female education. The lead was taken by the members of the Gujarati Dnyan Prasarak, Mandali. Parsi reformers like Dadabhai Naoroji, realized that only support from the leading businessmen (Shetias) of the community would

provide the money and the pupils with which they could start schools for girls. F.C.Banaji and the Cama family showed the way by giving education to their daughters and money to the schools despite opposition from Orthodox Parsis. By 1852 there were four schools with 371 pupils. In 1857, S.S.Bengali and his friends started the magazine 'Stri Bodh'.

The initial success of the Parsi schools led to the establishment of similar schools by the Marathi and Gujarathi Hindus in 1849 with the financial support of businessmen such as Jagannath Shankarset. The Parsi and Gujarathi girls' schools were able to get financial support from the businessmen (shetias) of their communities. However the Marathi Schools were starved of funds because of Maharashtrian Hindu Community possessed no really affluent Shetias, apart from Jagannath Shankarset. Hence, their schools were supported by monthly contributions from Elphinistonians like Bhau Daji, Thus, a beginning though creaky had been made in female education.

In 1848, Jyotiba Phule' established a private school for girls education at Poona. An Association of India Youngment also started girls Schools in Bombay and in some other parts of the Deccan Division of the Bombay Presidency. The Prejudices against female education were fast disappearing and "there will be no more difficulty found in establishing female schools than there is in those for boys", wrote Capt. Lester, then Acting Educational Inspector of the Deccan Division.

In the second half of the 19th century female education received considerable attention of the Government of India. The Education Commission of 1882-83 made a number of recommendation regarding the education of girls.

As for higher education for women, there was no separate institution either in Bombay or at Poona. Nevertheless, premier Colleges like the Elphinstone College, Wilson College and St.Xavier's College in Bombay, the Fergusson College at Poona and the Wellington College at Sangli always kept their doors open for female education. Reformers like M.G.Ranade, D.K.Karve and P. Pandita Ramabai also made significant contribution to female education in Maharashtra. G.K.Gokhale's 'Servants of India Society' generated very powerful forces for the advancement of female education.

Before we conclude, it is necessary to note the remarks of Bipin Chandra Pal, made in 1881 : "Bombay was socially far ahead of Bengal ... Female education and the freedom of social intercourse and movement of respectable Maharatha ladies was a new and inspiring experience which I had in Bombay." But as S.D.Javdekar has pointed

out, in Poona and other interior places among even educated persons, belonging to the Sardar and Brahmin castes, one could find nothing but orthodoxy and “darkness”. This is evident from articles published in ‘Prabhakar’. Social reformers like Ranade, Agarkar and Phule, and institutions like the Sarvajanik Sabha had to carry a relentless struggle to clear the cobwebs of antiquated, anachronistic social customs and traditions, relating especially to women, though in those days Poona was considered itself the real intellectual and political capital of the Bombay Presidency.

6.2.2 Widow Re-marriage

The Hindu Joint family was accompanied by property laws which were devised to emphasize the family, rather than the individuals as a unit. Inheritance was either withheld from women or greatly modified against their interest. The Hindu system of marriage ensured that property remained within the family. The worst affected were the Hindu widows.

Among Hindus marriage was considered as a Sacrament and therefore could not be dissolved by divorce or death, especially of the husband. Though the system was applied rigidly only to the higher caste, there existed a tendency among the lower castes to imitate the higher castes; prohibition of widow re-marriage was one such imitation. The British Law Courts, during their early days, applied the Hindu Civil Code, as interpreted by Hindu Pandits indiscriminately to Hindus of all castes. According to Hindu Shastras, men were authorised to take more than one wife if they could not get a male progeny from the existing marriage. However, in the course of time, a Hindu male was permitted to take a second or more wives, even if he had male children.

But there was no legal protection for women against the arbitrary action of their husbands in marrying other women. Moreover, they could not re-marry, even when a woman’s husband was dead. Any man who married a widow or an already married woman was held of bigamy, and it was punishable offence. The only way to escape from this arbitrary and cruel custom was through conversion to Islam or Christianity. It was against this evil that enlightened Western-educated social reformers raised their banner of revolt as was being done by the Brahmo Samaj in Bengal.

In Bombay, young Elphinistonians, including Dadabhai Naoroji, Dadoba Pandurang, Jambhekar, Karsondas Mulji, Baba Padamji and the militant, Hindu, Vishnubuva Brahmachari advocated widow re-marriage. In Poona, reformers like “Lokhitawadi” Gopal Hari Deshmukh, Vishnu Shastri Pandit and M.G. Ranade intensified the movement. The reformers cited the authority on the Vedas for widow re-marriage.

Journals like the 'Indu Prakash' were wedded to the advocacy of widow remarriage. The reformers founded, in 1866, the Hindu Widow Marriage Association (Vidhwa Vivahottejak Mandal). The object of the Association was limited i.e. re-marriage of widows of the high caste according to the authority of the Hindu Dharma Shastras.

Opposition to widow re-marriage also increased. A number of inhabitants of Poona submitted two petitions to the Government opposing the Widow Marriage Legislation of 1856. A Society for the Protection of the Hindu Dharma was established. The Shastris, Pandits and other orthodox views ganged up against the movement for widow re-marriage. But the initiative rested with the reformers. Vishnu Shastri not only translated Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar's writings on the subject into Marathi and published in the 'Indu Prakash' but also brain stormed the principal towns of the Deccan on the lecturing tour and initiated a heated discussion in the Marathi press and meetings. Vishnu Shastri also challenged the orthodox to a public debate on the question of widow re-marriage. In the debate that followed in March 1870 in Poona, Presided over by the 'Shankaracharya of Karvir and Shankeshwar, the reformers alleged that the Shankaracharya had tampered with one of the arbitrators and persuaded him to lie since religion was at stake.

Nevertheless, the Widows Marriage Association claimed a moral victory – a victory based on the Vedic Authorities for "widow Re-marriage" and by avoiding any significant reference to Western ideas.

Ironically, the movement witnessed in 1870, an anti-climax. Gopal Hari Deshmukh performed penance ("prayschitta") in Ahmedabad and was re-admitted to his caste. This action by the President of the Window Marriage Association caused the movement a set back. The movement suffered a further blow in the death of Vishnu Shastri Pandit in 1876. Thereafter, for more than a decade the movement remained dormant although in Bombay, the movement was continued by the Gujarathi reformers, led by Madhavdas Raghunathdas, and by the Parthana Samaj.

Maharshi Dondo Keshav Karve also rendered great service to the cause of widow re-marriage. He himself set the example by marrying Godubai, a widow sister of his friend, in 1883, braving hostile criticism of orthodox Hindus and their journals. With the co-operation of some friends, including R.G.Bhandarkar, he revived the Widow Marriage Association. He utilised his vacations for lectures on behalf of the Association in order to educate the public on widow re-marriage. In 1896, he started the Widow Home Association, inspired by Pandita Ramabai's Sharada Sadan. Justice Ranade and Dr.Bhandarkar were

also associated with it. Earlier, he had established the Hindu Widows Home which was aimed at making the widows self-supporting by giving them training as teachers, midwives or nurses. Since its establishment in 1889 until 1915, the Hindu Widows' Home got 25 Maharashtrian Widows married.

Thus the untiring efforts of reformers of Bombay and Poona, journals like *Indu Prakash*, and the activities of Widow Remarriage Association of Vishnu Shastri and of Social Conference of Karve began to fruit. By the turn of the 20th Century they had succeeded in focusing attention of the Hindu community on irrational attitude towards the question of Widow re-marriage, based on wrong interpretation of the Vedic literature.

6.2.3 Child Marriage

Child marriage was one of the cruel customs prevalent in India among different communities since ancient times. It became a social practice after the medieval period due to the alleged fear that unmarried Hindu girls would be taken away by the Muslim nobles or would be molested by anti-social elements. Though child marriage seemed to solve some social and economic problems, it was harmful to the society and degraded women in several ways. Nevertheless, pre-puberty marriage became a social tradition in all parts in India. It was only in the nineteenth century that enlightened men like B.M. Malabari, M.G. Ranade, Dr. R.G. Bhandarkar and some others challenged this socially and ethically degrading custom and launched a determined struggle against it. As a result of the efforts of reformers of Bengal the British Government of India had been persuaded to pass Act III of 1872 abolishing "early marriage" making polygamy a penal offence sanctioning widow remarriages and intercaste marriages for "parties not coming under any of the existing marriage laws and not professing any of the current faiths. In spite of the law, the evil of child marriage continued to be widely practiced among people, including those in Maharashtra.

The issue of child marriage was highlighted in 1880s by the Parsi reformer and editor of *Indian Spectator*, Behramji M. Malabari. With a view to place his views on the twin evils before the public and government officials for their opinion, he suggested that Universities should not give permission to married students to appear for examination, that government Departments give preference to unmarried men in making appointments and that materials describing the evils of early marriage be included in school text-books by the Education Department. He was supported by such eminent persons as Dr. Bhandarkar, Ranade, K.T. Telang, Agarkar and Chandavarkar in his crusade against Child marriage. Ranade suggested that the government, by a law, must fix the

minimum marriageable age both for boys and girls (at 16 to 18 for boys and 10 to 12 for girls). He even suggested that the Penal Code be amended so as to declare sexual intercourse with a girl under 14 as "rape". He wanted men above the age of 45 debarred from marrying girls who were virgins. Likewise, he also advocated a ban on marriage between young men with girls older than themselves. Since, in his view, such marriages were "unnatural and mischievous". In fact, Ranade strongly advocated state assistance to raise the age of consent for girls from 10 to 12.

Malabari's notes and Ranade's suggestions on them roused a storm of protest, led by Lokamanya Tilak, one of the highly educated and advanced thinkers of Maharashtra and a prominent political leader. Tilak made it clear that he did not object to the proposed reforms as such, but to the suggestion that a foreign government should interfere in the social reform of the Hindu Society. The British, on their part, did not show any hurry to enact legislation on the lines suggested by the reformers since they had adopted a policy of neutrality on social matters of the Indian people. Therefore, Malabari had to visit England thrice to appeal to the people of England to bring pressure upon the government to enact legislation prohibiting child marriage. Despite virulent opposition, Malabari and his fellow-reformers continued their campaign for legislation fixing the age of consent. Finally, they were successful in securing legislation against child marriage, known as the Age of Consent Act of 1891.

The Act according to R.C. Majumdar, "was a poor substitute for the prohibition of early marriage of girls, and from the very nature of the case, its practical effect could not be of much consequence". Nevertheless, the Act, by forbidding the consummation of marriage before the wife had reached the age of 12, succeeded in creating a sense of awareness among the Indian people about the need to reconsider the custom of child marriage. The Age of Consent of 1891 can be regarded as a piece of human legislation meant to remove a glaring social abuse and emancipate women from the miseries resulting from an early marriage.

However, complete and immediate elimination of such social practice was not possible because social prejudices die hard. This was exemplified by the marriage of Ranade at the age of 31 to a girl of 11, against his will. Ranade tried unsuccessfully to dissuade his own father and the father of the girls from forcing that marriage on him. In deference to his father's wishes, he had to consent to the marriage, but after the marriage, he educated his young wife in liberal thinking.

Gradually, she grew in confidence, and in the first decade of the 20th century, became a leading social reformer-Ramabai Ranade.

Despite social orthodoxy and politically inspired opposition to social reform with government assistance, Malabari, Ranade and their associates succeeded in arousing the desire for reforms among enlightened and educated section of Maharashtrian. The Age of Consent act was a signal for enlightened reformers and various associations to work for the betterment of the lot of females by saving them from oppressive and degrading social customs.

No discussion on women's emancipation can be complete without reference to Pandita Ramabai, a pioneer in the reform of women's upliftment, Ramabai incurred the wrath of orthodox Hindus for marrying out of her Maharashtrian Brahmin caste. After the death of her husband, parents and brother she returned to Poona. Her denunciations of men for keeping women in bondage, her marriage out of caste and her criticism of "popular Hinduism" roused the orthodox. Hindus, including Tilak, against her though they admired her scholarship. In Poona, she opened the Arya Mahila Samaj, under the auspices of the Prarthana Samaj for social service among Hindu women. She also started the study of English languages. Although Ranade and Bhandarkar Sympathised with her, her efforts to establish branches of the Arya Mahila, Samaj throughout Maharashtra met with little success owing to the orthodoxy's hostility.

Dejected and piqued at the attitude of the fellow Hindus, Ramabai approached the Christian missionaries for help. She went to England and America and returned to Poona with promise of financial support for education work. In the meanwhile, she had got converted to Christianity and written a book indicting caste Hindus. In 1889 she established Sharada Sadan in Bombay, which she transferred to Poona in the next year. Ranade and Bhandarkar continued their association with her activities, but her activities met with hostile opposition. Tilak denounced her as agent of Christian missionaries and alleged that she was engaged in conversion in the garb of imparting education and social reform. She defended herself by maintaining that it was their indifference and hostility that had forced her to seek assistance of the missionaries.

However, later, she was obliged to admit that she was doing proselytising work on behalf of Christian missionaries. This disclosure made Ranade and Bhandarkar to discontinue their association with Ramabai declaring that their original understanding with her had been broken. Nevertheless, the Arya Mahila Samaj continued its work and gave a great impetus to the work of social reform and social welfare of women.

6.2.4 Check your progress:-

Q. . What were the difficulties in Emancipation of women and what efforts made towards its realization ?

6.3 JUSTICE RANADE AND SOCIAL REFORM (1842-1901) :

Dadabhai Naoroji was a great leader in Political and economic fields. His social reform work was also substantive limited to Bombay alone. Mahadeo Govind Ranade another illustrious Professor from the Elphinstone College however was the first great reformer of an all-India Standing. After the departure of the Grand Old Man to England, the man who helped to revitalise the 'Students' Literary and Scientific Society' was Mahadeo Govind Ranade. He was actively associated with this Society for many years after 1859 and lived upto the high norms set by Professor Dadabhai.

Mahadeo was born in a Konkanastha Brahman family of Niphad in the Nasik District on January 18, 1842. He graduated in 1862 but he had started teaching the lower classes from the last year of his Degree class. He got his M.A. degree in 1864 and was appointed to teach history to the M.A. Class in the same year. He secured his L.L.B. Degree in 1866 with first class. In the same year he was appointed Oriental Translator to the Government of Bombay. He was popularly regarded as a "Prince of Graduates".

6.3.1 Students Literary and Scientific Society and Ranade

As a student he had presented many papers which included such subjects as 'The Duties of Educated Young Men' (1859) 'The Future Prospects of the Marathas and the Bengalees Compared' (1863) and 'The Theory of Population' (1864). The titles indicate the evangelical and utilitarian content. His predecessors in the Elphinstone College had already set the pattern for those restless young graduates who wished to undertake social reforms. Bal Shastri Jambhekar had led the way by turning to journalism. He had established first Marathi newspaper 'Mumbai Darpan' in 1831 to spread modern ideas among the Maharashtrian readers. Ranade made use of Indu Prakash, a journal which was started in 1862 by another great reformer, nineteen years his senior, Gopal Hari Deshmukh. (Lokhitawadi) Like 'Darpan' it was a bilingual journal in Marathi and English. He was invited by Lokhitawadi to edit the English section; the editor for Marathi section was Vishnu

Shastri Pandit who was to figure as an ally of Ranade in the later reform activities especially in the Widow Remarriage Controversy.

6.3.2 The Book Committee and The Sahitya Parishad

The 'Students' Literary and Scientific Society had encouraged Marathi translations of Western and Sanskrit books, through the two vernacular book committees Lokahitawadi had established similar bodies in Pune. There in Pune Krishna Shastri Chiplunkar had written many of the Marathi translations in his elegant and forceful style. Ranade in 1866 was appointed as Marathi Vernacular Translator by the Bombay Government. He was responsible for recommending Marathi works to the Government for publishing with government subsidies. He was knowing from his college days that there was a section of educated people who frowned on the existing provision of including Marathi and Gujarati in the Bombay University syllabus. He was however confident that before long the Marathi language would take first rank among the cultivated languages of Modern India. Ranade in co-operation with Lokahitavadi set up a new translation society, the 'Marathi Granthottejaka Mandali' (Society for the promotion of Marathi Books) in 1878. They wanted to raise funds from the public so that they could publish books written on a variety of subjects in the Marathi language. This society functioned with great enthusiasm for about five years. There were many practical difficulties but the public-spirited group of literary men had produced a new consciousness among the educated people of Maharashtra. In the same year 1878, in Pune the two public spirited journalists organised the first gathering of the Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad (Literary society of Maharashtra). This organisation held its annual conferences from that time onwards and provided a great platform for the literary renaissance in Maharashtra. The Granthottejaka Mandali faded away into oblivion but the Parishad and its founder remained a living force in Maharashtra.

6.3.3 Prarthana Samaj And Ranade

Ranade was not satisfied only with educational reforms. He wanted to reform the society. He was filled with the same spirit of his contemporaries as Lokahitawadi and Dadoba Pandurang. He was in two minds about reforming Hinduism. The influence of liberalism of Bentham and his conservative religious beliefs created tension. He knew that secular education of the modern times called in question and moral and spiritual values of the Orthodox Hinduism. He was aware of the challenge of the Christian Missionaries to Hinduism and the social structure of the Hindu Society. It was difficult to launch an attack both on the religious superstitions and the social ills at the same time. He found

that Prarthana Samaj (Prayer Society) which was founded in 1867 was more in-offensive than the other organisations. The Samaj grew on different lines from the Brahma Samaj of Bengal and it received its systematic philosophy only when Ranade and other young university graduates joined it. (This will be discussed separately elsewhere in the volume). He attempted to reconcile the impetuosity of the radical reformers of Hinduism with the reverence for the old moral and spiritual values of the Orthodoxy. In his book 'A Theist's Confession'; written in 1872 he struggled to prove that God is one personal and transcendent.

6.3.4 The Widow Remarriage Controversy

The Government of Bengal had passed the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act in 1856 as a result of untiring efforts of Pandit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar. He was a great scholar of Vedas and had adduced much evidence from the Vedic texts to support his point of view. He had published a volume, 'Marriage of Hindu Widows' and had appealed to the Bengal Government to make remarriage fully legal. Earlier the Government had prohibited the practice of Sati by law, in 1829. This had prompted the reformers of Bombay to take up the cause of women who were subjected to many social disabilities, in Maharashtra. The Students Literary and Scientific Society, the Prarthana Samaj; and other social organisations were undertaking the work of educational reforms. The Prarthana Samaj was not directly leading any social reform movement for the simple reason that the members of the samaj were suspected or leanings towards Christianity and also were regarded hostile to the Hindu religious practices. The Samaj however wanted to encourage widow marriage among its members.

Kashab Chandra Sen the leader of Brahma samaj visited Bombay in 1864 for exploring the possibilities of starting a branch of Brahma Samaj in Bombay. His plan met with a lukewarm reception. However, his visit inspired Vishnu Shastri Pandit and some of his friends to form the 'Vidhava Vivahottejaka Mandal' (Widow- Remarriage Promoting Association) in 1866. Vishnu Shastri was a leading liberal pandit of Pune. The Mandal attracted University graduates and reformers from different sections of the Society. Ranade knew Vishnu Shastri from the days when both were co- editors of 'Indu Prakash' of Lokahitawadi.

Ranade took more interest in this social reform as he knew from his own experience that the early marriage of girls some times means widowhood for the major part of their lives. The girls who were betrothed to some child bridegrooms who died before their formal marriage were considered widows for the rest of their lives. Ranade's own sister who was married at the age of ten, became a widow after a few years. Her

plight in her father-in law's house was most miserable. Ranade and his friend Vishnu Shastri did not wish to advocate the rights of women on the ideals of social justice but they wanted to show to the conservative leaders of the Hindus that the Dharma Shastra had already provided for such a contingency. The Orthodox party was fully prepared for a showdown as they organized 'Hindu Dharma Vyavasthapaka Mandalī' (Society for the Protection of the Hindu Religion).

The translation of Vidyasagar's book published in series of articles in *Indu Prakash* produced a great commotion and the controversy continued from 1868 to 1871. Vishnu Shastri went on a lecturing tour to Nasik and Pune to arouse the conscience of the people. He was also publishing essays on remarriage in the *Indu Prakash* at the same time. Then in 1869 he inserted an Advertisement for widow-remarriage. They found a widow whose family would allow her to remarry and there was a willing teacher to marry her. The marriage was celebrated on June 15, 1869 at Thakurdwar in Bombay in full traditional style. The Orthodox retaliated by excommunicating the sponsors of the marriage. Then ensued a trial of strength on the interpretation of the shastras. The shankaracharya of Karvir agreed to adjudicate.

The Orthodox party managed to pressurise the support time the debate was abruptly stopped. Shankaracharya's decision went in favour of the Orthodox party. Ranade during the struggle had published his interpretations in a pamphlet entitled 'The Text of the Hindu Law on the Lawfulness of the Remarriage of Widow', and an article "Vedic Authorities for widow marriage'. His writings, on the widow remarriage later became basic texts for the social reforms. He was excommunicated along with others in 1869 but he did not suffer much because of his position and assistance of liberal minded friends.

6.3.5 Weakening of the Reform Movement

The cause of the reformers received a set back when one of them resorted to the British Court to prosecute an Orthodox Spokesman for defamation. The Pune Court sentenced him to thirty two days imprisonment, and in a similar second trial the defendant was given a term of three month's imprisonment. The action of the reformers however was not received well by the general public. They resented the move of the reformers to seek the help of British Law and their law courts to punish the Orthodox people who wished to preserve their age-old tradition. They suspected some evil intention on the part of the rulers. According to the public opinion it was a conspiracy with the foreign rulers to destroy their culture.

Another event that weakened the position was the forbidden sea voyage of the son of Lokahrtawadi. The latter and his son Krishnarao were under the social boycott because they had supported the much debated marriage of a Brahman widow in Bombay. Now after the return of Krishnarao he would not be re-admitted to the Hindu Society unless he and his father did proper penance. Lokahitwadi publicly did the penance against the advice of Ranade. Lokahitwadi's retreat at a critical point weakened the position of the reformers.

The death of his wife Sakhubai in 1873 brought another crisis in the life of Ranade. He wished to visit Europe for a change but his father objected to that on the grounds that the influence of foreign country might adversely affect his outlook and behaviour. Moreover his father would not allow him to remain without a life partner. He was afraid that Madhav might marry a widow. His father therefore put great pressure on him to marry Ramabai the daughter of the Kurlekar family of Satara who was year to be married. The reformers of Pune and Bombay felt let down by one of their leaders, when Ranade married a spinster and not a widow.

6.3.6 Indian National Social Conference

Among the educated elite there was a controversy in the 1880s about the priority to be given to one of the two movements, social and political. There were many who thought that social reforms should get precedence over political matters. However there was a powerful group led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak who were emphatic about the importance of the political movement aiming at independence. Men like Dadabhai Naoroji would favour individual supporters of reforms but did not favour an organized movement. When Indian National Congress held its first session in December 1885 at Prarthana Samaj in Bombay a meeting was held in the same hall after the Congress session to discuss social issues. There after the Social Conference was held even year as an adjunct meeting of interested members at a separate place in the same town as the session of the Indian National Congress during that period.

From the beginning most of the Congress members were more interested in the political discussions, and left the social issues to be abated by a small number which included Ranade, R. Raghunathrao, Malbari Sheth and others. The Social Conference was formally established in December 1887. Earlier in March 1887 Ranade had made a spirited plea for attacking the social problems before undertaking a struggle for freedom. He pointed out that most of the public spirited men wish to be in the lime light by making political speeches and the same people are paralysed when social issues crop up. The general public also would give a rousing reception to the politicians and applaud

their smallest achievement however, would magnify the faults of the social reformers and play down their major successes.

Ranade believed in the necessity of solving the social problems before the struggle for self rule. He used to admonish those who were over enthusiastic about political movement. He wished to preserve the health of the society by maintaining the harmony among the different organs and functions of the body politic. He pointed out "You cannot have a good social system when you find yourself low in the scale of political rights, nor can you be fit to exercise political rights and privileges unless your social system is based on reason and justice. You cannot have a good economy when economic ideals are low and groveling you cannot succeed in social, economic and political spheres".

Ranade who was appointed as First Class Grade subordinate Judge in Pune in 1871 had to wait for twentythree years to rise to the position of a High Court Judge because of his reforming activities. This man who was popularly known as the 'Prince of Graduates' was associated with many socio-political bodies. The Government servants during the 19th century were not restrict from participating in public activities or even openly expressing their views on current matters. This liberty was fully utilized by men like Ranade to work for public activities of even openly expressing their views like Ranade to work for public good. He was one of the founders of the Indian National Congress, he was an active member of the Prarthana Samaj. He had joined issue with Tilak in the Controversy on Age of Consent. He was associated with Industrial conference and Industrial exhibition and above all he was the founder of the Social Conference and was one of the promoters of Sarvajanik Sabha. He was one of those, who showed the courage to demand responsible government in India in 1874 before the establishment of the Indian National Congress. His labour of love was however social reforms.

6.3.7 The Thirty Two Issues That Defined His Liberalism

Justice Ranade, Satyendranath, elder brother of Ravindranath Tagore, Lal Shankar and Umia Shankar of ahmedabad and Nanjundaiyya of Mysore and others drew up a list of thirtytwo of the very important issues before the Indian Society and circulated the list among the educated people to elicit their opinions. The list contained social, educational, religious, and philanthropic issues.

The nature of the contents reflected the condition of the Indian society in the 19th Century. The list included female education prohibition of liquor and drugs, the Hindu-Muslim conflicts, the caste system, child marriage, the miserable condition of widows, the problem of dowry, the

education of the backward people, sea voyage and similar inhibitions, The list however did not mention fundamental issues like the need to eliminate caste system, abolition of untouchability and equal position for women. The issues had the lack of bold approach but it would be disappointing to know the actual progress the Maharashtra Society has made during the last Century even in the matter of apparently minor social ills.

Ranade's liberalism may not contain the flash and the thunder that catches the eye. It was like a quiet flowing stream washing away the dust and stimulating the urge to reform society in the hearts of man like Prof. D.K.Karve and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar In the speech delivered by Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar at the celebration of 101st Birth Anniversary of Ranade in the Deccan Sabha at Pune he said, the greatness of Mr. Justice Ranade consists in adoption of his social objectives and the methods he followed to achieve them. He is known more as a social reformist than as a historian, economist or an educationist, Ranade was great because of his high social and his untiring efforts for reforms.

6.3.8 The Deccan Sabha and Ranade's Liberalism

M.G Ranade gave a clear cut form to the Indian liberalism when he drafted Manifesto constituting the Deccan Sabha on November 4, 1896. He wanted association to promote the interest identified with moderate and liberal opinion, not to be entangled with conflict of the old Sarvajanic Sabha established in 1870. He wrote "Liberalism and Moderation will be the watch words of this Association. The spirit of Liberalism implies a freedom from race and creed prejudices, and steady devotion to all that seeks to do justice between man and man, giving to be rulers the loyalty that is due to the law they are bound to administer, but securing all at the same time to the ruled the equality which is their right under the law-after all, political activities are chiefly of value, and the particular results achieved, but for the process of education, which is secured by existing interest in the public citizenship. This is no doubt a slow process, but all growth of new habits must be slow to be real. This was in fact the sum and substance of the hopes and aspirations of and his followers.

6.3.9 Check your Progress:-

Q. 2. Describe the contribution of M.G. Ranade in Social Reform ?

6.4 SUMMARY :

Like downtrodden, women's condition was equally bad in all caste. They had to suffer number of problems because of lack of education and men's dominance in the society. On the eve of the British rule in Maharashtra Women were the most sufferers in the social system. They were the victims of bad traditions, customs and superstition.

Christian missionaries and handful western educated reformers rendered yeoman service to the cause of the emancipation of women.

Mahadeo Govind Ranade a great social reformer played important role in the widow-remarriage controversy. He was active member of Prathana Samaj. To solve the social problem he called the Social Conference in the very founding session of Indian National Congress at Mumbai.

6.5 QUESTIONS :

1. Write in detail efforts made by various reformer of Maharashtra in the issue of emancipation of women.
2. What was the important social reform introduced by M.G. Ranade?



SOCIAL REFORMS II

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Mahatma Jyotirao Phule
- 7.3 Gopalbaba Valangkar
- 7.4 Vitthal Ramji Shinde
- 7.5 Shahu Maharaj
- 7.6 Summary
- 7.7 Questions.

7.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1) To understand Mahatma Jyotirao Phule's work, the Satyashodhak Samaj and Universal Humanism.
- 2) To know the work of Gopalbaba Valangkar and Anarya Dosh Parihar Mandal
- 3) To realise the contribution of Vithal Ramji Shinde and the Depressed Classes Mission of India.
- 4) To understand the role of Shahu Maharaj and Vedokta Episode.

7.1 INTRODUCTION :

Mahatma Phule was the pioneer of upliftment of the downtrodden Gopalbaba, V. R. Shinde and Shahu Maharaj worked against caste-system. They wanted to eradicate inequalities, superstitions, illiteracy from Society. Through they were attached to different organizations, they achieved their goal to some extent.

7.2 MAHATMA JYOTIRAO PHULE (1827-1890) :

Mahatma Phule occupies a unique position among the social reformers of Maharashtra. Born in 1827 in a gardener (mali) caste, he suffered from social and economic disadvantages. While as a student

in the Scottish Mission's High School, he came in contact with Christian missionaries and the ideas of Thomas Paine contained in his book, 'Rights of Man'. After completing his secondary education in 1847 Jyotiba decided not to join government service but to pursue an independent career.

In 1848 he was brought face to face with the problem of inequalities of the caste system and the abuses of the predominant Brahmin Caste. He was invited to the wedding of one of his Brahmin friend but was prevented by the relatives of the bridegroom from joining the wedding procession because he belonged to the lower mali caste. After this incident, Jotibarao made up his mind to defy the caste system and serve for the upliftment of the 'sudras' and women, who had been deprived of all their rights as human beings under this system. He was convinced that unless these sections of people were educated, their upliftment was not possible. Hence, with the help of some Brahmin friends he opened the first non-Christian girls' school in Poona in 1848, inspite of the opposition and 'vicious campaign against him by upper castes. He also began educating his wife, Savitribai so that she could also participate in his social work. In 1851, he established the first school for the children of untouchable and in the next year, he set up the 'Society for the Teaching of Knowledge to Mahars, Mangs and other People".

Phule believed that the caste system introduced distinction between low and high, and must, therefore, be abandoned. He was of the firm opinion that divisions among people should be based on their qualities, not on birth. Curiously, the Marathas, who were considered as Sudras by the Brahmins, regard the untouchables (ati-shudras) as inferior to them. But for Phule, who was imbued with the ideas of enlightenment and liberalism, distinctions based on Caste, was a social evil. Hence he boldly attacked the stranglehold of the Brahmins on the Maharashtrian society and castigated them for preventing others from having access to all avenues of knowledge and influence. Denouncing the Brahmins in general as 'Cheats and hypocrites' he called upon the non-Brahmin masses to resist their tyranny.

Phule charged Brahmins of misinterpreting Hindu scriptures to suit their own community and of fabricating falsehoods to dupe the minds of the ignorant and to fasten firmly on them the chains of bondage and slavery. He went to the extent of arguing that the Sudras were the sons of the soil and the Brahmins came from outside and usurped everything that was possessed by the Sudras. His books Sarvajanic Satyadharma 'Pustak' and 'Gulamgiri' were biting indictments of the Brahmin community. He denounced all Brahmin scriptures and their teaching

which had condemned the Shudras as the slaves of Brahmins. He declared that all those including foreigners, who treated him as equal, were his brothers.

7.2.1 The Satya Shodhak Samaj

Until the Indian “Revolt” against the British in 1857, Jyotirao Phule was in favour of the British social legislation and hoped for a quicker social change. But after 1857 the British adopted the policy of cautious social neutrality and did little in the direction of social reform by legislation. Most social reformers cared little for the poor peasants and artisans. This made him think in terms of establishing an association that would articulate the grievances of the neglected section of the Maharashtrians, create awareness among them and induce them to fight for justice and equality. By 1873, the idea of establishing an independent organisation to work for the emancipation of the “Shudras” from what he called, “slavery” of the Brahmins and to destroy religious and social bondage of the lower castes, crystalised in his mind.

Accordingly, on 24th September, 1873, Phule and his associates established the “Satya Shodhak Samaj” (Society of Seekers of Truth). The main objectives of the Samaj were to liberate the Sudras and Ati-sudras from social and religious bondage and to prevent their exploitation by the Brahmins. All members of the Samaj were required to treat all human beings as “children of God and worship the Creator without the help of any mediator”. Membership of the Samaj was open to all irrespective of caste and creed. However, every member had to take a pledge to loyalty to the British Empire. A “Satya-shodhaka” was to be a seeker of truth whose reference was the human person and concern for truth, and not the traditional values, Phule refused to regard the Vedas to be sacrosanct. He opposed the custom of worshipping before idols (idolatry) and denounced the Chaturvarnya (The four varnas).

In social and religious matters, Phule wanted both men and women to be given equal rights; he regarded it a sin to discriminate between human beings on the basis of sex. He stressed the unity of all human beings and envisaged a society based on liberty, equality and fraternity. He was opposed to religious, bigotry and aggressive nationalism because both destroy the unity of humankind and therefore inimical to progress.

Early in 1874 Phule started a branch of the Samaj in Bombay and three years later a weekly journal, ‘Din Bandhu’, was founded to spread its message. Narayan Meghaji Lokhande, a close associate of Phule and an active trade union leader, became the editor of the paper. He

used its columns to air the grievances of mill workers and to suggest measures to alleviate them.

Phule used his position as a nominated member of the Poona Municipality to help the famine stricken areas of Maharashtra (1877). The 'Victoria Orphanage' was founded under the auspices of the Satyashodhak Samaj. Through the pages of 'Din Bandhu' the leaders of the Satyashodhak Samaj articulated the grievances of the peasants and workers. In fact, Jyotirao and his colleagues like Lokhande were the pioneers in organising peasants and workers and attempting to redress their grievances.

The ideology of the Satyashodhak Samaj was virtually anti-Brahmanical. Brahmin orthodoxy reacted strongly against it. They found an effective "knight errant" in the fiery journalist, Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, and his journal, 'Nibandhmala'. He derisively described Phule as "a Shudra Religious Teacher, Shudra Founder of a Religion, a Shudra world Teacher, merely banking at Brahmins of all his writings". However, Phule's, movement remained outside the formal domain of politics. Its potential was not realised until the 1880s when Phule mounted strong attacks against leaders of the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Sarvajanic Sabha and the Indian National Congress for their failure to take concrete measures to improve the lot of the masses. He felt that these organisations were dominated by the Brahmins and therefore were not truly representative in character. However, he was equally fearless in his criticism, of the Government. For instance, he protested vigorously against Lytton's restrictions on the Indian Vernacular Press and disapproved of the proposed public reception to the Viceroy by the Poona Municipality.

The, anti-Brahminism of the Satyashodhak Samaj was directed, not against individual Brahmins but against the system that permitted Brahmin preponderance in socio-religious matters. Phule's personal relations with Brahmin reformers and with Justice Ranade in particular, remained good. He participated in their activities. Moreover, so radical was he in his championship of justice and Brahmins but also to the 'Sahannavakuli Marathas' – the 'Marathas belonging to the ninety-six aristocratic families, the Maratha aristocracy. He accused them of exploiting the kunbi peasant. According to Mathew Lederle, "Jyotirao Phule worked equally for the Sudra and Ati-Shudra revealed a surprising broadness of vision at a time when caste distinctions prevailed not only between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, but with not less rigidity between the Maratha Sudras and the untouchable Atisudras. The forces of the caste system were so strong that Phule's ideal of equality for all failed to

prevail even in the Satyashodhak Samaj". "If human beings are all creatures of the same Divine Being, why should one caste deem itself superior to others?" Asked Phule.

As a social and religious organisation, the Satyashodhak Samaj, according to Gail Omvedt, "bears comparison with other, more famous samajas: the Brahmo Samaj and Prarthana Samaj, with which it shares a secular and rationalistic approach, and the Arya Samaj with which it shared a mass basis". But it was non-elite in character and was limited to Marathi-speaking areas. Its radicalism resulted in a general hostility of the elite, including most of the educated non-Brahmin elite.

Unlike his contemporary reformers - Jambhekar, Dadoba Pandurang, Lokhitavadi, Bhandarkar, Ranade, Vishnushastri Pandit and Agarkar, Jyotirao Phule was no intellectual; nor were his writings and theories as profound as theirs. But his work was the anguished cry of the suppressed classes trying to emancipate from bondage of centuries and from the tyranny of upper castes. His main work was to rouse the exploited and suppressed masses and lead them in an organised resistance to the unreasonable claims of the Brahmins. By emphasising individual dignity and equality in social and religious matters, he attempted to bring solidarity to the Hindu social organisation which was fragmented into groups of caste. Herein lies his greatness.

Ironically, when he died on 28th November 1890; this great champion of the low castes and downtrodden, was a much misunderstood man; he was accused of fermenting hatred between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins. But no attempt was made to consider his scathing criticism of the prevailing society in a broad perspective. Even later generations were slow to understand and appreciate the significance of his steady and courageous advocacy of social equality and individual dignity. Nevertheless, recent studies of his work have convinced many scholars that Mahatma Jyotirao Govindrao Phule (Jyotiba Phule) was a pioneer in many fields. He stands out among his contemporaries' as one who never wavered in his quest for truth and justice.

Mahatma Jyotirao Phule was the first Indian to proclaim in modern India the dawn of the new age for the common man, the Indian woman. Jyotirao was the first Indian to start a school for the untouchables and a girl's school in Maharashtra. According to Dhananjay Keer, Phule believed in honestly working for his livelihood. He was almost the first public man in modern India to devote his time to serving the masses", By his emphasis on Truth, Equality and Humanism, this great son of

Maharashtra carved out for himself, in the company of modern India's great thinkers and reformers, a permanent place.

7.2.2 Universal Humanism of Mahatma Phule

Mahatma Phule was not interested in developing theories. He wanted to explain the work undertaken by him. In his famous book "Sarvajanik Satyadharma Pustak' (Book of Universal True Religion) he analyses the meaning of truth and explains the basis of 'inference' to arrive at truth. He ridicules the whimsical ideas put forward by "Mahabharata" before ignorant masses. He wanted only rational explanation.

Phule maintains that 'religion is the relation between God the Creator and man his creature.' Every thing comes from God for man to make use of. But since not all mankind has kept the fear of the Creator and a feeling of brotherhood embracing all men, truth has steadily declined and dissatisfaction and sorrow spread. The disregard of truth led to the disorder and hence truth should be restored so that order can be re-established.

Phule Criticised the theory of 'Vama-Dharma' that the religious duties are made identical with duties of one's profession. He opined that social reform is possible only when we understand religion properly. He was 'interested in religion not for the sake of doctrine but for the interest of the downtrodden masses.

His ideas about God were inspired by the influence of Christianity and his monotheism resembled that of the Prarthana Samaj.

He advocated liberty for all men as well as women. He wanted to remove the impediments of evil customs which enslaved man and degraded woman. He wanted the downtrodden to be educated. He said there should be schools for shudras in every village. Education would liberate them from social enslavement.

7.2.3 Check your progress :-

Q.2. Explain the concept of Phule's Universal Humanism.

7.3 GOPALBABA VALANGKAR :

Gopalbaba or Gopalbuva was one of those public spirited men like Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and Justice M.G. Ranade who wanted to reform Hindu Society and eradicate the evils of the caste-system. Gopalbuva was a contemporary of the eminent leaders mentioned above. We have to glean the information about his life and

activities as is available from the periodicals of the second half of the 19th century and of course the writings of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

He was born in Dapoli Taluka of Ratnagiri district. He was well versed in the Bhakti literature of Maharashtra. He was respectfully called a 'Haribhakta Parayan' (A highly revered devotee of God). Among the common people, he was variously called Gopalbaba or Gopalbuva as terms 'Baba and Buva' mean the same. Although born in an untouchable 'Mahar' family, he did not suffer the indignities of low birth passively nor did he resort to violent protests. He grew up to be a saintly person who believed in persuasion and discussion to remove the stigma of untouchability.

Gopalbuva founded an 'Anaryadosh Parihara Mandal' (society for the removal of disability of being non-Aryan). The very name that he chose for his Mandal or Samaj is significant. He wanted to wash out the stain or stigma of being regarded as non-Aryan. It was the time when historical research was in the initial stage in India. Mahatma Phule was talking about 'Gulalmgiri' (slavery) imposed by the descendants of Aryans who came from outside, namely the Brahmins.

7.3.1 Gopalbuva's Contribution

Dr. Ambedkar says that research shows that among several bodies set up for the purpose of social reforms the 'Anaryadosh Parihara Mandal' was the first one in Maharashtra. Gopalbuva toured the Bombay Presidency and opened branches of this Mandal or society. His purpose was to awaken the slumbering masses of unprivileged section of the society. He moved among different people and explained his mission to them. When he went to Bombay or Poona he did not leave anything in unsought which could help create consciousness for social reforms. He prepared a list of questions and sent it to the leaders of the Indian National Congress two years after foundation. He asserted how could the Congress demand political reforms without snaking social reforms?

Gopalbuva wrote in the popular weeklies of Poona namely 'Deenbondhu' of Jyotirao Phule and 'Sudharak' of G.G. Agarkar. He prepared a questionnaire of fifty pages and sent to various bodies and individuals asking them to debate the points. He even challenged the then high-priest Shankaracharya of Maharashtra and other religious leaders, to an open debate. He published the booklet of fifty pages on Vijaya dashmi day in 1888. His writings compiled under the name 'Akhanda' (perennial) were to be published subsequently.

In 1893 the Company's Government stopped recruiting untouchable to the military. The Mahar battalion in the Company's service in 1818 had played a leading role in defeating Peshwa Bajirao II. Now the company changed its stand. Gopalbuva rushed to Justice

M.G.Ranade with a representation to the Government, the matter received the attention of the Government.

Another instance which marked him out as a leader of the downtrodden community, was that although the high caste Hindus did not directly help him, they always, showed full sympathy for his cause as Gopalbuva could approach Justice Ranade when in distress. Gopalbuva's Mandal had a Government recognition as Sir Herbert Risley when compiling information about the customs and traditions of the Hindus sent a copy of the questionnaire to Gopalbuva's Mandal in 1898. Dr. Ambedkar has paid him a rich tribute, as he proudly says "it was from the Konkan that the movement for the emancipation of the low castes began. It was under his leadership that the awakening among the depressed community started. Those who wish to know more about his work may refer to the old files of Phule's 'Deenbandhu'.

7.3.2 Check your progress:-

Q.3 Write short notes on Anarya dosh parihar Mandal.

7.4 VITTHAL RAMJI SHINDE (1873-1944) :

As we have already noted that social reformers of Maharashtra like Balshastri. Jambhekar, Lokhitawadi Gopal Hari Deshmukh, Bhadarkar, Justice Ranade and Jyotirao Phule gave priority to social reform over political reform. Phule and Agarkar stressed the need to make the Indian Society fit for preserving freedom after winning it. They believed that freedom was meaningless if political power was monopolised by a privileged few, and hence Phule had endeavoured to establish the principle of justice and equality by emancipating the vast non-Brahmin masses of Maharashtra from the social and religious bondage. Since men like Tilak denigrated the reformers as 'stooges of the alien government' because of their advocacy of reform with the help of the government, most of them kept away from politics. In the early years of the Indian National Congress, some of the reformers, notably Ranade, were associated with the freedom movement but as the nationalist struggle came to be dominated by the close of the 19th century, by conservatives such as Lokmanya Tilak links between the reformers and the leaders of the nationalist movement were severed.

Until the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi on the national scene, both the social reform and nationalist movements appeared to run parallel to each other. Consequently, social reform movement, especially the efforts

to give a fair deal to the Ati-sudras or the untouchables, received a set back. But one reformer Vithal Ramji Shinde made repeated attempts to re-establish contacts between the social reformers and the nationalist freedom fighters. Finally, he succeeded in integrating social reform with, political reform, and persuaded the Indian National Congress to include abolition of untouchability in its programme.

Born in a poor Maratha family on 23m April 1873, Shinde was married to a then one year old when he was barely nine. Surprisingly, his family was comparatively liberal in the observance of social customs such as “Purdah” and female education. He graduated in Arts with the financial support of a prominent Poona lawyer, named Gangaram Mhaske, and the enlightened ruler of Baroda Sayajirao Gaikwad (1898). During the period of his college education. Shinde was influenced by the writings of J.S.Mill, Herbert Spencer and Agarkar. After his graduation he was attracted by the reformist ideas of the leaders of Prarthana Samaj like Ranade and Bhandarkar and joined the Samaj. In 1901, he managed to secure a scholarship to study at the Oxford University on the condition that on his return he would serve the Prarthana Samaj. At Oxford he studied ‘Comparative Religion’. On his return to Bombay, he worked for seven years as missionary of the Prarthana Samaj.

7.4.1 The Depressed Classes Mission of India

While serving the Prarthana Samaj, Shinde also established on 18th October 1906, the Indian Depressed Classes Mission for uplifting the untouchables. With Shinde as general secretary, and with the patronage of the Prarthana Samaj and the Bombay Presidency Social Reform Association, the movement quickly spread over Maharashtra. Shinde and members of his family, including his parents and his sister Janabai, took a pledge to serve the untouchables. But his work in the Prarthana Samaj did not give him enough time to spare for the activities of the Depressed Classes Mission. In 1910 differences between him and the leaders of the Samaj on organizational and other matters developed, forcing Shinde to give up his work of the Samaj. From then on, he devoted his full time to the work of the Mission.

At the same time, fearing that separatist movements on the basis of caste- would destroy the sense of unity so necessary for the success of the freedom struggle, he starved for social justice as a part of the movement. Since the non-Brahmins, especially the Marathas, formed a very large group in the total population of the Bombay Presidency, he took the initiative to form the Maratha Rashtriya Sangha (the National Union of the Marathas) to maintain the unity of the Maratha Community. But-despite his efforts, the Marathas were divided into two groups i.e.

one led by a nationalist Maratha and the other by the Satyashodhak Marathas who claimed to follow Mahatma Phule's teachings. Hence, Shinde established a new organisation called 'All India Untouchability League' to safeguard the interests of the untouchables and work for their political rights.

In 1917, with the help of Mrs. Annie Besant, Shinde successfully persuaded the leaders of the Indian National Congress to pass a resolution demanding eradication of untouchability. When, under the Government of India Act of 1919 Muslims were given separate representation, he petitioned the government for special representation in the legislature to the depressed classes. However, he lost the election which he had fought on a general seat, allotted to Poona City, due to the last minute withdrawal of support by Shahu Maharaja. Thereafter, Shinde had to face a lot of difficulties and opposition within the Depressed Classes Mission. A section of the politically conscious untouchables who did not like the moderate line of Shinde on the issue of untouchability sought to capture the organisation. Hence, he entrusted the powers and responsibilities of work of the Poona Branch of the Mission to the new leaders of the untouchables.

When Gandhiji emerged on the political scene of India as the leader in the political struggle for independence, Shinde was attracted towards him as he felt his aspirations realised in Gandhiji's social and political thought. After having relinquished the responsibilities of the Depressed Classes Mission, he worked as the missionary of the Brahma Samaj in 1923- 24, and participated in the famous Temple Entry Agitation at Vaikam in Kerala. Later, he supported the Jedhe brothers to organise the peasants movement in Maharashtra against the proposed rise in the land revenue (1928). He took part in Gandhiji's non-cooperation movement, courted arrest and suffered imprisonment for six months. But he had no peace of mind because of indifference shown towards him by the new leaders of the untouchables. A decade before his death on 2nd January, 1944, Shinde was completely broken financially, physically and psychologically. Those for whom he had devoted his prime years almost ignored him and forgotten him.

Vitthal Ramji Shinde was a true follower of Mahatma Phule. Though he differed from Phule in his approach to Hinduism, he was convinced that there was a widespread Aryan i.e. Brahmanic bias in the consideration of India civilisation. Therefore, he was in favour of abolition of the caste system. He dedicated himself to the promotion of the welfare of the masses. More than with anything else Shinde identified himself with the uplift of the Depressed Classes. Wherever he went, Shinde opened a day and night schools for the children of Depressed Classes

he started hostels and free dispensaries for the children and adults of these classes. He sought to create spirit of revolt among members of the Depressed Classes against existing conditions. The Depressed Classes Mission, under Shinde linked up work in several centres in the Bombay Presidency and some in Madras as well. According to S. Natarajan the Mission was responsible for turning out the leadership of the next generation of these classes and for inspring in them a spirit of service.

7.4.2 Check your Progress.

Q.3. Given an account of the work of Vitthal Ramji Shinde.

7.5 SHAHU MAHARAJ :

Among more than 563 rulers of the Princely States in British India, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja was a very enlightened monarch who made genuine efforts to promote the cause of social reform. His fame rests particularly on his defiance of the age old caste system and championship of the rights of the Depressed Classes and his work for their emancipation. His reforming efforts supplemented the activities of Mahatma Phule and Vithal Shinde and in some ways contributed to the consolidation and spread of the non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra. However, his victory in the fight with the Brahmins during the 'Vedokta movement', his success in establishing the rights of non-Brahmins to perform Vedic rites, in fact, strengthened the traditional upper castes, namely the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. Hence, his victory In the 'Vedokta movement' was a set-back to the anticaste system movement of reformers like Phule and Shinde. Shahu Maharaj was considered to be the main pillar of Phule's Satyashodhak movement and the movement of the Maratha Sudras and Ati-sudras; but he never accepted full responsibility of leadership of both these movements. As one of the writer has observed that he never fully involved himself in these two movements. In fact, in the last decade of the 19th century and early decades of the twentieth century, he publicly criticised the non-Brahmin movement.

Notwithstanding this criticism, it must be accepted that the Chhatrapati of Kolhapur rendered very valuable service to the cause of the upliftment of women, the untouchables, their education and

employment of the working class. According to Dhananjay Keer, he abolished slavery in which the untouchables, including the tribals, were held for ages in his kingdom, and gave them equal rights. Unmindful of his position as Chhatrapati Shahu dined with the untouchables and thereby displayed his progressive attitude towards the socially disadvantaged communities. He wanted to destroy social inequalities and caste distinctions because he regarded these as evils which had fragmented the Hindu Society. As Mathew Lederle remarks - "Shahu Maharaj in the spirit of Phule, worked for the upliftment of the untouchables, and promoted the education of the masses·.

In the very first year of his ascending the throne in 1894, Shahu issued a directive abolishing the system of forced labour. Realising that people belonging to non-Brahmin caste would not be able to break the Brahmin monopoly of administrative service due to lack of education, he prepared a scheme for their education. He was determined to provide equal opportunities to the backward or Depressed Classes. Therefore, he whole-heartedly supported the establishment of students' hostels on the basis of caste.

In 1902, he issued from England an order reserving 50 percent of the administrative posts under his government for candidates belonging to the backward castes - a measure aimed at destroying the Brahmin stronghold. For instance, in 1894, out of 71 officers in the General Administrative Department, 60 were Brahmins; in 1912, there were only 35 Brahmin officers out of a total of 95.

Although during the period of the 'Vedokta Controversy', Shahu Maharaj upheld the rights of the Marathas as Kshatriyas and claimed that they were superior to other non-Brahmin castes, he boldly took measures that struck at the very roots of the caste system. Towards the end of his life, he demanded the abolition of the obnoxious system itself. Calling it "the greatest obstacle in the path of our progress", he held that it was a crime to support the caste system.

Shahu was one with his contemporary reformers in holding free and compulsory education as the most effective remedy to cure the maladies from which the Hindu Society suffered for centuries. He established several institutions of primary, secondary and higher education. The effects of his educational policy were visible even during his life time. For example, in 1894, the Rajaram College at Kolhapur had only 97 students on its rolls, out of whom six were non-Brahmins. In 1922, there were 100 non-Brahmin students out of 265. During this period the number of school going students in his state increased from 10,884 to 27,830 and the number of non-Brahmins from 8,088 to 21,027 of

whom 2,162 were untouchables in 1922. These figures bear an eloquent testimony to the Chhatrapati's sincere efforts to break the monopoly of the privileged few in the field of education. All teachers in government as well as private schools receiving grant from his government were asked not to discriminate between students on the basis of caste.

Likewise, his government guaranteed equal treatment to all patients including untouchables in the hospitals. Partly under the influence of the Satyashodhak Samaj, Brahmo Samaj and Prarthana Samaj, and mainly under the influence of the Arya Samaj whose member he became in 1916, Shahu devoted the last years of his life for the improvement of the conditions and status of such as tanks and wells. Separate schools for the untouchables were closed down and they were made to study in schools belonging to the upper classes along with high caste students. Untouchables were permitted to practice as lawyers and compete for and occupy positions traditionally regarded as the preserve of the upper castes. His government replaced the Kulkarnis (village accountants, mostly Brahmins) by Talathis, and offered some of these new posts to the untouchables.

The Brahmins, as was expected, resented the measure; but the policy had far-reaching effects on the administrative machinery of the villages. The ruler of Kolhapur also sought to improve the lot of the Maharas by abolishing the traditional system of "Watan" and the "Baluta" system, which had led to forced labour by the villagers belonging to upper caste. In 1918, Chhatrapati issued an order abolishing the Mahar watan those who opposed the measure were liable to pay fines or undergo imprisonment.

Shahu Maharaja's efforts contributed substantially to social development among all non-Brahmin and untouchable castes, especially among the Marathas. The activities of Jyotirao Phule, and Shahu were a reaction against 'Brahmin Nationalism'. But the role of these two champions of non-Brahmins deferred. According to Gailomvedt,- "they symbolized the two primary ideological trends within the non- Brahmin movement, one with a more lower class, the other with a more elite social base. Phule was a complete secular and equalitarian radical; Shahu leaned toward the "Kshatriyas' ideology".

7.5.1 The Vedokta Episode

"Vedokta" refers to "Vedic religious rites which were claimed to be the right of all twice-born Kshatriyas and Brahmins", as opposed to the Puranic or "Puranokta" rites which all Shudras were entitled to perform. (Traditionally, even the Vaishyas were included in the "twice born" category.) Since the background of the controversy could be traced

to the struggle between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas for supremacy from ancient times, and the space at our disposal is limited, we shall restrict our discussion to the immediate events that led to the movement.

However, we may note that this controversy had raised its head in Maharashtra first time in the nineteenth century in 1837. When Pratap Singh was the ruler of Satara. To put an end to the vexed question about the permissibility of the Kshatriyas to perform the Vedic rites, he summoned a meeting of the leaders of both the castes, since the Brahmins had been arguing that they alone were eligible to perform the vedic sacrifices and rituals. The outcome of the meeting was that the Brahmins lost their case. Aristocratic Maratha families such as the Bhonsles, Ghatges, Palkars, Jadhavs, Mohites, Manes and Mahadiks' were now officially declared as the Kshatriyas. Their right to perform Vedic rituals and sacrifices was confirmed with documentary evidence.

The controversy reappeared in 1896 in Baroda, where rituals in the palace of Maharaj Sayajirao Gaikwad used to be conducted in "Puranokta". Under the influence of Jyotirao Phule, Gaikwad decided to adopt the Vedic religious rites as was being done in the ruling houses in Rajputana. When he ordered that the Vedokta religious rites be followed with effect from 15th October 1896, and the domination of social and religious life by the Brahmins went a long way in strengthening and consolidating the non- Brahmin and anti-caste movements. Although his efforts did not get much favourable response outside the State of Kolhapur during his own life time, his struggle for the emancipation of the untouchable castes from the bondage of upper castes provided the basis for the work of Jedhe Javalkar and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Hence, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaja has been called a revolutionary and man of the people.

7.5.2 The Kolhapur Incident

While the "Vedokta" controversy was raging in Baroda and arousing the Brahmins of Kolhapur as well of other parts of Maharashtra to agitate the Gaikwad's action, another similar controversy but of a greater intensity broke out in Kolhapur. In 1900 a dispute arose when the ruler of Kolhapur, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj discovered that his hereditary priests in the service of his palace were performing only "Puronokta" rites for him instead of Vedokta rites. On enquiry, the priests explained that since he was a shudra, he was entitled only to the "Puranokta" sacrifices they were performing. Provoked by their arrogance and also by their declaration that he was a Shudra, and therefore not entitled to Vedic rites, Shahu Maharaja ordered that all rituals in his court should be performed according to the Vedas. Thus

began a fierce inter-caste conflict, which gave a great fillip to the non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra.

The high priest of Shahu, the Rajopadhya, refused to comply with the orders of his king to perform Vedic rites. Hence, the Maharaja confiscated his "Inam" lands. The Shankaracharya supported the palace high priest against Shahu; enraged, the ruler of Kolhapur ordered the confiscation of the hereditary lands of the Shankaracharya in Kolhapur.

Behind the "Vedokta" controversy there was the burning question of political and social equality. It was alleged by the Marathas that the Brahmins were trying to sow dissensions in their Maratha community, and were trying to split the royal families. But leaders of the Brahmin community cleverly sought to convert the conflict between them and the Marathas of Kolhapur into a problem affecting the entire Hindu community. They demanded that Shahu should treat the "Vedokta" controversy in that light and solve it, keeping in mind that his decision would affect the entire Brahmin Community in India. However, he was not in a mood to compromise on the issue.

The conflict took a new turn when Lokmanya Tilak argued that Shahu may be allowed, in his capacity as the "Chhatrapati", to have Vedokta rites. But he refused to acknowledge Shahu's right for such rituals as matter of family right. In the end, the Maharaja resorted to coercion to make the Brahmins recognize his right to "Vedokta" rituals as he desired. Both the Rajopadhya and the Sharikaracharya yielded so that they could win back their lands. But this did not modify Shahu, his attitude was further hardened towards the Brahmins. He was convinced that only non-Brahmin power could force the Brahmins to acquiesce in obeying his orders.

Therefore, immediately after the Vedokta controversy, Shahu began to bring non-brahmins into the administration of Kolhapur and in many other ways he sought to weaken the position of the Brahmins. The Maratha nobility was happy to see "Brahmin nationalism" reeling under the blows of Shahu's reforms. But, as Gail Omvedt points out "the new Brahmins, who had come into the administration, were non-aristocratic persons. They began to pay attention to the message of secularism and equality and ceremonies to be held without any Brahmin at all that was being spread by the Satyashodhak Samaj. However, within a decade, a compromise with the Vedokta atmosphere was worked out in Kolhapur when many ceremonies of the Maratha community involved use of the sacred thread as one of the aspects of the claim to Kshatriyas status". But, in spite of this compromise, these ceremonies were significant. They were conducted in defiance of Brahmin

priests by trained non-Brahmin priests. (The social and political significance of these developments will be discussed in later Unit) .

7.5.3 Check your Progress:-

Q. 4 Briefly describe the Vedokta Episode.

7.6 SUMMARY :

Thus, between 1900 and 1920, a mutual influence involving Kshatriyas-oriented aristocratic anti-Brahminism and the mass-based radicalism of the satyashodhak movement took shape. On the one hand, it brought more “Vedic” outlook into the non-Brahmin movement such as the emphasis on the sacred thread ceremonies and claims to Kshatriya status by the Marathas of Kolhapur and its surrounding areas. On the other, the hostility of Shahu Maharaja to Brahmin domination of Hindu education and culture led to a climate in which militancy and social radicalism grew among educated non-Brahmins.

7.7 QUESTIONS :

1. Write in detail about mahatma Phule and his Satyashodhak Samaj.
2. Evaluate contribution of Gopalbaba Valangkar in the anti-caste movement.
3. How did V. R. Shinde and his despressed classes Missions functioned.
4. Examine the Role of Shahu Maharaj in the movement against Brahmin dominance.
5. Briefly describe the Vedokta Episode.

GROWTH OF LIBERALISM IN MAHARASHTRA - I

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Dadabhai Naoroji
- 8.3 M. G. Ranade and Economic Nationalism
- 8.4 Ganesh Vyankatesh Joshi
- 8.5 Summary
- 8.6 Questions

8.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1) To acquaint with the promotion of economic nationalism.
- 2) To understand the important role played by Dadabhai Naoroji.
- 3) To know important work done by M.G. Ranade.
- 4) G.V. Joshi and his economic nationalism.

8.1 INTRODUCTION :

We have reviewed the work of Jambhekar who is regarded as a pioneer of Renaissance in Maharashtra. Another reformer Tarkhadkar represented a secular approach and was one of the sponsors of reforming the traditional Hindu religion. Deshmukh alias Lokahitawadi did not confine his liberal thought to merely one or two fields but applied it to all walks of life. These reformers were not received with open arms by the society which was drilled and disciplined to preserve its social and spiritual values over centuries. Moreover, the traditional Maratha society had the privilege of witnessing the rise of the Maratha political influence throughout India. The people of Maharashtra whether in the cities like Bombay or Pune would hardly admit of any change inspired by their British conquerers.

The second half of the nineteenth century was dominated by the activities of another three leaders of liberal thought. They were Dadabhai

Naoroji, Mahadev Govind Ranade and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Their ideas and activities were to influence not only Bombay and Maharashtra but the whole country in general. In this connection Dr. K. Mukerji observes that Maharashtra never had a general renaissance in the sense that Bengal had one after 1815. Prof. J.V. Naik's rejoinder that the predecessors of Ranade- Agarkar had done a substantial rethinking in response to the socio-economic life in the colonial situation and thus the work of Ranade-Agarkar had influenced the main stream of Maharashtrian thought deserves consideration. Although most of these enlightened reformers were confined to cities, their influence on the people of Maharashtra was profound which will be clear from the activities of the institutions and organisation that they established. We shall now discuss the achievements of Dadabhai Naoroji, Mahadev Govind Ranade and Gopal Krishna Gokhale in the following pages.

8.2 DADABHAI NAOROJI (1825-1917) :

The manifold achievements of Dadabhai Naoroji the Grand old Man of Indian History cannot be justly compressed in a few pages. The story of his long life reflects the several memorable epochs in the history of political life of India. His 'simple but heroic life devoutly dedicated to the service of humanity, cannot be properly represented by fixing attention only on fleeting activities of his college days. It is therefore necessary to enumerate the important events of his life after discussing his contribution to the Students Literary and Scientific Society.

8.2.1 Student's Literary and Scientific Society

Dadabhai was born in Bombay in a poor Parsi priest family on September 4, 1825. He was educated in a free school conducted by the 'Native Education Society', The school had two branches English and Vernacular. The society was conducted under Government auspices. He received his college education in the Elphinstone Institution. The Elphinstone College and the school conducted by the Native Education Society were combined to form Elphinstone Institution He received the Clare scholarship in 1840 and in 1842 he was admitted to the newly opened class of Normal Scholars.

Dadabhai was very active during his college days. In 1848 some of the members of the Native Literary Society assembled in the hall of the Elphinstone Institution and formed a new society. It was named as 'Students' Literary and Scientific Society. Dadabhai was appointed as Treasurer of the Society and, Professor Patton its President. From that time onwards Dadabhai devoted himself to the work of education and social reform.

8.2.2 The Rules of the Society

The aim of the Society was to develop the interest in literary and scientific knowledge. In keeping with this aim one of the rules of the Society provided that two members should be nominated by the Secretary of the society to read papers on literary scientific or social subjects, The meeting of the Society was held twice a month. The Society was keen on activating the members to do independent thinking on these matters of public interest. The Students and teachers should shoulder the responsibility of educating the people and therefore an indepth study of the current issues was also intended. The Society however did not encourage entanglement of the political matters and religious questions.

The society maintained a strict discipline and therefore wished to weed out useless members or those who only accepted the membership as a sort of ornament. Those who failed to read a paper in the first instance were fined a rupee. The fine for second failure was two rupees and if the member failed to read his paper on the subject offered by him the third time he was expelled.

The questions that were made the subjects of the papers were discussed in the meetings of the Society. It was not to be merely an academic discussion to be confined within the four walls of the class room but the conclusions were to be exposed to the full view of the public through the columns of journals conducted by two vernacular branches of the society. One was the Gujarati 'Dnyan Prasarak Mandali' and the other was a 'Marathi Dnyan Prasarak Mandali'. The Gujarati journal was edited by Dadabhai Naoroji which published the debates.

The work undertaken by the 'Dnyan Prasarak Mandali under the guidance and direction of Dadabhai Naoroji was of far-reaching importance. In 1849, a paper on female education was read by Behramji Kharshetji Gandbi. The discussion on this much-debated issue led to a practical operation. The students began to visit several Parsi and Hindu parents to allow them to sit on their verandahs and to teach their girls. In a few days after the decision about the propagation of education among the girls the students could get the consent of parents. In the seven schools they could register 44 Parsi girls and 24 Hindu girls. The move to educate women attracted the attention of some leaders of Bombay. Jagannath Shankar Sheth gave a cottage to be used as school-house. This inspired others to give concrete assistance for female education. Khershedji Nasanwanji Cama gave a substantial donation to the Society. This enabled the Society to maintain schools for girls both Hindu and Parsi.

The social reform successfully undertaken by the Society encouraged some Parsi reformers to remove some pernicious customs from the Parsi society. In 1851 Naoroji Furdoomji the 'Tribunal of the people' was persuaded to found the 'Rahnumae Mazdaysnam Sabha' or 'Guides on the Mazdayasnan Path'. Naoroji Furdoomji was appointed President and Dadabhai Secretary. Some of the reformers were zealous to reform the old Zoroastrian faith according to the Western ideas. The Rahnumane Sabha achieved its goal of restoring the ancient religion to its pristine purity.

Dadabhai lived to witness the diarnond Jubilee of the Society and the Dnyan Prakash Mandali. The Society had also undertaken the work of translating books into Marathi and Gujarati. The work of the Society was also getting wider publicity as Elphinstonians of the first generation were interested in journalism. Among the Marathi speaking alumni journalism had become a favourite tool to propose social and religious reforms. Dadabhai also felt an urgent need of an independent journal for the cause of reform. Dadabhai and Kharshedji Cama decided to start a fortnightly journal 'Rast Goftar' (Truth Teller). Cama agreed to provide the necessary funds and Dadabhai agreed to run it without remuneration. The new journal was issued on November 15, 1851. This was incidently the sixth journal in Gujarati but the only one with an independent ideology. The journal was started in the wake of Muslim-Parsi riot which broke out on October 7, 1851. Within two months the journal with progressive views found favour with the readers and in January 1852 the fortnightly was converted into a weekly. Dadabhai was fully supported by the Society boys and his connection with the journal continued even after he left India in 1855 and made England his home.

The Students Society had a wider acceptance and its activities were assuming larger dimensions under the able leadership of Dadabhai. On September 2, 1852 a meeting was held in Elphinstone College to perpetuate the memory of Framji Cowasji Benaji, the great philanthropist and patron of education. It was decided at the meeting that the fund collected for helping the zorostrians in Iran was to be now utilised for the formation of a museum in connection with the Students Literary and Scientific Society and named the Framaji Cowasji Institute. Here was a professor setting a great ideal before his students. Several students of the Elphinstone College joined in the work of collecting funds for a noble cause. R.P. Masani remarks. "It is a teacher's office to lead as well as to teach and by the spark of his personal example to set the heart of his pupils on fire. Dadabhai fulfilled that mission, not only in regard to his college pupils but also in regard to his disciples throughout his life.

8.2.3 Important Events In his life

It would not be out of place if some important events in the life of the 'Grand Old Man' of Indian history are mentioned here in the context of his all-out efforts for building a new India and from such discussion regional history cannot be separated. He was appointed Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in 1852. He was the first Indian to hold, such a high position in any prominent colleges in the country. He left India in 1855 to settle in England. He joined the Cams Company and after a few years he started his own trading company. During the first decade he tried to educate the British public opinion on the Civil Service Examination. He stressed the Importance of Sanskrit and the Arabic the two classical languages and the London Indian Society was able to force the British Government to give up the proposal of reducing the marks gained by the Indian candidates in one of these languages as optional subjects.

In February 1866 John Crawford, President of the Ethnological Society of London read a paper in which he sought to prove that the Asians as a race were inferior in intellect compared to the Europeans. In the following month Dadabhai gave a fitting rejoinder to Crawford's thesis. Dadabhai's spirited defense of the Asiatic contribution to literature and science silenced arrogant European ethnologists.

Dadabhai's achievements in the political field are many. He became the first Member of the British Parliament. He worked as a Diwan of Baroda. He worked for the establishment of the Indian National Congress of which he was elected President thrice in his career. His greatest contribution to the intellectual field was his book 'Poverty and Un-British Rule in India' published in 1901. In 1876 when he was a Municipal Councilor of Bombay. He read a paper on the subject of the poverty of India before the Bombay branch of East India Association.

Dadabhai's achievements are put in a nutshell by Lokmanya Tilak when the efforts of Tilak were frustrated by Moderates in the Congress to be elected President at the Calcutta Congress in 1906. He writes, "Why do we respect Dadabhai so much? We do not consider that late Mr. Mandalik, Bhau Daji or Mr. Naoroji Fardumji were in any way inferior in their contribution to the national welfare to Dadabhai. Even if we point out that he was the first Indian to be elected the Member of British Parliament, subsequently Bhavnagari also achieved that distinction. These events do not explain why Dadabhai enjoys a unique place in the hearts of Indian people. The explanation is so obvious. His greatness does not lie in the number of institutions he started, or a number of lectures he delivered on different subjects or his work in this capacity or that. His greatness rests on his 'theory of drain' that he propounded not

merely by guess-work but by indefatigable industry to collect the statistics and prove, his thesis. In the mildest of psychopants eulogising the blessings” the British rule after the fall of the Peshwa regime, here was a man brave enough to prove to the British masters that they were responsible for the poverty and the miserable conditions of the Indian people. He thrust on the attention of the people of India that the outward appearance of the British Rule may be attractive but it acts as a disease to destroy the national interest of India.

The ‘drain theory’ that he developed created a consciousness among the educated Indians, throughout the country that self-rule has no substitute. Although he spent most of his life in England he never missed any opportunity to uphold the national honour. He had the good fortune to enjoy a long life. His political hopes of a better deal from the British rulers at the outbreak of World War I were very high. Gopal Krishna Gokhale was another leader who laid implicit faith in the benevolence of the British rulers. Dadabhai did not live long enough to see the constitutional changes after World War I.

8.2.4 Check your progress:-

Q. 1 Write in brief the rules of Student Literary and Scientific Society.

8.3 M. G. RANADE AND ECONOMIC NATIONALISM :

In unit No.5 we have already discussed social reforms of this brilliant scholar. He however excelled in many other fields also. His book ‘The Rise of Maratha Power’ which he wrote to awaken self-esteem of the people of Maharashtra (once a proud nation now living under awe of the British power). He had also applied his mind to the economic hardships the common man was undergoing during the British regime.

Ranade was an independent thinker. He had closely watched the deteriorating condition of the people. Bhaskar Tarkhadkar, Bhau Mahajan and others had focussed the attention of the educated elite on the ‘drain of the wealth’ of India. His work at the small princely state of Akkalkot as an ‘Karbhari’ (administrator) and his association with Vishnushastri Pundit and Ganesh Vasudev Joshi (Sarvajanik Kaka) had given him an insight into the financial aspect of reform. His mind was fully equipped to interpret the British policy of ‘Free Trade’ when it was profitable for the English traders and ‘protectionist’ policy when the Indian textiles threatened to capture European markets. His writings and speeches were looked with suspicion by the Rulers. He could not get a full-fledged post of a judge for 23 years and remained in subordinate position.

8.3.1 Welby Commission and Ranade

Dadabhai Naoroji, Wedderburn and Caine wanted Justice Ranade to present India's case before the Indian Expenditure Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Welby. Ranade was not spared by the Bombay Government. He therefore entrusted the work to G.K.Gokhale. He persuaded Ganesh Vyankatesh Joshi to do the groundwork under his own direction. He thus promoted nascent economic nationalism. (More about Welby Commission in subsequent units).

8.4 GANESH VYANKATESH JOSHI (1851-1911) :

G. V .Joshi was an eminent economist, a liberal thinker and a nationalist to the core. He never allowed his passions to cloud his vision about the true nature of the British Rule in India. Though born in a family which served the last Peshwa with great devotion, he never allowed his vision to be clouded by passions at hostility towards the new rulers.

He was born at Miraj a small princely state in 1851. His father worked as a treasurer (Potnis) in that princely state. His grandfather was a diplomat at the court of Peshwa Bajirao II and had participated in the last battle of the Peshwa against the army of the East India Company. However, his father did not hesitate to allow him to receive English education.

Ganesh Joshi was a brilliant student. He stood first in the subject of Logic of the B.A. examination. After graduation he sought Government Service in the Education Department in 1873. Like most of his contemporaries he started social activities while in Government Service. He served at Nasik, Ratnagiri, Bombay, Poona, Sholapur and Satara. He was a competent teacher and his fame spread over the whole of the Bombay Presidency. He used to contribute articles on various subjects to the 'Times of India' and his articles were read by the educated elite and the government officials with great interest. He wrote under the pen name 'J'.

He was modest and God-fearing man. He led a simple life. He was a devout worshiper of 'Ganapati'. He was a highly disciplined man. He did not spare any labour to understand any academic or practical problem. He filled his mind with full information on the subject under study and in a short time he was recognised as an expert statistician.

8.4.1 His Social, political and economic studies

This erudite scholar worked quietly and was always engrossed in deep study of the social and economic problems. He was a liberal thinker and advocated a comprehensive social reform not a mere revival. He spoke with conviction. He contributed to several periodical and

magazines of that time like the 'Maratha', 'Sarvajanic Sabha', quarterly and 'Indian Review' besides the 'Times of India'. He advocated free education for all. His systematic study of economic problems and his ability to express his views emphatically supported by statistical proof drew the attention of the leaders of the Indian National Congress. Besides Justice Ranade, Surendra Nath Bannerjee, Sayani and RC. Dutt used to consult him on political and economic matters.

8.4.2 Welby Commission

Ganesh Joshi was not satisfied with making such statements as India is a poor nation. He painstakingly compiled data from the Reports published by the Indian Government and compared them with the published statistics of corresponding economic matters from other countries and proved that India had become a poor country. Dadabhai Naoroji later on published his thesis on the 'Drain Theory' but Joshi had already done it on the basis of statistical study.

Justice Ranade asked Ganesh Joshi to collect the relevant statistical information and assist G.K.Gokhale in putting forward a case for India when he was to testify before the Welby Commission. Gokhale accomplished his job with distinction. It cannot be denied that the groundwork for that was ably prepared by Joshi. Ranade's guidance was also a great factor in making the exercise a great success.'

Ganesh Joshi enjoyed the confidence of the political leaders as well as the Government officers. He was nominated to the Bombay Legislative Council. He received great recognition from the people when he presided over the Provincial Conference held at Dhulia in 1908. He retired from Government Service in 1907. He died in 1911. In the following year his son published his collected articles and speeches in a book form.

8.5 SUMMARY :

Thus Dadabhai's 'The Drain theory created a consciousness among the educated Indians. M.G. Ranad's Guidance Ganesh Joshi as an expert statistian promoted hascent economic nationalism.

8.6 QUESTIONS :

1. Describe the work of Dadabhai Navroji in the promotion of economic nationalism
2. In what way did Justice Ranade Endeavour to improve the economic condition of the country?
3. Evaluate the work of Ganesh Vyenkatesh Joshi to prompt economic welfare of the country.

GROWTH OF LIBERALISM IN MAHARASHTRA- II

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Triumvirate of Liberal School
- 9.3 Phirozshah Mehta
- 9.4 Baddruddin Tyabji
- 9.5 K.T. Telang
- 9.6 Growth of Rationalism and G. G. Agarkar
- 9.7 Summary
- 9.8 Questions

9.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1) To understand the triumvirate of Liberal school.
- 2) To realise Growth of Rationalism

9.1 INTRODUCTION :

Western learning had inspired many young men of high and middle class to bring about change in social and religious life of their people. In the early stages of the British Rule the English educated gentlemen admired the ideas of humanism and rationalism. They talked about dignity of the individual if not the equality of man. Their minds were full with idealist philosophy and achievements of modern science.

The first generation of the educated elite like Bal Shastri Jambhekar, Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar and Gopal Hari Deshmukh had expressed their views on certain evil customs in the Hindu Society either through periodicals or speeches before an assembly of like-minded people. These three men were erudite scholars but they lacked the moral courage when it came to translate their ideas into actions.

The next generation of reformers like Ranade and Bhandarkar moved with caution and circumspection. The leaders from Bombay in

the last quarter of the century were more vocal not only on the social reforms but also on matters concerning administrative and political reforms. The champions of liberalism and nationalism namely Pherozshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji and K.T.Telang emerged as all-India leaders. Mehta and Tyabji were Presidents of the Indian National congress in 1890 and 1887 respectively. All of them fought for rights of the Indian people as we shall see in the following pages:

9.2 TRIUMVIRATE OF LIBERAL SCHOOL :

- a) Phirozeshah Mehta
- b) Badruddin Tyabji and
- c) K. T. Telang.

Vishnubuva Brahmachari, Vishnushastri Chiplunkar and S.M. Paranjape contributed significantly to the revival of ancient Hindu religious and social traditions, customs and institutions and started to give Hinduism a place of honour in the family of religions. Their speeches and writings inspired nationalism of a radical type anti-British, in some cases even anti-liberal and a deep attachment to ancient Indian religious and cultural institutions.

However, there were also others, equally popular and powerful nationalists - who were imbibed in the spirit of modernity and liberalism. Men like the Lokhitavadi, Jambhekar, Dadoba Pandurang Ranade, Phule and Agarkar, through their multifarious activities and many institutions they were connected with, strove to give a modern, liberal and humanitarian outlook to Indian Society. Their progressive outlook inspired moderate nationalism. In the city of Bombay, in the second half to the nineteenth century, the famous Triumvirate, namely Phirozeshah Mehta, K T Telang and Badruddin Tyabji, gave a fillip to liberal, secular, moderate nationalism.

Check your progress:-

Q.1. Assess the contribution of Phirozshah Badruddin Tyabji and K.T. Telang to the revival of social traditions.

9.3 PHIROZESHAH MEHTA (1846-1915) :

Mehta was a Parsi western educated lawyer and prominent political leader of the city of Bombay. He was a secretary of Bombay Branch of the East India Association (EIA), member of the Bombay Association, the Western India Association, and a powerful leader of

the moderate faction of Indian National Congress. During 1884-85 he was the Chairman of Bombay Municipal Corporation. Mehta and K T Telang concentrated their activities from 1870's onwards in building up their power base; within the decade, they made a successful bid to capture the leadership of the city. For Mehta, secretariship of EIA was an important stepping stone to leadership and fame. By the close of the century he had emerged, alongwith Gopal Krishna Gokhale, as an acknowledged political leader of the Country.

Phirozeshah Mehta was a liberal. He was in favour of reform, especially of municipal affairs of Bombay. Although, in 1874, he was a supporter of the (corrupt) Municipal Commissioner of Bombay, Arthur T. Crawford. He struggled for popularly elected body for the Bombay Municipality. Alongwith V.N.Mandlik, Badruddin Tyabji, K. T. Telang and other like-minded intelligentsia, Phirozeshah Mehta supported the campaign for a complete reform of the electoral system. In his view, the continued appointment of the 'Justice of Peace' (JP's) for life by the Government was bad. Hence, he demanded a popular and responsible corporation, elected by the "ratepayers" themselves.

At a public meeting held in April 1883. Mehta, Tyabji, Telang, Mandlik and Dadabhai Naoroji affirmed that the educated intelligentsia should participate fully in the administration not only of their city but of India as well. They urged the English educated Indians to unite and present a united front to their rivals for prestige and power i.e. the Anglo-Indians. They told them to be prepared for sacrifice and struggle until they had won a status of equality with the ruling race. But as P H Mody writes, " Mehta, like Naoroji, had a sincere faith in the sense of justice and fair play of the British" .

Phirozeshah Mehta rendered unforgettable service to the systematic organisation of the Municipal Corporation as a member and Mayor. According to G K Gokhale, by pacing his outstanding abilities freely at the disposal of the city for nearly 50 years, Mehta attained a position of "unrivaled predominance" in the Corporation and in the country's affairs.

Phirozeshah Mehta was liberal and moderate in politics. His faith in the British fair play and justice did not preclude him from opposing policies of the British in India which were not in the interest of the country and its people. His grasp of things and vigour of his intellect, and his fearless independence together dignity and judgment won him a prominent place in the public life of Bombay. In the Legislative Council of Bombay, he showed himself to be a match for the ablest of his Anglo-Indian opponents.

Mehta was unsparing in his criticism of the Indian Civil Service and of the policy of the Government of India of denying Indians an opportunity to join it. He highlighted in the Council debates the indifference of the Civil Servants to the grievances of the Indian people and public opinion. As President of the Indian National Congress, he urged the adoption of direct election and enlargement of the functions of Legislative Councils so that the people were not left at the mercy of an indifferent officialdom.

Phirozeshah Mehta was a champion of the Free Press. Therefore, he severally criticised the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 which imposed severe limitations on the freedom of the Press. He denounced this autocratic measure of Lord Lytton as a “narrow minded policy of autocratic imperialism”. He went to the extent of opposing the proposal of giving a public address and erecting a memorial to Sir Richard Temple, the retiring Governor of Bombay Presidency.

He had faith in the capacity of the Indians to manage representative institutions. He also believed that “the time was past when strong popular opinion on any subject could be successfully resisted by Government for any length of time”. As an active member of the Bombay Branch of the East India Association, Bombay Association, Western India Association and founder-member of the Bombay Presidency Association, Mehta strove through resolutions, memorials and public meetings to focus the general feeling of the community on matters of common interest as well as to attract the government’s attention towards grievances of the people.

Phirozeshah Mehta was one of the founder members of the Indian National Congress and soon came to be recognised as one of its pillars. A moderate and constitutionalist, Mehta was elected President of the Congress in 1890. He put the case of the Congress in a nutshell when he said that it had survived the ridicule, abuse, misrepresentation and charges of sedition and disloyalty. However, like Gokhale, he differed from the radicals like Tilak as to the methods and course of action to be followed by it. According to Mehta :

“It is because the masses are still unable to articulate definite political demands that the functions and duty devolve upon their educated and enlightened compatriots to feel to understand and to interpret their grievances and requirements and to suggest and indicate how these can best be redressed and met.

By 1890, Phirozeshah Mehta’s position in the political life of Maharashtra and at the all India level had become almost unassailable. He was President of the Congress in 1890; a member of the Bombay

Legislative Council from 1887 to 1893; in 1893, he was elected to the Viceroy's Legislative Council. His position within the Bombay Presidency Association was equally strong. He had close personal contacts with J. N. Tata and D. M. Petit, the leading capitalists of Bombay. Thus he came to dominate the city of Bombay, and was hailed as the "Lion of Bombay."

The differences between the Moderates and the Extremists ideas culminated in an open split at the Surat Session of the Indian National Congress (1907). The split remained unlit the death of Phirozeshah, G. K. Gokhale and Subramanya Ayer in 1915. Bereft of Mehta and Gokhale, the Moderate-dominated Congress could not keep the Extremists out any longer and the two factions were united at the Lucknow session of the Congress in 1916.

Phirozeshah Mehta was a staunch nationalist. He believed that despite differences India was acquiring a general will as a political community which gave it the status of a nation, a consciousness of political unity. This spirit was evident, he believed, in the Congress. The members of the Congress "met together as men on the common basis of nationality influenced for weal of woe by the system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and be relieved of like burdens ..." , he said.

Check your progress:-

Q. 2 Examine the Role of Phirozeshah Mehta in Moderate politics.

9.4 BADRUDDIN TYABJI (1844-1906) :

Badruddin Tyabji was one of the prominent nationalist leaders of Bombay. Born in a family of Arab descent, he was educated first in a Muslim Madrasa, and then in the Elphinstone Institute of Bombay. His western education inspired him in the ideas of political freedom and equality, and generated in him the spirit of public work and political aspiration.

He was drawn to politics in 1878 by Lytton's notorious Vernacular Press Act. Tyabji rose to the position of eminence in the Company of leaders like Phirozeshah Mehta, K .T. Telang, R. G. Bhandarkar and V N Mandlik. According to R.C. Majumdar "the leadership of the so-called triumvirate, namely Kashinath Trimbak Telang, Phirozeshah Mehta and Badruddin Tyabji greatly helped in the evolution of political ideas and organisations in Bombay.

Tyabji had a big hand in organising the Muslims. Alongwith his brother, Kamaruddin Tyabji, he organised the Saremaya-e-Jamat-e-Sulaimai to feed, cloth and educate boys of their own community who managed to get to Elphinstone High School. He was actively associated with founding of the 'Anjuman-i-Islam' of Bombay and served as its secretary in 1877.

Badruddin Tyabji was also aware that unless the Muslims of India were united, they could not hope to achieve much. One means of fostering unity amongst them was the use of Urdu. Therefore, under his guidance, the Ahjuman-i-Islam strove to promote the belief among Indian Muslims that Urdu was their language. Moreover, Badruddin was keen to minimise the sectarian rivalries among Muslims and stressed the unity between the Sunnis and Shias.

His involvement in active politics (despite' his busy schedule as a barrister) increased during the Ilbert Bill controversy of 1883. As a member of the Bombay branch of the East India Association, he strongly supported Lord Ripon and the Bill against the criticism of Anglo-Indians. Alongwith Dadabhai Naoroji, Phirozeshah Mehta, K.T.Telang and V.N.Mandlik, he organised public meetings and launched a drive to collect signatures in support of the bill. His commitment to the Indian cause enabled him to climb upwards both in his public life and in legal profession

In 1882, Badruddin was appointed as an additional member of the Bombay Legislative Council for four years (1882-86). During his tenure, he became more popular among the people by his eloquence and advocacy of their cause. The Indian members of the Council, including Badruddin, Ranade, Telang and Mehta, enlivened its proceedings. They impressed all by their intelligence and abilities, to the discomfiture of both the Bombay Government and Government of India.

Badruddin Tyabji, Phirozeshah Mehta and K.T. Telang founded the Bombay Presidency Association on 31st January 1885. At its inaugural, public meeting, Tyabji gave expression to his political opinions. According to him :

“ It is, I think, with the nations as with individuals that with the growth of political life new aspirations arise, and these aspirations require an organisation to give them due expression and the organisation in its turn watches, regulates, develops and directs national aspirations ... We have awakened to a sense of our political rights and the distinctions of race, colour and creed, which have so long and unfortunately divided us, have at last disappeared under the softening and enlightening influence of education”.

Tyabji actively supported the founding of the Indian National Congress in December 1885, and until his death in 1906, he was closely associated with it. He denied the charge that the Muslim Community, was not with the new organisation, and affirmed that they were one with their countrymen and other creed's persuasions in movements for political improvement of their country. He rejected the feelers of the Government of Bombay and instructions of Syed Ahmed Khan to keep away from the Congress. He even opposed the proposed Mohammedan conference as a rival to the Congress. He urged fellow-Muslims to join the congress and take part in its deliberations.

In December 1887, at 'the Madras session of the Indian National congress, Badruddin Tyabji was elected as President. According to Danil Argou, the election of Tyabji was deliberately designed to demonstrate that the Congress was representative of the Muslims. Tyabji, in his Presidential Address, stressed this point and declared that he was moved to preside over the session in order to encourage Muslims to 'cooperate with Hindus for their common benefit'. It was his considered view that "in regard to general political questions affecting India as a whole it is the duty of all educated and public spirited citizens to work together, irrespective of their caste, colour or creed."

For several years, Tyabji was a decisive factor in the deliberations of the Congress. While upholding the freedom of the Muslims in religious matters, he urged them to be in the national stream in national activities as Indians. They should struggle alongwith their countrymen as one people for better government, better treatment of Indians, less taxes and better educational arrangements for all the communities. He tries to dispel the, fears of the Muslim community that the grant of representative institutions would result In the preponderance of Hindus .

As long as he lived, Badruddin Tyabji remained a devout Muslim but with a liberal outlook. His devotion and loyalty to the national cause was exemplary, and he fearlessly ,withstood the displeasure of the Government and frowns of Syed Ahmad Khan, and continued to be a leader of the Congress. However, after his elevation in 1895 as Judge of Bombay, High Court, Badruddin withdrew from public affairs. Badruddin Tyabji along with Phirozeshah Mehta and K.T.Telang remained a towering personality in the politics not only of Bombay but the national politics as well. To quote sir P.H. Mody; "... the brilliant triumvirate were carrying on a ceaseless campaign of reforms in every branch of the administration. From various platforms and through diverse organisations they laboured to promote the public good in every sphere of public life."

But as Masselos has pointed out, “inspite of his outstanding position amongst the general public Badruddin Tyabji’s hold over his co-religionists remained weak and his position insecure”.

Check your progress:-

Q.3 Assess the role of Badruddin Tyabji as a prominent nationalist.

9.5 K. T. TELANG (1850-1893) :

As noted above, Phirozeshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji and Kashinath Trimbak Telang formed the “Triumvirate” of Bombay’s political life in the third quarter of the 19th century. Through their ability intellectual brilliance, public spirit and achievements they not only enriched the public life of Bombay but also gave a fillip to the growing nationalism in India. They represented the educated generation in Indian politics whose ideas deferred from those of their predecessors.

Telang was an author, social reformer and advocate of Bombay High Court. He was a member of the Bombay Legislative Council from 1886 to 1889, and served as judge of Bombay High Court from 1889 until his death in 1893. He was closely associated with the Bombay Branch of the East India Association, and a co-founder of the Bombay Presidency Association.

Telang was influenced by Dadabhai Naoroji, especially by his views on Indian economy. This is clear from a paper he read in 1876, titled ‘Free Trade and Protection’ from an Indian point of view. In his paper, Telang urged the need for protection of industries for much the same reasons as advanced by Naoroji.

Telang was an energetic Sanskrit scholar and Hindu Social reformer. In his scholarly papers and critically edited Hindu texts, he defended all that was good in Hinduism. His writings and speeches had a great appeal to the Hindus and to the mercantile interests. His activities as a journalist and a former secretary of the Bombay Association endeared him to the educated classes. He was much respected by and carries great weight with the native (particularly the Hindu) community.

Like Mehta and Tyabji, Telang also took an active part in the agitation against the Vernacular Press Act. His speeches supporting the Ilbert Bill in April 1883 swayed the public opinion of Bombayites in favour of Rippon and the Bill. His contribution to the passing of the Municipal Act of 1818 was considerable.

In the 1880's and thereafter, Telang, Mehta, Naoroji and Tyabji became more active in all India affairs and rose to prominence. Earlier, in 1879, Telang wrote an article warning people that excessive reliance on the system in which the Executive branch of the Government had the power to add to the Acts passed by the Legislative Councils, rules which possessed the force of law was dangerous. Such a system, according to him was "a form of reactionary, personal government which encroached on numerous individual rights." In the 1880's agitation against this system was intensified.

At the beginning of 1885, Telang assisted Phirozeshah Mehta, Tyabji, Dadabhai Naoroji, V.N. Mandlik and Naoroji Furdunji to found the Bombay Presidency Association. He was appointed, along with Mehta and D.E. Wacha, as its secretaries. He was also associated with the establishment of the Indian National Congress in Bombay in December 1885. He maintained his association with the new national organisation until he was appointed a judge of the Bombay High Court in 1889. Thereafter he practically withdrew from public affairs.

K.T. Telang was a Sanskrit Scholar. He was well-versed in Hindu Law. This helped him and his fellow-reformers to carry on their reforming activities, such as supporting female education and widow re-marriage, with confidence. His love of Sanskrit literature and his commitment to social and political reform is illustrated in his numerous speeches and articles written by him during his career. Telang's brilliant career was cut-short by his death in 1893, at the young age of 43. This was a great loss to Bombay and the country.

9.5.1 Check your progress:-

Q. 4. Evaluate the work of Phirozeshah Mehta in creating secular, moderate nationalism.

9.6 GROWTH OF RATIONALISM AND G.G. AGARKAR (1856-1896) :

9.3.1 G.G. Agarkar (1856-1896)

Gopal Ganesh Agarkar (1856-95) was one of the foremost social reformers and a rationalist of modern Maharashtra. Born in a poor Chitpavan family in 1856, the young Agarkar was a brilliant student and managed to support himself through scholarships and occasional writings. As an undergraduate at the Deccan College, Poona, he

developed close friendship with Bal Gangadhar Tilak. His favourite subjects both at . B.A. and M.A. were history and Philosophy. He also passed the LL.B Examination. His favourite authors were: J.S.Mill, Herbert Spencer, Gibbon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Turgot and Condorcet. The philosophical historical, political and sociological writings of these great thinkers profoundly influenced the development of Agarkar's thoughts and ideas.

From the days of his youth, Agarkar was fearlessly independent. Defying the common custom of child marriage, he married only at the age of twenty-three though property also could have been contributory factor for his delayed marriage. Identity of views and idealism strengthened the bond of friendship between him and Tilak. In 1880 in partnership with Vishnushastri Chiplunkar (another brilliant youngman) and Namjoshi, he opened the New English School on the model of schools run by Catholic Missionary Society of Jesus, in the same year, Agarkar, Tilak, Namjoshi, Chiplunkar, Apte and Gadre planned publication of two newspapers i.e. Kesari in Marathi and 'Maharatta' in English. The purpose of these papers was to educate the people and give them guidance in social and political affairs, firmly based on rationalism,

Agarkar accepted the responsibility of editing Kesari. The weekly not only gave news but also offered views on burning issues of public interest. In articles penned mostly by himself, Agarkar condemned child marriage and supported widow re-marriage. In 1882 Tilak and Agarkar were arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned on a defamation suit for accusing the Brahmin Diwan of the Young Maharaja of Kolhapur and two British officials of persecution of the Maharaja. When they came out of the jail, they were warmly welcomed and felicitated by prominent citizens of Bombay and Poona and by the students of Bombay University. Here Agarkar met G.K.Gokhale, who was influenced very much by the fiery journalist in the formative years of his career as a political leader.

In 1884, the Deccan Education Society was formed, and in the next year, the Ferguson College was established. Both Agarkar and Tilak taught in the College and Agarkar rose to be its Principal in 1892. However, in the meantime, differences had developed between the two friends on several issues connected with social reform. These differences forced Agarkar, in 1887, to discontinue his association with Kesari. In the following year. he began his own periodical 'Sudharak' (Reformer) to propagate his ideas and to uphold the cause of Social reform of the contempt, anger and hostility of Orthodox Hindus.

Agarkar, according to M.R.Lederle, "has a special place in Maharashtra, because he was the first to accept as a whole the

principles underlying the new ideas that flowed in from the West. He accepted them as they were propagated his time in England. On 1st August 1888, he and Gokhale published an appeal to the public requesting them to subscribe to Sudharak. The following is an abstract from the appeal, which throws light on the views and idealism of Agarkar.

Sheer physical force, as and instrument of political, social or moral conversion, has ceased to exist; and the days of intellectual persecution have come ... The very name of the journal sufficiently indicates its nature and its purpose. Even countries like China so well known for ultra-conservative tendencies - have begun to realize the fact that if they want to hold their own in the universal struggle for survival, they must adopt the essential principles as also the methods of work, of European Civilisation.

Referring to the Indian Society, Agarkar and Gokhale lamented in their appeal that: "After so many years of liberal English Education, this sense should have been awakened in us than in any other Asiatic people. But unfortunately there has of late, become visible a tendency not only to conceal or cover over national defects, but also to misinterpret and misrepresent even what is best In Western Civilisation .

The purpose of Sudharak, they affirmed was: " to combat this tendency, to point our faults, and to impress upon the minds of our countrymen the idea that in a modified adoption of the essential elements of Western Civilisation lies the real salvation of our country ..."

Agarkar was and remained a good Hindu till the very end of his life in 1895. He wrote that however strong the criticism of the Hindu religion and society might be, the really good and blameless institutions had nothing to fear. But he warned that all that was bad and evil in the Hindu Society would be destroyed as a result of Western knowledge. However, he asserted that he would not ever harbour the thought of India embracing Christianity. Agarkar's approach to religion was agnostic and rationalistic. Reform for him was not religious but a secular duty, and it ought to be based on reason. And he was fearless in expressing his views and ideas.

Secularism, conquest of superstition, confidence in the unlimited progress of human society, tolerance, freedom of thought and expression, reform of laws in the direction of justice, kindness and charity and mass education were very dear to Agarkar. Hence in an article entitled "A Nation of Slaves" (In Marathi) Agarkar criticised his countrymen for their lack of courage in the face of oppression, lack of knowledge, lack of enthusiasm, lack of capacity for hard work and to speak the truth qualities without which no nation could make progress. He pointed out that very few Indians developed the habit of thinking independently and

speaking out boldly what they believed strongly. He deplored the wide gap between word and deed, and warned that freedom might result in creating new slaves.

Agarkar stood for a complete restructuring of Indian society based on the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. He rendered great service to the cause of emancipation of women by opposing child marriage and advocating widow re-marriage. He strongly urged that primary education be made compulsory to all, irrespective of sex, and the same kind of education be given both to males and females.

G.G. Agarkar always placed before himself high ideals and always tried his utmost to live up to those ideals. His sense of duty and his love of truth and discipline were as great as his courage was unbending and his will undoubtable (Sic). In private life he was extremely simple and gentle. Agarkar had been critical of some of the meaningless and ridiculous funeral rites of the Hindus. Therefore, not yielding to the pressure of the members of his family he refused, when his mother died, to shave his head and moustaches.

Agarkar's life was full of strife and struggle. His thinking was not acceptable to the self-styled guardians of the contemporary Hindu society, and he was aware of it. But this great man of high ideals was convinced that if social reform was to be carried out, such unpopularity was inevitable. Hence he aggressively attacked social evils like the caste system, untouchability, child marriage and the unfair treatment of widows. He had to face formidable opponents like Lokmanya Tilak.

Undaunted he single-handedly took upon himself the mission of cleansing the Hindu society of its outdated and often reactionary customs. He strove to liberate people's minds from the centuries old bondage or of outdated and anachronistic social practices and religious rituals. Until his death, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar adhered to principles and to what he considered as the righteous path. Indeed he was a unique personality in the history of modern Maharashtra. His conviction that a healthy individual will make a healthy society was the mainspring of his revolutionary fervour. He advocated a rational attitude towards the traditions and time honoured customs to force the people to see things for themselves with open eyes. He was not satisfied with outward changes in dress and manners. He insisted on the change of outlook on the worldly affairs and get rid of blind faith in things which do not stand the test of rational enquiry.

9.6.1 Check your Progress:-

Q.5. Write in brief about G. G. Agarkar as a social reformer and a rationalist of Modern Maharashtra.

9.7 SUMMARY

Mehta, Tyabji and Telang as a popular and powerful nationalists were imbibed the spirit of modernity and Liberalism.

Like Jambhekar, Lokhitwadi, Dadoba Pandurang, Ranade, Phule, Agarkar through their multifarious activities and many institutions they were connected with strove to give a modern, Liberal, humanitarian out look to Indian Society. Their progressive out look inspired moderate nationalism.

9.8 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the contribution of Phirozshah Mehta to the liberal thinking.
2. Evaluate the Badruddin Tyabji in the Indian National Congress and Liberal Thinker.
3. Comment on work of K. T. Telang.
4. Examine the philosophy of G.G. Agarkar as a rationalist Indian.

INSTITUTIONAL NATIONALISM

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.0 Objectives

10.1 Introduction

10.2 The Bombay Association

10.3 Poona Sarvajanik Sabha

10.4 The Indian National Congress and Maharashtra

10.5 Servants of India Society

10.6 Summary

10.7 Questions.

10.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1) To study the important role played by the Bombay Association (1852)
- 2) To understand the function of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha (1870)
- 3) To realize the importance of Indian national Congress and Maharashtra.
- 4) To study the contribution of Servants of Indian Society.

10.1 INTRODUCTION :

Maharashtra had been politically active since the seventeenth century. The Deccan or “desh” (Poona, Pandharpur and Nasik) was both the cultural and political nerve centre of the region. However, non-availability of education to the masses of people, its limited range, and its, emphasis on religious and philosophical learning, prevented the spread of political knowledge to the common people. Consequently, though the Brahmins were politically alert, the masses remained more or less indifferent or inactive politically, even after the Maratha territories passed under the British. It was only after the middle of the ninetieth century that political activities began in Poona.

In the City of Bombay, the political awakening may be traced to the early nineteenth century. In 1841, Bhaskar Pandurang Tarkhadkar made a scathing attack on the British imperial policies. In 1848-49, "Lokahitawadi" Gopal Hari Deshmukh also wrote articles in a well known Marathi paper, the 'Prabhakar', severely criticising British imperialism. These developments ultimately resulted in the foundation of the first political association in Bombay City in 1852. It was called the Bombay Association.

10.2 THE BOMBAY ASSOCIATION :

The first attempt at organized political activity in Bombay was initiated by the merchants or "shetias". Unlike the other classes, the "shetias" were not bound by ties of caste but by ties of common interests, life style and more generally, by common status. Men belonging to different castes and religions had come together in the course of trading ventures as partners. As their ventures prospered, they increasingly identified themselves with one another as a distinct group - an elite group with distinct economic and perhaps even class interests. They also had a distinct sense of their own public position and considered themselves as natural leaders of Indians in Bombay.

Their "early battles" were to gain access to local positions of power for themselves within the British controlled administrative system. The Government soon accepted them as representative of the people. They constituted the pool from which the Government drew for service on a variety of official and non-official public bodies.

By the 1840s, the City of Bombay also saw the emergence of a new class of English educated young men, the products of Elphinstone Institution. These young men had a sense of identity had a common sense of purpose. They had command of some instruments with which to express common view and work for common ends. Moreover by 1850, they had begun to collaborate with the "shetias" to bring about social reforms in their respective communities. More significant was their collaboration in the movement for political reform. Known as the "intelligentsia" the politically educated and conscious young men began to work together with the "shetias" in secular causes.

By the 1850s, religious excitement, racial estrangement, economic and political discontent was gripping different part of India. Besides, in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras education was growing steadily and enlightened public opinion was fast growing among a small but vocal section of Indians. Moverover, there was an increasing unification of the country. It was under this scenario that the renewal of the East India Company's Charter was approaching provoking a flurry of political activity

in the country. Already, in Calcutta the British India Association had been formed (in 1851) and in Poona a society called the Deccan Sabha had been established (in January 1852). But leaders of the Bombay city remained immersed in their own concerns.

It was left to a handful of the educated men to promote the idea that Bombay required its own political associations to ensure that Bombay's interests were properly looked after. Naoroji Fardunji, Narayan Dinanathji, Dr. Bhau Daji and Dadabhai Naoroji were among the most active of the "intelligentsia". But it was obvious that nothing could be done without the assistance of the shetias. Finally they succeeded in enlisting the support of some leading shetias like Kharsetji Nasarvanji Kama and Jagannath Shankarshet. Thus, on 26th August 1852, the Bombay Association was inaugurated. Most of its members were Bombay's leading shetias or merchants. While Shankarshet became its President, Bhau Dhaji and Vinayakrao Jagannathji took over as the Secretaries of the Association.

Soon after its formation, the intelligentsia collected and disseminated information which would enlighten the British rulers concerning the real wants of the people of India. The intelligentsia carried out these activities behind the scene, allowing the shetias to act as the leaders of the Association. The Association prepared a petition, drafted by Bhau Daji, for presenting to the British Parliament. Among other things, it contained complaints against the Judicial administration of the East India Company's Indian rulers and its police force. It also contained suggestion regarding measures for the spread of vernacular education and the development of Indian culture.

The first draft of the petition was not approved by some leading shetias who feared that they might lose the favour of the British capitalists. The second, modified petition, also did not find favour with them. Hence Bhau Daji resigned his post of Secretary of the Association. This had the effect of dividing the members of the Association between the capitalists and the intelligentsia. In 1856 the Association described itself as comprising men "mostly possessed of considerable property, and all deeply interested in the efficiency of those Departments of the Government which are charged with the preservation of order, the protection of life and property and the vindication of Law".

In general, the attitude of the Association towards the British Raj was one of subservience. Many of its members paid tributes to the 'Raj for the liberty and prosperity enjoyed by Indians under the British. Therefore, there was no question of the Association working against or in opposition to the British Government they would, as Christirre Dobbin observes, "rather mediate, tender advice to the Government based on

real knowledge of the feelings of the people and explain to them the Government's point of view, based on their understanding of the mysterious ways of the new rulers. Their aim was to cooperate with the British bureaucracy in promoting mutual interests; their purpose was to supplement the governmental channel of information to help efficient and just administration. One of the leading Shetias even contended that Indians deserved no greater degree of government patronage and privileges than those they already possessed” .

Undeterred by the position of leading shetias to the wording of the Association's petition to Parliament, Bhau Dhaji, along Naoroji Furdunji, in their capacity as Secretaries of the Association, were determined to express their views on political needs of India in plain, unmistakable Language. Hence, they sent a petition to the Parliament, more or less on the lines of the Association of Calcutta and Madras in 1853. The major points covered in the petition were :

a) The difficulty experienced by Indians on account of the dual control and the extreme centralisation of the Government of India. As a result, the petition pointed out, both the Government of the Presidencies and the Government of the Governor General of India, were “unequal to the efficient discharge of its (their) duties and that nothing but the impenetrable veil of secrecy with which even its most trivial acts are covered.

b) The administration was very costly; most members of the Council were selected by patronage rather than on grounds of merit. The members “have no specific duties to discharge and little or no responsibility as things may always be outvoted by the Governor.

c) The petition drew the Parliament attention to the fact that extreme secrecy under which the Government functioned was engendering and perpetuating “amongst the young servant of the Government an illiberal and despotic tone.” Moreover, the existing system of Government was prompting tendencies of racial prejudices and carelessness towards the welfare of all by discouraging all schemes of improvement emanating from independent' and disinterested sources.

Hence, the Association's petition suggested reform of the Indian Civil Service, of the Courts of the East India Company of the Legal system, and of the Executive Government, by associating” some prominent persons, trained and experienced in the public offices of England who can bring to the consideration of public affairs a more extended knowledge and wider views than are to be expected from the European gentlemen who have passed all their days from boyhood in the bad system of the country and know no other by which to compare and improve them.

The petition demanded, among other things, an improved system of education and more facilities to get education in India. It asked for the extension of public work to encourage production. It also asked for the association of Indians with the legislation concerning India. In another petition, the Bombay Association delayed with the desirability of appointing Indians to the Governor's Councils and of abolishing the distinction between the Covenanted and Uncovenanted Civil services.

However, it is worth remembering that the leaders of the Association had full faith in the British Government particularly in the Parliament. Even Dadabhai Naoroji and Naoroji Furdunji had no hesitation in calling the British Government as an "enlightened and liberal Government." Dadabhai Naoroji even felt that the British rule had conferred many benefits of India and therefore he wished for the permanence of that rule.

The Association did not air any specific interest of the intelligentsia, and after the resignation of Bhau Daji, it became an exclusively Shetia affair. Since they were not prepared to do or say anything that might antagonize the Englishmen in the Government and outside of it, the Association's meeting became infrequent. Therefore, in 1861 Naoroji Furdunji resigned from the Association in sheer disgust. Thereafter, the Association became politically inactive. The Bombay Share Market Crash of early 1865 brought almost all political activities in the city to a halt.

In 1867, the Bombay Association was revived with Naoroji Furdunji as its Secretary. A majority of its 87 members were Shetias. The revived association carried on its activities by holding public meetings. In its first public meeting held in March 1868, the Bombay Association demanded holding of examinations of the Civil Services simultaneously in England and India and urged the Government to raise the age limit of Indians to participate in such competitive examinations.

In 1869, Dr. R.G.Bhandarkar, M.G.Ranade and some other prominent public personalities of Bombay joined the Association. The unsatisfactory state of India's financial affairs since the "Great Revolt" of 1857 provided a general platform on which a variety of interests could converge. The Income Tax Act of 1870 brought the intelligentsia and shetias together on a common platform against the Act. The meeting was attended by more than two thousand shetias, stock-brokers, besides the members of the Association. In the course of the meeting the leading shetias like Sir Jamshedji Jijiboy and V. Shankarshet advised the Government to consult public opinion before pushing through important measures like the Income Tax Bill. Others like N.V. Dabholkar attacked the Government for its excessive military spending. Dabholkar went to the extent of questioning the "wisdom of English institutions of India"

and termed the existing system of representation in the Councils “a farce and delusion-

However the shetias and the intelligentsia could not work together for very long. In the Association’s meeting in October 1872, the two faction clashed. The shetias tried to remove Naoroji Furdunji from the Secretariship of the Association but did not succeed. Hence, Dabholkar, Shankarshet, N..B. Jijibhoy and R.N.Khot resigned from the Association, the split became complete when the Association cooperated with the British India Association of Calcutta in drawing up a petition to the British Parliament on the Indian Budget and another petition to the Viceroy on the Indian Civil Services.

In the meantime, the Association was losing its very active members. Bhau Daji was dead in 1874, Dadabhai Naoroji shifted his residence to London. Ranade migrated to Poona, Bhandarkar and Atmaram Pandurang concentrated their attention on the activities of the Prarthana Samaj. Among its prominent members, only Furdunji and V.N.Mandlik remained. In 1876, Furdunji tried to reactivate the Bombay Association and the controversial Municipal bye-Laws enabled it to actively participate in the agitation. But after 1878, the Association once again became inactive and in 1879 it ceased to function.

Although the Bombay Association did little remarkable work. it brought to the force some of the leading personalities of Bombay who were to play a leading part in the affairs not only of the city but also of India. As R.C.Majumdar writes, “... the Bombay Association represented the advanced section of political thinkers in Bombay.’

10.2.1 Check you progress

Q.1 Briefly state the circumstance that led to the foundation of the Bombay Association.

10.3 POONA SARVAJANIK SABHA (1870) :

In the second half of the nineteenth century, as we have already noted, Maharashtra assumed with the easy assurance in the role of leadership of the social and political life of India. Alongwith Bengal, it led several successful movements for the modernisation of Indian Society and for its political emancipation. Among its great leaders were Justice Ranade, Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozechah Mehta, G.K.Gokhale and Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

Intellectual Poona was the nerve centre of Maharashtra. It has its own organisations. The first association was called the Deccan Association. Founded in January 1852 it did not live long. The next and most important organisation was the Sarvajanik Sabha. It came into being in 1867 and grew under the inspiring guidance of Ranade, its Secretary G.V. Joshi and the illustrious liberal political leader Gopal Krishna Gokhale. The Sabha involved itself in agitational politics and played a crucial role during the great famine and, “the Deccan Decoities” of 1875.

The aim of the Sabha was to “represent the wants and wishes of the inhabitants of the Deccan, being appointed on a popular elective system”. The members of the Sabha strove to secure wider participation for the Maharashtrians in the administration of the Bombay Presidency and greater benefits for the educated elite. The Sabha represented the views of the non-vocal sections of the Maharashtrian Society. Further, they sought to place before the authorities their views concerning the interests of the people, particularly of the educated class and to interpret the conditions and needs of the Society.

The members of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha consisted of the **Sardars, Jahagirdars, Inamdars, Sawakars**, and the educated elite sections as its members. The Sabha soon established itself as one of the most vigorous and vocal political associations of India. Besides sending memorials and petitions to the Government, it experimented with a novel style of political activity. This included a **swadeshi** campaign to revive and encourage indigenous industry, the establishment of a network of branch associations in the Deccan and a campaign throughout rural Maharashtra to investigate the nature of land tenure and the condition of peasantry. Under the active and untiring secretarship of G. V. Joshi (popularly called “Sarvajanik Kaka” the Sabha became a powerful instrument of the struggle for the organised and responsible ventilation of grievances against the bureaucratic government.

The Sabha involved itself in the struggle against the revised land revenue assessment of the 1870s. It campaigned for reduced rates. When peasants withheld payment of the land tax in 1873, the Government suspected its hand behind the peasant’s action. The Sarvajanik Sabha also played an active role in helping people of the Deccan during the famine of 1875-77. It sent a large number of volunteers to render relief as well to assess the extent of loss of life. Their findings were incorporated in a series of narratives which severely censured the Government of Bombay for its inadequate measures to grapple with the tragedy. The members of the Sabha also used the Native press to criticise

the lethargy, bordering on indifference of the authorities to the plight of the rural masses, with telling effect.

The Deccan Deceities' organised by Vasudev Balwant Phadke in 1879, together with the other happenings of the 1870s in the Deccan led to a classic (though ridiculous) statement of "CONSPIRACY THEORY" by Sir Richard Temple, the Governor of Bombay. He regarded the educated Chitpavan Brahmins as disloyal to the British and postulated that there was some indirect connections between Phadke's revolt and the activities of the Sabha. Temple's reaction to the happenings of 1879 was an illustration of how the top officials of the Government sought to denigrate the Sabha. But in fact, their reaction betrayed their limited understanding of the Sabha and its great leader Ranade. They failed to appreciate that he was a moderate who believed in the beneficence of the British connection, though he was critical of their unjust policies, such as land revenue and famine policies.

A very significant point about the Sabha worth noting is its total commitment to modern democratic ideas. From its very inception, the Sabha introduced the elective principle in its constitution. From the beginning, great care was taken to make it an elected body. There is justification in the claim that "the principles of election is almost ingrained in the Indian mind and is not a plant of foreign growth".

Thanks to the labours of Ranade and Joshi, the Poona Sarajanik Sabha became the pioneer public organisation in India. In fact, the Sabha hosted and helped to sponsor the initial meetings of the Indian National Congress. The rising political stature of Gokhale also gave the Sabha a place of pre-eminence among other associations in India. Its quarterly journal published expressions of representative views on important topics and issues of public interest in a well-informed and dignified manner. Authoritative studies on agricultural and financial problems of the day appeared regularly in the journal. Although the Bombay Government had withdrawn its recognition of the Sabha, it took note of the articles published in the Sabha's journal. Moreover, the Government found it impossible to ignore the Sabha's activities.

In 1895, the Sarvajanik Sabha was split due to acute political differences among its leaders. The moderate leaders like Justice Ranade and G.K.Gokhale left the Sabha with their followers. The Sabha passed under the control of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. In -1897, the Government issued an order stating "The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, as at present constituted, must cease to be recognised as a body which has any claim to address Government on questions of public policy". This was Government's ploy to silence a powerful but hostile critic. Yet, the Sabha did not die. It continued its activities and agitations unabated.

The outstanding political leaders and reformers of India, like Justice Ranade, his disciple Gokhale, G.V. Joshi and Lokamanya Tilak made the Sarvajanik Sabha a dynamic and influential political association of all India stature. Its opinions and views were respected by all and feared by the British authorities. It served as the cradle and training school for many politicians, including Gokhale and Tilak, who were to play a significant role in the freedom struggle of India.

10.3.1 Check your progress:-

Q. 2. Write Short notes on 'Poona Sarvajanik Sabha'

10.4 THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND MAHARASHTRA :

The growth of political consciousness and political associations in India culminated in the establishment of the Indian National Congress in December 1885. Its formation formalised a range of tentative groupings aimed at creating a political body that would bring together Indians from the various parts of the country and unite them in a joint effort to achieve specific ends. The organisational development since the second half of the century in Bombay, Poona, Calcutta and Madras, greatly helped and contributed to clarify the ideas, aims and provided enthusiastic participants for the All-India movement, launched in 1885. The activities to the leaders of Bombay, Poona and Bengal and the movements led by them were the source of the mainstream of India's national movement. It was but natural that the new All- India movement should take to these centres of political activity for inspiration and support. The choice fell on Poona; but finally the birth of the Indian National Congress was formalised in the city of Bombay.

Allan Octavian Hume, who had come to Bombay in December 1884, held a series of discussions with the leaders of Bombay and Poona about the programme of political activities to be adopted by educated Indians. Earlier, Lord Ripon had expressed the view that the "intelligent natives of Bombay Presidency are the best men in India". He was full of praise for Bombay's leaders like V.N.Madlik, Pherozechah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, K.T.Telang and J.U.Yagnik. Ripon had also recognised that the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was an influential body guided by intelligent men.

These views may have influenced Hume as could be noted from his increasing reliance upon the leaders of the Bombay Presidency than

upon those of Calcutta for translating his idea - of an All-India Association of Indians. Besides, public life in Bombay was free from factionalism than that of Calcutta; the leaders of Bombay held broader and moderate views on national matters; the Anglo Indians of Bombay were better behaved than their counter- parts in Calcutta. Besides, Bombay had played a leading role in persuading the rest of India not to empress Lord Ripon' over the Ilbert Bill compromise and in organising a grand farewell demonstration in his honour.

These activities of the Bombay leadership might have played an important part in the selection of Bombay and Poona as the likely venue for the proposed conference of representatives from all parts of India for the purpose of (a) organising a central "national association" to direct political activity throughout the country and (b) for the preparation of a charter of demands to be presented to the Parliament. In an important meeting, attended by Hume, William Wedderburn, Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G. Ranade, Naoroji Furdunji, Pherozeshah Mehta, K.T.Telang, and some other prominent citizens of Bombay in January 1885, a "central committee" was appointed for collecting and transmitting information telegraphically to one of the daily newspapers of London. This committee comprised Mehta, Dadabhai Naoroji, Telang and Badruddin Tyabji. The meeting also resolved to establish a "National Indian Association" in order to carry on a systematic agitation for removal of grievances of the people. Mehta, Telang and Tyabji were able to get assurances of the influential citizens of the city of pecuniary and popular support for the proposed Association.

Poona was also equally prominent politically. Thanks to what one writer puts it, "indomitable workers" like M.G.Ranade, G.V.Joshi, S.H.Chiplunkar and G.K.Gokhale, the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha had become a very influential and powerful association, Moreover, in the 1880s the relations between its leaders and the Bombay leaders were extremely cordial. Therefore, the leaders of the Sabha were closely associated with Hume's scheme of an all India political association.

Earlier in December 1884, a meeting was held in the house of Raghunath Rao, a prominent Theosophist of Madras. The meeting decided to hold a conference in Poona for establishing a "Political Association, involving members of all different associations in the country. The conference was to be called as the "conference of Indian National Union." It was later decided to hold the conference under the auspices of the Sarvajanik Sabha on the 28th, 29th and 30th December 1895.

Unfortunately, hardly had the Sabha completed all the necessary arrangements that the epidemic of cholera broke out in Poona. This

forced the organisers of the Congress to shift the venue to Bombay. Thus, to quote S.R.Mehrotra, “fate deprived Poona of the honour of playing host to the first National Congress.” The resourcefulness of Mehta, Telang and Tyabji, the “Triumvirate” of Bombay, who had just founded the Bombay Presidency Association, and the “liberality of the managers of the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College and Boarding Trust who placed the buildings above the Gowalia Tank at the Association's disposal and supervised their refurbishing up, furnishing and lighting”, the Congress was able to start its deliberations according to the schedule. The Bombay stalwarts played a vital part in the deliberations.

From 1885 till 1915, and thereafter, leaders of Maharashtra played a dominant role in the growth of the Congress and shaping its policies. In the early phase of the Congress (first 40 years) many of its most important leaders and most of its constant supporters came from Bombay city and Poona, the Congress derived many benefits from its close connections with the Bombay Presidency. Gordon Johnson remarks, “It is, indeed doubtful whether any other region in India could have so successfully nurtured the all-India movement”. This connection also enabled the leaders of Maharashtra to play a prominent part in the affairs of India. A number of the annual sessions of the Congress were held in Bombay and Poona i.e. in 1889, 1895, 1904, 1915 and a special Congress in 1918. Dadabhai Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Lokamanya Tilak played prominent role in the activities of the Congress and helped to shape its policies and ideology.

Till 1905, the Indian National Congress was a “petitioning” and “praying association” of men of means. Its leading lights such as Naoroji, Mehta, Gokhale and others were moderates in their political views and liberals in their ideology. Their activities until about 1900 were characterised by “polite pleadings, obsequious petitions, dignified delegations, and respectful representations”. In brief, utter mendicancy was the trend of the moderate phase of the Indian National Congress.

From the late nineties, a major fictional crisis developed within the Congress hierarchy in Maharashtra. These regional political differences between the leading Moderates like Gokhale, Mehta and Naoroji on the one hand, and Extremist led by Tilak, on the other also affected the national politics. Consequently, throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century and in the first 1908, the national movement was threatened by dissension and disaffection. The factionalism almost wrecked the Congress because the Maharashtrian politicians provided the core of national leadership. The division among them in Maharashtra ultimately determined the outcome of the general quarrel between the

Moderates and the Extremists. Only the death of Pheroza Shah Mehta and Gopal Krishna Gokhale and the coming of the First World War saved the Indian National Congress from calamity.

Until 1890, the Moderate Maharashtrian leaders like Naoroji, Gokhale and Mehta who were influenced by the Western concept of freedom and democracy –dominated the Congress. Though they were moderately successful in persuading the British to grant some of the reforms demanded by Indians, they were unable to involve the common masses in the movement. Lokamanya Tilak, however, knew the British mind correctly; he possessed the ability and knack to involve the masses in the political agitation. For this purpose, he effectively made use of religious symbols like the cow and Lord Ganapathi and was able to create popular sanction behind his political agitation. He also used the Chhatrapati Shivaji Jayanti festival to arouse the masses of the Marathas against the misrule of the British. This moderates failed to do.

The underdemocratic and despotic attitude of the British administration towards popular demands and peaceful agitation of the Indian, National Congress made leaders of the movement change their tactics from your prayers and petitions to civil disobedience. Tilak thundered: "Swaraj is my birth right". On the one hand, the terrorist activities in Maharashtra and elsewhere in India gave additional opportunity to the British to intensify their despotic rule without adding much to the strength of the people. On the other hand the method of peaceful agitation, particularly the 'Swadeshi' movement, and the non-violent, non-cooperation, satyagraha, which began to be used from the first decade of the twentieth century, gave "the dumb masses full scope to boldly defy the power of mere arms and assert themselves".

The response of the majority of the Muslims of Bombay to the request of Indian National Congress for support was however, negative; only a few Muslims were in favour of co-operating with it. Contemporary newspapers and writers have recorded that in a number of meetings of Bombay Muslims held to consider the question of extending support to the Congress, an overwhelming majority was either silent or opposed to have anything to do with the Congress. Only few prominent nationalist Muslims, including Tyabji who was elected President of the Congress in 1887 chose to join and work for it.

After 1900, co-operation between Tilak and his followers in Maharashtra and Extremists like Aurobindo and Bipin Chandra Pal of Bengal increased. The anti-partition and Swadeshi movement brought them closer and their contacts deepened into a political "entente" between Bengal and Bombay. Thereafter until 1920, Lokamanya Tilak remained the towering personality in the national movement and the

most powerful leader of the Indian National Congress. But Gokhale and Mehta, too, until 1915, remained very influential leaders of the Congress. Mehta in particular, dominated the scene in Bombay until his death in 1915.

Thus the connections between the Indian National Congress and Maharashtra had been very close. The leaders of Maharashtra despite ideological and temperamental differences, contributed immensely, at least during the first three decades of the existence of the Congress to its development. Through their speeches, writings and activities. Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G. Ranade, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta and Bal Gangadhar Tilak and many other Maharashtrians rendered invaluable service to the establishment, development and growth of the Indian National Congress and the national movement.

10.4.1 Check your Progress.

Q.3 What were the objectives of Indian national Congress

10.5 SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY :

With the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885, the old style regional associations had practically ended in Maharashtra. Moreover, formation of factions within the dominant power elite and the consequent struggle for power of the leadership had rendered the existing old associations feeble. Consequently some leaders began to organise new associations, directed at achieving specific objectives and promoting specific ideas and interests. The Servants of India Society was one such organisation.

The Servants of India Society was founded by Gopal Krishna Gokhale in 1905. The object of the Society was to train men who would be willing to “devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit” and work “as national missionaries to promote by all constitutional means the national interests of the Indian people. It was obligatory for all the members of the Society to take seven vows at the time of joining it, of which the following are noteworthy :

- 1) To give the best to the country and to think always of the interest of the country.
- 2) To regard all as brothers and work for the advancement of all, irrespective of caste and creed.
- 3) To serve the country selflessly without expecting any advantage for oneself.

- 4) To be content with whatever the Society was able to provide to the member and to his family. He would not devote his energies to earning money for himself.

Although the Servants of India Society displayed some of the obsessions of the earlier public bodies in its concern with national uplift and public work, it no longer attempted to attain any kind of representative character. Its membership was limited to carefully selected individuals dedicated to the national good. It did not identify any specific activity for its members – political, educational, economic or social; its members were merely a group of men, trained and equipped for some form of service to the Motherland. The society published three papers - 'The Servants of India', 'the Dnyan Prakash' - (Marathi) and the 'Hitawad', a weekly.

The activities of the Society were many and its record of achievement is impressive. The activities of five of its illustrious members (G.K.Gokhale, Srinivasa Shashtri, N.M.Joshi, H.N.Kunzru and Ram Bajpai) will suffice to indicate clearly the society's role in moulding the national life of India. Gokhale and Shastri devoted themselves mainly to Politics and attained a unique distinction as the national leaders par excellence. Joshi founded in 1911, the Social Service League in Bombay for "securing the masses of these people better and reasonable conditions of life and work." Within fifteen years, the league had established seventeen night schools for over seven hundred adults, three day schools for part-time mill workers, eleven libraries and reading rooms and two day nurseries. The League also organized more than hundred cooperative societies, gymnasia for children etc. Bajpai organized the Boys' Clubs and Scout Corps.

The Society also carried on scores of other welfare activities for the slum dwellers. It established its branches in other parts of India as well. Its active members like Kunzru rendered very valuable social work. Some of its branches and members engaged themselves in the work of village uplift and reconstruction, uplift of the aboriginal like Bhils, and the emancipation and upliftment of women.

10.5.1 Check your Progress:-

Q.4. Evaluate the important role of Servant of Indian Society.

10.6 SUMMARY :

Although the Bombay Association did little remarkable work it brought to the fore some of the leading personalities of Bombay who were to play a leading part in the affairs of the city and also of India. The Sarvajanik Sabha a dynamic and influential political association of all India status served as the training school for many politicians. The leaders of Maharashtra contributed immensely, the existence of the Indian national congress and its development. The society carried on political conscious and other welfare activities to uplift the Bhills and women.

10.7 QUESTIONS :

1. Discuss the aims and objectives of the Bombay Association.
2. Assess the contribution of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha to the growth of Nationalism in Maharashtra.
3. Examine the contribution of the Servants of India Society in the promotion of nationalism
4. Write Short Notes on
 - a) Maharashtra and Indian National Congress.
 - b) Sarvajanik Kaka

REVIVALISM AND MILITANT NATIONALISM

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Vishnubuva Brahmachari
- 11.3 Vishnushastri Chiplunkar
- 11.4 Arya Samaj
- 11.5 Theosophical Society
- 11.6 Ganpati and Shivjayanti Utsav
- 11.7 Summary
- 11.8 Questions

11.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1) To know about Vishnubuva Brahmachari
- 2) To understand the role of Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar
- 3) To study the contribution of Arya Samaj, Theosophical Society and Ganapati and Shiv Jayanti festival.

11.1 INTRODUCTION :

You may have by now realised that by the middle of the 19th century, India in general, and Maharashtra in particular, was in a state of decline. When a society is in such a state it opens the way to three possible attitudes towards it revolt, reform or revivalism. These three attitudes, we ought to remember, are very rarely present as three watertight compartments, they often overlap and intermingle. But they present three distinct programmes of thought and action. The first rebels against the present traditional and outdated structure and outlook of the society. The aim of the revolt is to replace the old and traditional with new ideas and values. The reformer, like the rebel, feels uneasy about the existing state of affairs in the society and recognises the need for a change. However, unlike the rebel, he does not break with the past. He

tries to reform the society from within by using new ideas and introducing new values. Though he is always a potential rebel, in general he seeks to work within the framework of the existing society by clearing the cobwebs. For instance, few liberal intellectuals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were uprooted from their own traditional cultural milieu; they maintained much of their traditional family atmosphere, preserved their attachment to their ancient poet-saints and often they were inspired by the heroes of the past and mythology. M.G.Ranade symbolized, the typical reformer; both progressive and conservative.

The revivalist on the other hand distinguishes himself from the other two by his fanatical, attachment to the past and concerning himself with the preservation of the ancient customs, traditions, social and religious Institutions unchanged. He is inspired by things that belonged to the past; he is reluctant to accept new ideas and values and even opposes them violently. A revivalist may be progressive in certain fields, but he uses antiquity, and not reason, as criterion to judge progress. However, revivalism is not completely opposed to progress as such and should not be confused with traditionalism i.e. “uncreative clinging to the past”. It may, as an attitude, express itself in matters concerning religion, social life and even politics. In short, we may define revivalism as an anxious desire to preserve a vital contact with one’s past, without which the individuality of a society cannot be preserved. For example. Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak based his social philosophy, ethics and his attitude to social changes on Vedantic philosophy and the traditions of Maharashtra. He was an orthodox traditionalist; yet he advocated social reform and renaissance of Indian culture. He was the greatest nationalist of India that Maharashtra ever produced.

11.2 VISHNUBUVA BRAHMACHARI (1825-1871) :

In Maharashtra revivalism started as a counter-action to Christian influence and secular Western influences. Many Hindus felt that the foreign influence was threatening their religious and social institutions. The first great revivalist in modern Maharashtra was Vishnu Bhikaji Gokhale, who became famous as Vishnubuva Brahmachari (1825-1871). Born in a poor Konkanastha Chitpavan Brahmin family, he received scanty formal education and at the age of sixteen, joined government service. But he had religious bent of mind, and “familiarized himself with books like ‘Vivekasindhu’ Jnaneshvari, Eknathi, Bhagvata...” etc. At the age of 22, he began preaching the vedic religion at Pandharpur, and soon began lecturing in different parts of Maharashtra. In Bombay, he accepted the challenge of the missionaries through lectures, debates and journals. From 1856 to 1871, Brahmachari carried on his activities of counter

attacking the Christian missionary propaganda against Hindu customs and traditions. It is interesting to note that in 1857, he entered into a 6 month long debate (15th Jan. till June 1857) with the Christian missionaries, on the Chowpatty sea shore. Hindus, Muslims, and Christians attended the debates in large numbers. This weekly debate had such a deep impact on the people that by the middle of 1857, the government of Bombay, fearing violent explosion of communal passions, ordered Vishnubuva Brahmachari not to continue it any longer.

Later, he travelled through the length and breadth of India preaching the superiority and infallibility of the Vedas. According to him, "Veda means knowledge. It is a part of God himself. He believed that the Vedic religion leads man on to the moral and spiritual heights. According to him, the Vedic times were not only far advanced in spiritual insight, but in scientific and technical knowledge as well, including chemistry and physics. He said that in ancient times, people all over the world followed the Vedic religion and received their religious instructions through the Sanskrit language. Brahmachari did not have a good opinion of other religions; as for Christianity, he held its teaching as 'faith created by the hypocrisy of barbarians.

Vishnubuva Brahmachari was very conservative in his attitude towards some aspects of Brahmanical Hinduism, such as Vedic ceremonies, vegetarianism, belief in rebirth, and so on. For him, the great difference between Hindus, on the one hand and the Jews, Christians and Muslims, on the other, consisted in the belief of the latter religion that only human beings have the Soul, not animals; their rejection of the Idea of re-birth, and their acceptance of a general judgment at the end of time.

Surprisingly, inspite of his fanatical conformity with traditional ideas, he showed a remarkable sense of independence of mind in rejecting a number of traditional ideas and customs. In his view, caste should be determined by a person's qualities, and not by his birth. He favoured female education, and upheld the right of girls to be consulted in the choice of their husbands, though he wanted them married before the age of twelve. He also opposed the custom of Sati and favoured widow marriage,

He was a prolific writer. Among Vishnubuva Brahmachari's famous work was Vedokta Dharmaprakasha (The principle of Hindu Religion), published in 1864. In a very interesting essay on, "Beneficial Government" (Marathi) he put forward ideas such as "One home and all citizens as one family". He held the view that it is the duty of the king to ensure the happiness of all his Subjects, and it was the duty of the subjects to obey

the Kings laws. 'Further, since, according to him, all citizens belonged to one family, and all land and its produce should be held in common every person should work 'for the community, and in exchange the community must meet his needs.

In social matters, he was in favour of civil marriages and favoured divorce. In his view, children should remain with their parents upto the age of five, and then be handed over to the State. He wanted work to be assigned to each individual according to the person's capacity, and grouped the individuals into five castes, corresponding to their professions. He wanted the state to take care of the old and employ them as heads of each work- department. This body could work as a kind of parliament.

Brahmachari envisaged a moneyless economy, and a society without charitable institutions. He was optimistic that the character of the people which had degenerated due to corrupted ethics of the law of many, would improve and all coercion and fraud would come to end. He was optimistic that the caste system would disappear, and people would live in peace and happiness without enmity. In 1869, he got 10,000 copies of the essay printed and sent to prominent persons in India as well as to members of British Parliament, ministers, Queen Victoria and Prince Edward of England.

It was indeed surprising that a semi-literate and conservative person like Vishnubuva Brahmachari should put forward notions of "Utopian Socialism". Perhaps, as Lederle has pointed out, "he may have derived ideas from Vedantic Monism and the writings of Jnaneshvara, the great thirteenth century commentator of the Bhagvadgita" . To quote Lederle, "In developing this philosophy of society (socialism) based on Vedantic Monism Vishnubuva Brahmachari thus remained true to a strong trend in the Indian traditions."

Vishnubuva Brahmachari was a pioneer of the revivalist tendencies toward social and religious movement. He had full faith in the superiority of the Indian culture over the Western civilisation and therefore, he preached that the Indians should look back to the Vedic times for inspiration and guidance. His social idea was that of human brotherhood and a welfare state. RC.Majumdar describes him as "a utopian socialist who based his social ideas on Vedic religion, and may be compared to the Christian Socialists of Europe." According to one writer, "He was socially equalitarian religiously Vedantic, politically socialist, mentally liberal and independent, morally bold and confident and humanitarian."

Vishnubuva Brahmachari, though an ardent Hindu, defiantly challenged Brahmin leadership of his time. In so doing, he created "an

undesirable split between the upper classes and the masses which ultimately led to some unfortunate developments in the public life of the province. (Bombay Province).- The Bombay Journal, 'Indu Prakash', in an Obituary on 20 February, 1871, Wrote:

“It is extremely difficult to find an outstanding man like Vishnubuva Brahmachari. He was an outstanding thinker and one who translated his precepts into action. He was courageous enough to say or do what he thought was necessary for the interests and good, of the country. Therefore, in the death of this good man, not only Bombay but Maharashtra as a whole, has suffered a great loss. “

11.2.1 Check your progress:-

Q.1 Explain the ideas of Vishnubuva Brahmachari 'Vedokta Dharmaprakasha.

11.3 VISHNUSHASTRI CHIPLUNKAR (1850 - 1882) :

We have noted that in the first half of the nineteenth century, Maharashtra witnessed the emergence of a galaxy of outstanding men like Acharya Jambhekar and Dr. Bhandarkar. Their thought and activities has profound influence on the social life of Maharashtra. The second half of the country also produced equally outstanding personalities like Vishnu Shastri Chiptunkar, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Principal Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. But it was Chiplunkar who during his short span of life of thirty three years shot to fame as a writer, journalist and fearless Hindu patriot and revivalist. Through his article in the “Nibandhmala” and “Kesari” he left a deep impression not only upon his contemporaries but also on future generation of writers, journalists and men of public affairs like Tilak. He is regarded as the one who inspired and promoted the modern Marathi. They hail him as the representative and spokesman of the 19th Century Maharashtra. But Some others regard him as a literary genius but leader of Hindu reactionaries.

Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar was born on 20th May 1850 in Poona. His father, Krishnashastri Chiplunkar, was a well-known personality. In 1865, at the age of fifteen he passed his matriculation, and four years later, began editing a journal, “Shalapatrak”. He was graduated from the University of Bombay in 1872 and two years later began the publication of his famous periodical, “Nibandhmala.” Besides, he also established the New English School which produced almost all the

prominent leaders of the Maharashtrian society. In other words, from the tender age of fifteen he devoted his life to various public projects and activities. Before his death on 17 March 1882, he had not only earned a niche for himself in the history of Maharashtra but also enriched the literary and public life of Bombay Presidency.

11.3.1 Vishnushastri as Writer and Journalist

Under his father's influence, young Vishnushastri had developed a strong taste for Marathi and Sanskrit languages and literature. His extensive reading during his college days gave him a great deal of insight into Indian Philosophy, history and literature. The study of Western literature and history helped him in broadening the horizon of his thinking and enriched his literary style. He became such a powerful writer of Marathi prose that he used to call himself as "the Shivaji of the Marathi literature."

Vishnushastri was the first Marathi writer to introduce scientific literary criticism, including criticism of great classical writers like Kalidasa, Bana, Subandu and Dandi. His articles in "Shalapatrak", "Nibandhmala", and "Kesari" showed unmistakably his remarkable style, powerful prose and independent thinking. Simultaneously, with his essay-writing, he also continued teaching in his school and editing his journal "Nibandhmala", which he had started in 1874. Until that year, a majority of Marathi writers used to translate classics from Sanskrit and English Literature; little original writing was done. With his "Nibandhmala", Vishnushastri showed "the great height to which Marathi prose could reach in expressing the most abstract ideas in all fields of human-knowledge-history, politics, economics and philosophy." His writings, according to scholars, 'liberated the educated class from the chains of servitude that bound it to foreign thought'. However, he did not fail to acknowledge the contributions of earlier writers, novelists, researchers and journalists to Marathi literature, society, culture and politics.

In 1880, Chiplunkar, in partnership with Tilak, Agarkar and Namjoshi opened the New English School in Poona on the modern lines of the schools run by the Catholic Jesuit Missionaries. In the same year, they planned publication of two newspapers, "Kesari" in Marathi "Maharatta" in English to educate the people and guide them in social and political affairs and established the Aryabhusana Press for the use of these two newspapers.

The elegant and forceful prose of Vishnushastri Chiplunkar was a source of great inspiration to all subsequent writers. His "Nibandhmala" influenced both literary criticism and political essays. After his death in 1882, his work of enriching the Marathi language was continued by Agarkar, Tilak, S.M. Paranjape, and others. Thus it is clear that as a

writer, journalist, founder of printing presses and as an educator, Chiplunkar was very prominent figure in Maharashtra.

11.3.2 Chiplunkar's Social and Political Views

Vishnushastri was a religious revivalist but not a social conservative. Though a man of fairly broad mind and outlook, he disliked young educated men following the Western way of life, ignoring their own rich religion, culture, society and mother tongue. In his view, it was an open exhibition of their lack of confidence in their own culture and language. It was this attitude, he wrote, that was responsible for India's continued bondage under alien masters. Therefore, he vehemently criticised this servile attitude of the educated class. He urged the young educated Maharashtrians not to forget the work of great leaders like Jambhekar, Bhandarkar, Vishnubuva Brahmachari and Ranade who had been striving for the regeneration of the Maharashtrian society,

Chiplunkar used his powerful pen to expose the selfish and politically backward educated Maharashtrian collaborators of the British Government. He felt that many of the reformers lacked courage to practice what they preached. He lamented their lack of concern for the plight of the masses. It was ironical that while in speeches they spoke against traditions, customs and rituals, many reformers performed the thread ceremony of their sons in traditional fashion and celebrated the marriages of their minor children. Chiplunkar hated their hypocrisy and mercilessly attacked them in his writings.

Vishnushastri Chiplunkar was a man of learning courage and unimpeachable character, and showed impeccable faith in his mission of defending Hindu institutions against attacks of the Christian missionaries and westernised reformers. He personally was invariably as good as his words. When most of his colleagues betrayed the cause of social reform, he courageously married a Brahmin widow after the death of his wife (1874). This shows that he was not a social conservative as alleged by his critics. In fact, a careful and unbiased analysis of his writings in "Shalapatrak," "Nibandhmata" and "Kesari" shows that his thinking on various matters-social, political and economic, was surprisingly modern and far advanced than many of his contemporaries. He appreciated the work of reformers but was critical of their priorities, methods and their excessive love for the English and the West.

Chiplunkar in his childhood had grown, nostalgic about the Peshwa rule. As he grew up, he developed a burning desire within himself to educate his fellow-country men against British rule. With this aim in mind, he used his brilliant essays to arouse nationalistic feeling among his educated young contemporaries. He succeeded in imbibing in them a strong sense of patriotism that soon inspired numerous Maharashtrians

with courage to fight for the liberation of their motherland. But his emphasis was on the past glory of India and superiority of her institutions. He attacked with venom all those who criticised Hinduism, Hindu customs, traditions and culture. Blinded, perhaps, by his uncritical and irrational thought of the "Glory that was India", he turned a Nelson's eye to the country's social evils like, child marriage, the plight of women in society and deplorable exploitation and bondage of the Shudras and Ati-shudras. He did not give serious thought to the newly emerging forces which were clamoring for a change in India's social, religious, economic and social life.

Chiplunkar was anxious to see India as a free country with Sovereignty of the people. He wrote in "Nibandhmala".

"British conquest put an end to our independence. The loss of freedom means the loss of everything that we hold precious. But the greatest evil of foreign rule is our moral degradation resulting from the loss of freedom ... Our character is completely demoralised".

Hence he earnestly sought to arouse among the Maharashtrians of middle class national pride and a dislike for the British rule. He was of the view that if Indian society were to make progress, it was imperative to destroy alien rule. For this reason, he gave priority in his writings to political reform over social reform. For example, in his article "Conditions of our country" (Marathi), Chiplunkar analysed the factors responsible for the sorry state of affairs of India and concluded that the country's degeneration and degradation was due mainly to foreign rule of "Our Western Aryan Brothers" i.e. the British. He lamented that India, once opulent, with a large population, known for its intellectual accomplishments, and economically progressive, was (in the late nineteenth century) in the grip of famine". "They were being subjected to such injustices that they had even forgotten their rights; their position was no better than that of dump animals," he wrote.

Chiplunkar regretted that the educated, Self-styled champions of India's regeneration, instead of working for the amelioration of the sufferings for their countrymen, were busy cultivating the goodwill of the British officials. And some drowning themselves in foreign liquor, had forgotten or were ignoring their own culture and traditions. Yet some others casting their shame and self-respect to the winds, were prostrating at the feet of their alien masters! According to T. V. Parvate, Chiplunkar preached that in order to regain the ancient glory of India and to safeguard their self-respects, the Maharashtrians should stand on their own feet and develop self-confidence.

'The "Shivaji of Marathi literature" was sad at the backwardness of India's agricultural, industry, trade and commerce, and arts. He held the British responsible for the country's decline. Hence, he was forthright in holding that neither religion nor social customs like child marriages or caste had anything to do with India's decline as alleged by social reformers. According to some of his biographers, this did not mean that he was opposed to their reform movement; what he wanted was a united, selfless, service-oriented, self-reliant and determined struggle against the British to free India from bondage.

Vishnushastri Chiplunkar was undoubtedly a great son of India, and Maharashtra is proud of him. He has been regarded as the "Brihaspati" of the Marathi literature. But he had foresight to realize the merits of English education, and compared it to "the milk of the tigress" because it inspired sentiments of virility and liberty. However, he was opposed to the exaggerated emphasis on deliberate and wholesale imitation of the West. As noted earlier, he had a deeply embedded love for and attachment to the institutions, traditions and culture of Maharashtra of the times of the Peshwa.

Vishnushastri Chiplunkar attempted to bring to the forefront of conscious realization the hidden patriotic sentiments of the people of Maharashtra. However, he failed to realise the potentialities of an all-India nationalism. This task was left to Lokmanya Tilak, and he accomplished it admirably. But Chiplunkar drew the attention of many patriots to the fallacy of regarding the British rule as "boon". He pointed out that even before the British and their culture came to India, Indian civilisation and culture enjoyed a status of eminence in the world. He repeatedly told the Anglophiles that they were mistaken in their belief that the Europeans had brought civilisation to India; their claim was without substance, and at best only half truth, he said. He urged Indians not to believe in such propaganda.

In a lecture delivered on 18 March 1901 on the occasion of the death anniversary of Chiplunkar, Tilak acknowledged Chiplunkar's contributions in reacting against the morally disturbing influence of the new English education. Writers like Hari Narayan Apte, S.M. Paranjape, S.K. Kolhatkar, N.C. Kelkar, and several others have also acknowledged the inspiration they derived from the writings of Vishnushastri Chiplunkar. He may therefore be accorded a similar position as that of Bankim Chandra in Indian literature.

11.3.3 Check your progress:-

Q.2. Write in brief Chiplunkar's Social and political views

11.4 DAYANANDA SARASWATI AND ARYA SAMAJ :

The influence of Christianity and modern science had created a new awakening in the Hindu society. Different sections of the society expressed their reactions in conformity with the ideals and beliefs cherished by them. The Orthodox section mostly Brahmans came out openly in defense of the "Sanatana Dharma". Others established 'Prayer Society' to be on level with other faiths but a powerful movement to regenerate Hinduism based on Vedic tenets was under taken by Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883). His original name was Mulashankar. He was born in Morvi in the modern state of Gujarat.

Mulashankar was initially, influenced by the teachings of a Jain sect 'Sthanakavasis'. He was convinced that worshipping idols of Gods was of little significance in realising ideals. He left his home and wandered in search of spiritual teaching.

He went to the South and was influenced by 'Saraswati Order of Sri Shankaracharya. He studied the old Sanskrit works to know true religion. Now he began to speak with conviction that Idolatry and Caste-System are against the spirit of the vedas. He denounced 'Bhagavat Purana' as immoral. In 1868, he challenged many Pandits to debate some points from the Scriptures. In 1872, he went to Calcutta to hear the views of Devendranath Tagore and Keshavchandra Sen. He was impressed by their views on social reform and rationalism. He started wearing an ordinary dress and delivered his discourse on religious matters in Hindi. He published his maiden work 'Satyarth Prakash' After that he visited Bombay in 1874 and came in contact with the leaders of 'Prarthana Samaj'.

Dayanand Saraswati discerned some draw backs in the ideology of the Prarthana Samaj. He did not like Prarthana Samaj as the followers would not accept the infallibility of the Vedas. He thought they lacked in patriotism. The glory of ancient Indian culture was rediscovered by scholars and therefore he thought Indians would benefit by the Vedic teachings. He founded 'Arya Samaj' in 1875 in Bombay.

11.4.1 Main Principles of Arya Samaj.

Originally there were twenty eight principles of Arya Samaj. When he shifted the centre of the activities of Arya Semaj to Lahore, the principles were reduced to ten. The important among them are:

- (i) Belief in the transcendence of God.
- (ii) Acceptance of the Vedas as authoritative books of the Hindus.
- (iii) Belief in the necessity of Action for physical, spiritual and social progress.

Arya Samaj founded in Bombay was to flourish in Punjab

11.4.2 Significance of the Principles

He forced the attention of the educated elite on India's past. He proved that Hinduism is not a bunch of superstitious belief but it is based on the high philosophy of the Vedas. The necessity of 'Action' means the necessity to spread education and strengthen the Hindu Society by nationalism. Those helpless men who embraced Islam or Christianity should be readmitted to the Hindu fold by the simple process of 'purification' (shudhikaran). These activities of the Arya Samaj met with opposition from the Orthodox Hindus and Christian Missionaries as well as Muslim leaders.

Dayananda Saraswati found it difficult to get followers in Poona Educational and journalistic activities were on foot in Poona under the leadership of Lokmanya Tilak; so also the die-hard Hindus would not accept the idea of readmission of the converts to Hinduism on equal footing.

11.4.3 Arya Samaj in Kolhapur

Dayananda died in 1883 and the Arya Samaj was divided between conservative and progressive groups. They could hardly continue their association with the Prarthana Samaj or the Theosophical Society. It was only in 1918 the progressive group succeeded, in attracting the Maratha Community by their educational activity and social reform. Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur welcomed the Arya Samaj for their ideology to reconstruct Hindu community. He chose the Arya Samaj instead of the 'Satyashodhak Samaj' to entrust educational activities to their care. They had already established a schools and a hostel, now Shahu Maharaj entrusted the Rajaram College to them, in appreciation of the objective of regeneration of the Hindu Society. Arya Samaj continued the work of inspiring nationalist and revolutionary ideas in Maharashtra.

11.4.4 Check your progress:-

Q. 3. Briefly evaluate the main principles of Arya Samaj ?

11.5 THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY :

This society was founded in New York by Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott in 1875. It was in response to the admiration of ancient Indian culture and religion as revealed in the holy books of the Hindus which were being studied by Western Scholars. The followers of Arya samaj had also attracted the attention of many Americans. The Theosophical group however was more conservative and mystical than the Arya Samajists. The founders of the Theosophical Society came to India in January 1879. It was during this period that the educated middle-class leaders like Dadoba Pandurang, Justic Ranade and others were contemplating of close association of the Prarthana Samaj with Arya Sarmaj. The founders of the Theosophical society, also worked in close co-operation with the Arya samaj. However Swami Dayananda Saraswati did not favour Prarthana Samaj and the Theosophical society. He thought that the Prarthana Samajists did not care for the Indian Culture and the Theosophical Society gave much importance to mysticism.

11.5.1 Objectives and Beliefs of the Theosophical Society.

- (1) To form a universal brotherhood of man.
- (2) To Promote the study of ancient religion; philosophy and science.
- (3) To investigate the laws of nature and develop the divine powers latent in man.

The Theosophists borrowed the terminology of their doctrines from the Brahmanical and the Buddhist literature. It was a strong mixture of religion, philosophy and occultism. Their teachings centred round the following, points:-

- (1) The unity of God
- (2) The God manifested in the universe under three 'Aspects'.
- (3) A hierarchy of superhuman beings like Gods, Angels, human spirits, and sub-human intelligence exists.

Dayananda Saraswati had praised the work of the Theosophical society as it undertook social activities like establishing schools and publishing books. However there arose a rift between the Arya Samaj and the founders of the Theosophical Society over misappropriation of

funds. The headquarters of the Theosophical Society were shifted to Adyar in Madras in 1882, and branches were opened in several parts of India.

Madame Blavatsky went on a lecturing tour and drew quite a large following in big cities of India. There were many Hindu leaders whose faith in traditional Hindu religion was shaken. They were not bold enough to come out openly against Orthodoxy and so preferred the cover of the Theosophical Society. They lent lukewarm support to the ideology of 'Karma' and 'Nirvana' but whole heartedly appreciated the educational activities of the society.

11.5.2 Significance of the Work of the Theosophical Society

The Theosophical Society established schools and published books, pamphlets and propagated the importance of ancient culture and religion of the Indian people until the last quarter of the 19th century Hindu leaders were apologetic when foreigners discussed Hindu theology and a confusion of Castes. A vigorous defense of Hindu religion and culture by Madame Blavateky and later on by Annie Besant who assumed leadership from 1889 started a process of regeneration. Leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, K.J. Telang, Lokmanya Tilak and Justice Ranade appreciated the efforts each according to the particular aspect that was considered important by him. Annie Besant after the death of Madame Blavatsky in 1893 became very popular among the leaders of the Indian National Congress. She opened a Hindu College at Banaras in 1896 and advocated social reforms of the Hindu Society. The Society was criticised for its ideology and mysticism but it cannot be denied, that the society provided self confidence for the Hindu Society.

11.5.3 Check your progress:-

Q. 4. Examine the significance of the work of the Theosophical Society?

11.6 GANAPATI AND SHIVJAYANTI UTSAV :

The foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 had raised hopes of politically awakened and western educated gentry, mostly Hindus. It however gave rise to fears in the minds of Muslim, upper Class men. Sayyad Ahmed Khan and his followers moved away from the Congress. The British rulers were quick to exploit the situation. The establishment of Aligarh University was to add one more dimension as

the Indian National Congress was losing Government support Lord Dufferin in 1888 dismissed it as a 'microscopic minority'.

Lokmanya Tilak a militant nationalist was determined to seek wider support from the masses. He looked back on the past achievements of the Marathas. He was also aware of the revivalist movements of the Arya samaj of Dayananda Saraswati and the Singh Sabha of the Sikhs. He wanted to motivate the people of Maharashtra to act vigorously.

In 1892 he started 'celebration of Ganapati and Shivaji Jayant; festivals. Ganapati was worshipped by Maharashtrian people privately, in their homes. This festival is observed in the Hindu month of Bhadrapad that is in August/September every year Shivaji Jayanti takes place in April-May. In case of Shivaji Jayanti, it was Mahatma Jyotibe Phule who undertook the cleansing, repair and rectoration work of chhatrapati Shivaji's Samadhi. He also had celebrated the Jayanti and composed the poetry in form of 'Powada ' of Shivaji long back on in 1867. It was Tilak who popularised Ganesh festival along with Shivjayanti in first decade of 1890's. He was sucessful to mobilise the masses on these occasions.

Lokmanya Tilak used both the occasions that is the Ganapati and Shivaji Jayanti 'Ustav' as occasions of public celebrations when programmes for political education of the masses were organised. Young and old men and women could attend those festivals and also know how they were ruled. These festivals were more for national awakening in Maharashtra rather then strengthening orthodoxy. Lokmanya was charged with communalism as the Hindu-Muslim riots began in Bombay. The two nation theory which was being advocated was more pernicious than the move to regenerate nationalism.

11.6.1 Check your Progress:-

Q. What were the main principles of Arya Samaj ?

11.7 SUMMARY :

Revivalists tries to reform the society from within by using new ideas and new values. They seeks to work within the frame work of the existing society, Few liberal intellectuals of the nineteenth centuries were uprooted from their own traditional culture. They may be progressive in certain fields but they uses antiquity, nor reason, as criterion to judge progress. Lokmanya Tilak based his social philosophy, ethics and his attitude to social changes on Vedantic philosophy and traditions of Maharashtra.

11.8 QUESTIONS :

1. Give a brief sketch of the life and activities of Vishnubabu Brahmachari in the revival of Hinduism.
2. Explain in detail the views of Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar on the greatness of Hinduism.
3. Give an estimate of the achievement of the Arya Samaj.
4. Write Short notes on
 - 1) The Theosophical Society in Maharashtra.
 - 2) Ganesh and Shivjayanti Utsav.

RESISTANCE AND INSURRECTION

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.0 Objectives

12.1 Introduction

12.2 The Rising of the Ramosis

12.3 The Rising of the Bhils

12.4 The Rising of the Kolis

12.5 Maharashtra the Revolt of 1857

12.6 The Revolt of Vasudeo Balwant Phadke

12.7 Peasant Unrest

12.8 The Deccan Riots

12.9 Summary

12.10 Question

12.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1) To understand the uprisings of Ramoshi Bhil and Koli.
- 2) To know the revolt of 1857 in Maharashtra.
- 3) To observe the revolt of Vasudav Balwant Phadke
- 4) To realise peasant unrest.

12.1 INTRODUCTION :

While the educated in Bombay and Poona were exploring the marvels of New Science and thanking God for the blessings of the British Rule, less advanced sections of the Society like the tribals hill-man and peasants were facing a bleak future for their home and hearth. The foreign rule had uprooted them completely. The Ramoshis, Bhils and Kolis from western Maharashtra vigorously opposed the new laws and the wicked systems which the British rulers had introduced.

The towns and cities might have been charmed by new schools, periodicals, books, steam boats and a railway line from Bombay to Kalyan but the village folks were undergoing the fortune of merciless land laws and the oppressive systems of revenue and judicial administration. Land had become a market commodity and handicrafts were ruined because of the imports of machine made goods from England. The villagers and cultivators had a very grim future because they were being thrown out of their hereditary land and occupation, those who lost their means of livelihood crowded into agriculture and the frequent famines and demand for cash-crops drove them to desperation.

The armed revolts of the tribals and later on the peasant did not evoke any sympathy from the educated class. Even the Great Revolt of 1857 was dismissed as the whimper of a decayed feudal order by the English educated people. The peasants and craftsmen were busy with the problem of the security of livelihood and thus the Revolt of 1857 could hardly inspire them to action for political gains.

The suppression of the revolts and Insurrection by the Ramoshis, Bhils and Kolis was not an easy task. The peasant revolts of 1860s and 1870s were put down with a heavy hand. This attracted the attention of the new middle class which was rising in the cities of Bombay and Poona. They began to perceive new meaning and a new line of action.

In some cases, some idealistic individuals, inspired by highly nationalistic and emotional writings, convinced that the British rule was leading Indian society and culture downhill towards decline, wanted to overthrow it. Fired by such idealism, they attempted insurrections as in the case of the revolt by Phadke.

12.2. THE RISING OF THE RAMOSIS AT POONA (1826-29) :

The Ramoshis served in the Maratha police administration in the lower ranks. After the final defeat of the Marathas in 1818, the British administration of the Bombay Province found it difficult to restore order in the region immediately. The new administration was unable to absorb the Ramoshis in the police administration. Consequently, a vast body of unemployed but armed men, including the Ramoshis, were thrown upon the former territories of the Peshwa. They were prepared to join anyone who would provide them suitable employment, and even to help in the attempt to overthrow the British power.

In 1825, the economic distress resulting from scarcity, and reduction in the number of soldiers in the local Poona garrison, adversely affected the Ramoshis. Hence, under the leadership of Umaji Naik and his associate, Bapu Trimbakji Sawant, they rose in revolt and resorted to outlawry. From 1826 to 1829, they committed many excesses in the

hills around the fort of Torna. They proved to be so turbulent that the Government was forced to pardon many of their crimes and placated them by granting lands as well as by recruiting them as hill police. However, their risings were quelled by the British garrison. Nevertheless, the Ramoshis continued to cause trouble to the authorities by attacking their oppressors like money-lenders.

12.2.1 Check your progress:-

Q.1. Trace the causes of Rising of the Ramoshis at Poona ?

12.3 THE RISING OF THE BHILS :

The Bhils were primitive and predatory peoples. Their settlements were scattered in the Western Ghats and in the Country at its base. Their stronghold was in Khandesh. They controlled the mountain passes between the north and the Deccan. In open country-side, they lived quietly as cultivators, and proprietors of the soil. However, in the hilly region, they subsisted on the plunder of the rich land-holders in the neighborhood. They had suffered exploitation and depredations at the hands of the Marathas and others and from the famine of 1802-04.

All these exciting causes rendered the conditions of Khandesh where the Bhils were in the majority, highly anarchical. Thus driven by wars and pestilence, against which they had no protection the Bhils, refractory by temperament, entrenched themselves in the mountains under the leadership of their chiefs, the occupation of the Province of Khandesh by the British in 1818, naturally increased their restlessness. The Satpuras were the nest of these disaffected Bhils in the North, and Satmala and Ajanta in the South. Here, different organised gangs of the Bhils were led by thirty two leaders.

In 1817, an insurrection of the Bhils broke out in Khandesh, presumably stirred by Trimbakji after his escape from the fort of Thana. When the British (Elphinstone) put pressure upon Peshwa Bajji Rao II to secure the seizure and arrest of Trimbakji, the Bhils turned anti-British and rose in revolt against them. Their explosion presented a tempestuous scene of a tremendous popular upsurge, and according to S.B.Chudhury "this stirred the country to its depth." The Government of Bombay used severe military action against them and simultaneously used judicious conciliatory measures to stop the eruption of the Bhils.

In the following year the Bhils broke out in a general insurrection on all sides and ravaged the neighbouring plains. The British had to employ several detachments to suppress them. The trouble continued until 1831 inspite of vigorous military measures of the Government. Gradually the dual measures of coercion, anti -conciliation, at which the British were the past- masters, succeeded in quelling the disturbances of the Bhils and converting them into peaceful cultivators. Although a section of the Bhils once again broke out in revolt in Malwa in 1846, the rising was suppressed. The two and a half decades of struggle with the British cost them very dearly. Not only many of their leaders were killed or captured but a large number of them were killed and their settlements were destroyed their new conquerors.

12.3.4 Check your progress:-

Q.2. Assess the Role of Bhills in Khandesh against Britishers?

12.4 THE RISING OF THE KOLIS (1828-30, 1839 AND 1844-48) :

The Kolis were neighbours of the Bhils, and lived in the country both above and below the Sahyadri in the Thana District, they were scattered over the whole area from the borders of Kutch to the Western Ghats. They were by nature a turbulent people. The British had the first taste of the Koli intransigence in 1824 when Kolis of Gujarat raised a formidable insurrection, burning and plundering villages right upto Baroda. Only the use of force strong enough to quell the activities of the desperadoes could check their excesses.

The Kolis revolted again in 1828 because most of them had been thrown out of employment by the dismantling of forts by the British, thereby depriving them of their livelihood. Inspired by successful insurrection of the Ramosis of Satara, the Kolis under the leadership of Ramji Bhungeria, (a Koli officer of the Government who had resigned in protest against a government order stopping his levy of rupees fifty) raised the standard of revolt in 1828. A large body of troops had to be sent against them, and detachments had to be posted at Konkan and Sahyadri to prevent them from escaping from the combing operations of the British troops.

The Kolis proved to be a thorn in the flesh of the British Government. They posed a serious menace when in 1839 bands of Kolis plundered

a large number of villages in the Sahyadri. They were joined by other turbulent elements of the hills. Both R.C.Majumdar and S.B.Chaudhary point out that in these risings, the Kolis were led by three Brahmins (Bhau Khare, Chimnaji Jadhav and Nanan Dharbhare) who seemed to have harboured some political motives. To quote Majumdar, they “felt strong enough to work for the restoration of the Peshwa, as the strength of the Poona garrison had lately been reduced. The rebels assumed the charge of the Government in the name of the Peshwa. But the British acted swiftly and their prompt action averted a crisis. The British forces attacked the Kolis dispersed their bands captured and arrested many fifty four of whom were tried and punished with varying terms of imprisonment; some were hanged, including a Brahmin, by name Ramchandra Ganesh Gore.

The Kolis were not the ones to give in easily; they broke into revolt again in 1844. Their leaders this time were Raghu Bangria and Bapu Bangria. Starting from their headquarters in the country side to the north-west of Poona, they carried on their looting and plunder in the districts of Nasik and Ahmadnagar. Next year the Koli disturbances spread as far as Purandhar and Satara. The situation appeared to be desperate, until a strong military force brought the situation under control. Bapu Bangria was caught but Raghu Bangria eluded the vigilance of the police. He had tremendous influence over the minds of the people and “lived on blackmail levied from Poona and Thana Villages”. Finally he was arrested on 2nd January, 1848 and hanged. By 1850, the Koli rebellion had been crushed.

It is significant to note that during the Koli rebellion of May 1845, Umaji, the leader of the Ramosi uprising of 1825, had also joined the Kolis at Purandhar lawless activities. Further, in 1873, Honya, an influential Koli, raised a well-trained band of followers in the north west of Poona, and began a series of attacks on the moneylenders “who habitually cheat and oppress the hill-tribes and at intervals drive them into crime.” Though Honya was caught in 1875, the spirit of insurrection was spread from the Kolis to the peace-loving Kunbis of the plains. Between May and July, 1875 over a dozen assaults were committed on money-lenders by the insurrectionists. The authorities had to summon troops to restore order.

Again, during the revolt of Phadke in 1879. the peace around Poona was disturbed by two gangs: one of the Kolis and the other of the Ramosis. No fewer than fifty nine robberies were committed by the gangs. It took a lot of hard work for the police and the troops to effectively curb the violent activities of these two gangs.

12.4.1 Check your progress:-

Q.3 Why did Ramosis, Bhils and Kolis revolted against British ?

12.5 MAHARASHTRA AND THE REVOLT OF 1857:

In 1857, Northern India was convulsed by the “Great Rebellion” which was to a large extent “the Revolt of the people.” It shook the very foundations of the British rule in India, and resulted in the transfer of power from the East India Company to the Crown. During the very eventful months of 1857-58, Maharashtra, as a whole, presented a picture of political serenity and tranquility. Except for a few pockets in and around Poona and a few individuals, the whole region remained quiet. This can be explained partly by referring to the rapid economic development of the city of Bombay, its growing commercial activities, the growth of Western influences and the belief among the educated persons that the British rule had been a blessing as compared to the Chaotic and inefficient reign of the later Peshwas.

We have already noted that men like Jambhekar, Lokhitawadi Gopal Hari Deshmukh, Jotirao Phule, Dadabhai Naoroji, R.G.Bhandarkar and M.G.Ranade were engaged in the social reform in response to the criticism of Indian society by the Christian missionaries. Of course, a few individuals like Atmaram Pandurang Tarkhadkar had been critical of the British rule; but in general, Bombay seemed to have accepted the British regime with equanimity. In fact, a sizable number of educated people or the intelligentsia, businessmen and prominent leaders were actually collaborating with Government of Bombay in several respects. It was only their common economic and status expectations as well as shared perception of social and political realities that had brought the several closed social groups and the open groups such as the Shetias and the “Young Bombay” on a common platform to found the Bombay Association in 1852.

But Poona and interior Maharashtra presented a different picture. Unlike Bombay, which was developing into a cosmopolitan city, Poona was a Maratha city par excellence, and as S.R.Mahrotra remarks, “the Marathas were one of the great bugbears of the British in India.” A highly proud and patriotic people, they still clung on to the memories of Shivaji’s valour and the glorious days of the Maratha Empire. Many traditional Brahmins and even those who had received English education had not forgotten the way in which the British had established in Poona. The

British were viewed with a deep-rooted apprehension and antipathy. To quote the Bombay Times and Standard (17 October, 1860):

“Poona was the focus of Maratha patriotism and a centre of Brahmanical influence. The Maratha Brahmins, particularly those of the Chitpavan variety, who dominated Poona, were considered by the British to be ambitious, intriguing and incurably hostile to the raj.” Sir Richard Temple, Governor of Bombay, complained in 1879 thus:

“Never have I known in India a national and political ambition, so continuous, so enduring, so far reaching, so utterly impossible to satisfy as that of the Brahmins of Western India. “

Naturally, the response of Bombay and Poona to the “Great Rebellion” differed, though the British suspected the leading Hindus of both the cities. In 1857 the public life of the city of Bombay began to suffer the repercussions of the revolt of Northern Indian princes, zamindars and common people. In October rumours spread throughout Bombay that Jagannath Shankershet and Bhau Daji, two of its leading lights, were conspiring to overthrow the Government. Nevertheless, during those turbulent days the city remained calm and the Bombay Association found it “a prudent course” to cease functioning until the disturbance in the North had stopped. Surprisingly, the British in Bombay were able, to obtain co-operation of the city’s Muslim leaders to pacify their co-religionists of the North who were active in the rebellion.

The Anglo-Indian press in Bombay denounced the Revolt. For instance, Dr. George Buist, editor of Bombay Times, “cried for the blood of Indians as reprisals for the massacres during the Rebellion”. The Government of Bombay seemed to have taken no action against Buist for his attack on Indians.

However, there leading Bombay papers published in Gujarati, namely, the Bombay Samachar, the Jame-Jamshed, and the Rast Goftar, put up a vigorous defense of Indians against the attacks made on them in the English press. An Indian shareholder of the Bombay Times Mr. Naoroji Furdunji, insisted, on the editor being restrained. Buist was asked to give an undertaking that he would moderate his tone; on his refusal to do so, he was dismissed. (Buist was succeeded by Robert Knight. He converted the Bombay Times into a leading Anglo-Indian paper to fight for the cause of the Indians.)

In the Deccan, whose region was contiguous with the disturbed areas of Central India, there was much “brooding discontent”. According to Tara Chand, “Loss of independence, disappearance of Peshwa’s rule and degradation of Poona which had been the centre of Maratha power, rankled in the minds of the peoples.... The confiscation of

numerous estates at the instance of the Inam Commission, the ban on adoption on the failure of natural heirs to the owners of landed estates, and the close relations between the families of Nana Saheb and the Patwardhan Chiefs, had Created an explosive situation.”

The Indian troops in the British army stationed in places like Asirgarh, Burhanpur, Aurangabad, Belgaum, Kolhapur and Bombay together with the discontented Muslims of the region plotted a revolt. A concerted attempt by Rango Bapuji Gupte, an old and faithful servant of the House of Shivaji together with a few Maratha Sardars, with recruits collected from among the Ramosis, Mangs and Kolis, to oust the British and restore Shahu, the son of Pratap Singh, to the throne of Chhatrapati Shivaji appeared to be bearing fruit. Promises of support came from several chiefs from different parts of Maharashtra. But before the plot could be executed, it was betrayed. The British acted swiftly and put the conspirators to death.

In Kolhapur, Belgaum and Dharwar symptoms of rebellion among the civilians and of mutiny among Indian soldiers became increasingly evident. Then news of Nana Saheb's rising in Kanpur greatly excited them and they established communication with the mutineers in the North for a simultaneous action. They were secretly supported by the discontented Maratha chiefs and openly by the Muslim leaders. Accordingly Kolhapur rose in arms on 31 July 1857. Twice the soldiers attempted to take the town of Kolhapur, but failed. The rising at Kolhapur soon assumed formidable character and the civilians hostile to the British (mostly villagers) joined it in full strength.

On 6 October, 1857, the rebels entered the town of Kolhapur, occupied it and closed its gates. But the British forces and their guns quickly overpowered the rebels, and recaptured, the town and the Raja's palace. Thirty-six rebels were executed in the course of the day.

The people of the Southern Maratha country were greatly excited by the confiscation of lands by the Inam Commission. It was also suspected that emissaries of Nana Saheb must have worked there to produce convulsions. Resistance to the British took place both above and below the ghats (hills). The Chief of Nargund (a small place in the Southern Maratha country) 'offered the last instance of bloody reaction against: the British Policy of Lapse as well as against the Inam Commission.

The Chief (Baba Saheb) declared war on 27 May 1858, and it brought into existence a national rising in the Southern Maratha Country.” But his rebellion was crushed by the British with a heavy hand. He was executed on 11 June 1858.

Thus, the British were able to put down revolts in a few areas of interior Maharashtra. Their task was made easier by the lack of concerted action on the part of the people of Maharashtra. The outbreak in Southern Maharashtra therefore, remained only a minor episode in the Great Rebellion of 1857". The revolt in Maharashtra was confined mainly to dispossessed and discontented Maratha Sardars, Zamindars and some North Indian sepoy. As Tara Chand observes, "in 1857-58, there was little in common between the Marathas and Mahars with the "Purbiya" soldier. Moreover, the tact and vigilance of the British officers prevented the revolt from being widespread" .

V.D.Savarkar, while attributing the failure of the attempted "Revolution" to the vigilance of Lord Elphinstone's Bombay Government, writes :

The general plan of the sepoy was to make a rising in Bombay first, then to march towards Poona, capture that city, raise the banner of Maratha Kingdom, and proclaim Nana Saheb as Peshwa. But before the plans could be put into operation, Forrest (The Chief Police Officer) broke up the conspiracy...."

12.5.1 Check your progress:-

Q. 4 Give an account of revolt of 1857, in Maharashtra.

12.6 Revolt of Vasudeo Balwant Phadke 1879 :

Vasudev Balwant Phadke is regarded as one of the outstanding Indian revolutionaries. Burning with the zeal of liberating Maharashtra from the imperial rule of the Britons, he risked both his career and life to what V.S. Joshi terms "task of lifting the nation from the abyss of foreign bondage through insurrection and organization." According to N.C.Kelkar, "after Peshwa Nana Saheb, it was Phadke alone whose name struck a grim terror in the hearts of Englishmen". He single-handedly sought to build a revolutionary organization to overthrow the British regime.

Born in 1845 in the district of Kolaba in a poor Chitpavan Brahmin family, Phadke did not receive much education. In 1863, he joined the Military Accounts Department of the Bombay Government and remained in service for the next fifteen years. According to his biographers, the denial of leave to attend on his ailing mother by his superiors in 1869 developed in him a feeling of profound dislike for the British government." His feelings were deeply stirred by the devastation caused in Western

India by the terrible famine of 1876-77, for which he held the British rule responsible. Besides, the changing political situation in the Deccan from 1870 onwards and the agitational politics of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha under the guidance of M. G. Ranade and Ganesh Vasudev Joshi, known popularly as “Sarvajanik Kaka” added fuel to the burning patriotism in his heart. Ranade’s stinging criticism of the economic exploitation of India by the British, further strengthened his romantic resolve to fight the exploiters.

Sarvajanik Kaka’s vow in January 1871 to use exclusively **Swadeshi** goods, including clothes, inspired Phadke to discard foreign cloths. He also prevailed upon his colleagues and associates in “Aikyavardhini” an organisation founded to promote unity among the Maharashtrians for the national uplift of India to use Indian - made goods. **The Bombay Gazette** in its issue dated 28 June 1879, wrote : There is a section in Poona, of Brahmins, who have bound themselves by a vow never to purchase or use an article of British produce. Vasudev Balwant was one of these and those who knew him in the Finance Office say he religiously kept his vow.

The forced abdication of Maharaja Malharrao Gaikwad of Baroda in 1785 on “the malicious charge” of attempting to poison the British Resident, and the riots known as “Deccan riots”, gave fresh impetus to anti British feelings. The hunger and starvation of millions of famine stricken peasants and accompanying death of hundreds of people due to epidemics of cholera and small-pox rendered the sight in several places, such as Sholapur, pitiable and distressing. The measures taken by the ‘Civilised and enlightened British Government to alleviate the sufferings of the people were utterly inadequate. The holocaust of famine and the government’s failure to take energetic steps to combat it convinced Phadke and other like-minded men that only ouster of the alien regime could improve the conditions of the people. Hence they resolved to immediately rise in an armed revolt against the British and establish Swaraj. Phadke now undertook the mission of collecting men, money and arms for the proposed revolt.

The natural surroundings of Poona with forts, hills and rivers were ideal for an armed uprising. But the revolutionary armed ways were not palatable to the educated classes. Hence, Phadke sought his recruits from among the masses, including the sturdy Ramosis. He incited them against the British by his outspoken analysis of their miseries and sufferings. He succeeded in convincing them that the British rule was the main cause of their present state of affairs.

Phadke and his associates organised a secret revolutionary society and undertook a vigorous training of their recruits in the use of

arms. All members of the secret society were bound by a pledge: “ I shall respond to the call of my nation, sacrificing my all at the alter of my motherland” . Thus prepared themselves, Vasudev Balwant Phadke and his men launched on 22 February 1879, the first organized revolt of the Maharashtrians against the British since 1818. Most of the one hundred or so volunteers in his force were victims of poverty and starvation. Ramosis, Kunbis, Dhangars, Chambaras and Brahmins dominated its ranks. While the majority of them were actuated by the lust of immediate gains from loot, some of them were inspired by the hatred of the British.

As reports of Phadke-led revolt were flashed in newspapers, the whole of India struggled hard to comprehend the real implication of the upheaval in the Deccan” The Government became anxious and concluded that the situation was fraught with grave danger to the future. But as Phadke’s men embarked on dacoities and were involved in short skirmishes with the police, sympathy of several people was with them. The Government was worried not only by the threat to life and property, but also by what they thought challenge to their authority. Sir Richard Temple, then Governor of Bombay, was baffled by “.. the apathetic and unsatisfactory behaviour of the people in many villages and the sympathy known to be left, if not openly evinced, by many of the upper classes..”

Realising the political character of Phadke’s dacoities, the Bombay Government moved swiftly and succeeded in arresting some of the leaders of the raids. A man-hunt was launched to capture Phadke, but he could evade the police because he was sheltered and befriended by the rich and the poor, by the upper and the lower castes. In course of his wanderings, he tried to enlist the support of villagers and recruit men for his cause. His aim was to loot the Government treasury in order to raise a force of five hundred good men committed to his cause. But his ambition was rudely shattered by the conduct of the Ramosis who were not inspired by any patriotic ideas but merely looked to their own interests.

On 29 March 1879, Phadke committed two dacoities and got some money; but soon there were quarrels about the distribution as the Ramosis had misappropriated part of the booty without even Informing him. Disappointed and disgusted, Phadke dispensed with the Ramosis and went away. On 24 April, he wrote:

“I have only seven days to live so I think; therefore I bow before the feet of all you my bretheren inhabitants of India, and give up my life for you and will remain pleading for you in the Just Court of God”.

However, he recovered from illness and went to Sholapur. According to V.S.Joshi, Phadke’s biographer, “towards the first week of May 1879,

Phadke issued his famous proclamation denouncing the British policy of economic exploitation of India and demanding economic relief for the peasants as a matter of 'natural right'. He warned the government that many groups would simultaneously rise in different parts of the country, and if the government did not concede the demands the Governors and other high officials would be put to death".

The proclamation sent a shrill of excitement throughout the country. But the Government went on undeterred in its plan to suppress the revolt. A reward of Rs. 3000/- for the arrest of Phadke was announced and troops were dispatched to the disturbed region. As the Government forces hunted the insurgent strongholds over the Ghats, Phadke and his men crossed the Kasara Ghat to avoid a straight fight with them. They went to Konkan, committed dacoities and escaped with the loot-precious stones, like rubies, pearls and jewels, costly nose-rings and ear-rings, necklaces etc. Their raids created a panic among of people. District after district stood in constant dread of the raids of Phadke and the terror created by his dacoities compelled a large number of rural people to migrate to cities like Bombay and Poona.

The Government of Bombay suspected that some of Phadke's active collaborators were in Poona and adopted stringent measures to trap them out. The resultant "harassment and persecution of civilians "had no precedent in the whole history of the Brahmin community of Poona", and the city transformed into a huge prison".

The conflagration at Poona and the revolt of Phadke became the absorbing topics of the day in political circles in London. 'The Times' demanded that adequate measures should immediately be taken to stamp out the seditious trends in India. The Secretary of State for India was forced on 23 May 1879, to admit that the "Deccan has without doubt been subjected to great distress for some weeks past. " The government machinery moved faster and pursued Phadke until they came across him asleep in a temple in the village of Dever Nadigi, in the Kaladgi District of Hyderabad, at 3.a.m. on 21 July 1879.

Phadke was charged for collection of men, arms and ammunition with the intention of waging war against the British government of India, for exciting feeling of disaffection to the Government and for committing dacoities. He was transported for life to solitary confinement in the Aden Jail, on 3 January 1880. He tried to escape from the jail on 13 October 1880 but was recaptured. He died there on 17 February 1883.

According to R.C.Majumdar, "Phadke's revolt was curious phenomenon one man standing against the mighty British empire. He

left a legacy and the seeds he sowed grew into a mighty banyan tree with its shoots spread all over India, in about a quarter of a century. His patriotism and daring spirit were taken up by the Chaphekar brothers... and from them it was taken over by the revolutionary wing of the Indian nationalists early in the twentieth century. Even his methods of secretly collecting arms Imparting military training to youths and securing necessary funds by means of political dacoities were followed by a latter. He may, therefore, be justly called father of militant nationalism in India". But the means he employed and the torture to which his men forced their victims to submit makes it difficult to form a correct estimate of Vasudev Balwant Phadke's revolt.

12.6.1 Check your progress:-

Q. 5 Describe the revolt of V.B. Phadke.

12.7 PEASANT UNREST :

Maharashtra was essentially an agrarian society in the nineteenth century. Except Bombay and Poona, remaining areas in the region were predominately agricultural and an overwhelming number of the people were peasants. According to R.D.Chosksey, out of the total population of the Maratha territories conquered by the British in 1818 (40,00,000), the Marathas constituted around seventy percent, and the remainder consisted of Brahmins, Muslims, Rajputs and others. Outside the city of Bombay, the Brahmins and Muslims were usually in Poona, Satara and Dharwar. While most of the Marathas were "ryots" or peasants, the Brahmins centered in urban areas pursued professions; and they constituted the intelligentsia Hindu community.

During the regime of the Peshwas, the economic condition of the peasants, though not good, was tolerable. Few owned the land; majority of the ryots were tenants and paid rents for the lands cultivated by them. Still others in rural Maharashtra were landless farmers and were hired by the cultivators as labourers. A small number of the poor persons in the rural areas worked as domestic servants. Slavery also existed in the Deccan. Many of the Deshmukhs, Deshpandes, Patils and other richer individual landlords engaged the services of landless villagers against money payment. The wages paid to a rural labourer were meagre, and showed little tendency to increase beyond a bare subsistence rate. This remained the trend even after the British conquest of Maharashtra, at least until 1850.

From about 1850, a steady rise occurred in the rate of money wages, owing mainly to the increased demand for labour in railroad construction, road building and other public works as well as in agricultural operations.

On the taking control of Maharashtra's administration, the British introduced the "Rayatwari System" of land revenue. Under this system, the land settlement was by the Government with individual occupants who were themselves landholders and not tenants. This was more or less the system followed by the Peshwas, until Bajirao II's regime. The Rayatwari System of land revenue administration under Mr. Elphinstone in his capacity as the Commissioner of the Deccan, gave wide discretionary powers to the revenue officials. But within a few years it was found that the system was not satisfactory. Scarcity of rainfall ruined crops in many a regions and low prices of grains worsened the conditions of the peasants and reduced the revenues of the state. Moreover, increasing burden on land, increasing land revenue, competition with foreign goods - all resulted in the mounting indebtedness of a very acute type, which chiefly affected the agriculturists. But overzealous revenue officials tried to collect the full amount of the assessment, thus causing acute misery to farmers.

In 1827, the government introduced changes in the mode of land assessment, which in theory, appeared to be an improvement over the earlier method of revenue collection. But soon it also showed several defects, and after experience of a few years, a modified system was introduced. With the introduction of the new system in 1836, collection of land revenue showed a marked improvement because under the new system rates of land revenue were lower than the earlier system. As a result of this reduction of land revenue, farmers brought more land under cultivation, and with the outbreak of the American Civil War (1861-65), there was an increase in demand for Indian cotton in England. Consequently, Khandesh reaped a good harvest. A period of prosperity spanned the period 1850 to 1866 ending the earlier economic depression; but the prosperity was only temporary.

The Government of Bombay Presidency wrongly took the entire credit for the rosy economic picture. It lost sight of the many deep rooted causes of the past economic distress and failed to understand that the present prosperity was only a temporary relief and the economic disease of earlier years could recur at any time. Consequently, no sooner had the American Civil War ended and American cotton recaptured the market than the temporary economic bright summer turned into a dim winter of depression. The peasant who was already groaning under the burden of past debts, now became desperate. The sowcar lorded the village economy and the ryat was his serf remarks Choksey.

Meanwhile, population in Maharashtra was growing rapidly. According to an estimate, between 1832 and 1872 population of the Deccan alone increased by about 20 lakhs. The surplus population, until 1850, found livelihood by bringing new lands under cultivation and in the later years, construction activities and public works projects increased the demand for labour. But the fluctuations in the economy and the steady growth in the price of food grains during the period 1850-65, prevented the labour from deriving much real advantage from the increased money wages. Moreover, the failure of the Government to develop any industrial activity, its deliberate encouragement to import of machine-made goods from England and neglect of local cottage industries - the main financial support of peasants during years of scarcity, crippled the rural economy. Even migration to cities like Bombay in search of employment did not reduce the pressure of population on land.

The plight of the peasants was made more unbearable by greedy money-lenders. Although the Regulations of 1827 had provided important measures to check the abuses of money-lending, the curse of the Deccan peasant-indebtedness continued; far from becoming less, it increased considerably. British legislation relating to the right to property also placed poor peasants increasingly under the control of money-lenders. For example, by giving land an exchange value, the law made it easier for the peasant to mortgage it and for the money-lender to confiscate it in the event of the former's failure to redeem the mortgage. Earlier, a farmer abandoned his land only due to some calamity like famine, or war; under the new laws, he could be ousted from his land by the moneylender. Even the Civil Procedure Code of 1859 and the Limitation Act of the same year strengthened the moneylender's hand against the hopeless peasants.

Consequently, by 1875, peasants of Maharashtra were reduced to a wretched debt-ridden and poverty stricken class; their condition had become miserable. The fervent pleas of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and the Bombay Association to rescue the peasantry from their pitiable plight did not have much effect and the Government of Bombay, in fact, suspected the Sarvajanik Sabha of instigating the Ryots to withhold, payment of land revenues.

12.7.1 Check your progress:-

Q. 6 Describe the revolt of V.B. Phadke.

12.8 THE DECCAN RIOTS :

In 1867, had season commenced in rural Maharashtra; prices of agricultural produce fell rapidly and in 1870 the burden of debt was severely felt by poor farmers. Their failure to pay interests on loans brought the debtors to the courts of law. The result was that the mass of the people again became “quasi-slaves having to surrender all their produce to the sowkar, and receiving from him only enough grain to live on, as well as small sums of money which served to increase their debts”. Moreover fall in agricultural prices forced the cultivators to reduce cultivation, and while retaining the best lands, others they sold to or mortgaged with the moneylenders. According to R. C. Majumdar, “Marwaris carried on a lucrative business by lending them money at a high rate of interest... “ The Commission appointed by the Government of India to inquire into the Deccan Riots estimated that about one-third of the occupants of Government land were burdened with debts which averaged eighteen times their annual assessment : Some unscrupulous sowkars or money lenders even went to the extent of inducing and compelling the “debts-peasants”, mostly Kunbis, “to compromise the honour of their females to get relief from the crushing debts”.

Under these unbearable circumstances and outranges, the usually patient peasant lost their patience. At the end of 1874, their pent up feelings against the oppressive money-lenders burst into flame and their hatred against them exploded into violence in the village of Kardeh in Sirur Taluka of the Poona Collectorate. The moneylenders of the village were also subjected to social and economic boycott; they were forced to flee the village, the riots spread rapidly to other areas of Poona Collectorate. Police acted fast and arrested 951 persons from 33 villages.

The characteristic features of the Deccan Riots were, to quote Majumdar, “wholesale plunder of property and murderous assaults upon money-lenders, but generally speaking, there were no serious crimes of murder. In almost every case the object of the rioters was to obtain and destroy the bonds, decrees etc. in the possession of their creditors, personal violence against them being used only when they refused to handover these documents. The victims were almost exclusively the Marwari sowkar and Gujar sowkars, though in rare cases even Brahman sowkars were molested.”

The uprisings of the Bhils, the Kolis and the Ramosis in the first half of the nineteenth century and again in the 1870s, in which they carried on a series of attacks on the money-lenders, may also be treated as a part of the peasant’s revenge against their exploiters and oppressors.

Anxious to prevent such violent activities and show of lawlessness, the Government appointed a Commission to report on the riots and the causes the outbreaks of Poona, Satara, Ahmednagar and Sholapur. The Deccan Riots gave the authorities an opportunity to take stock of the economic situation in Bombay Presidency. With the acceptance of the Commission's Report, Act of 1879, indifference of the Government towards the problems of the peasants was overcome. This is clear from the fact that in the subsequent famines in Maharashtra not only private organization like Poona Sarvajanik Sabha but also the Government agencies took an active by natural calamities. Moreover, by taking direct action to the Government and other concerned parties that their patience should not be taken as their acquiescence of injustices heaped on them. After the last quarter of the nineteenth century, political organizations began increasingly to take cognizance of peasants, grievances and involve them in national politics.

According to Lokmitra, a Gujarati weekly published from Bombay, "the Deccan decoities were perpetrated by indignant ryots than by professional robbers. The Deccan ryots were impoverished and felt the land assessment as a heavy burden. They were dissatisfied with this state of things and the new forest law added to their dissatisfaction. They took to committing decoities, and some professional robbers joined them."

12.9 SUMMARY :

Thus, the armed revolts of the tribals and peasant did not evoke any sympathy from the educated class even the revolt of 1857 was dismissed by the educated people.

The suppression of the revolts, and insurrection by the Ramosis, Bhils and Kolis was not an easy task. The peasant revolt of 1860's and 1870's were put down with a heavy hand. This attracted the attention of the new middle class which was rising in the cities of Bombay and Poona.

12.10 QUESTIONS :

1. Why did the Ramoshis, the Kolis, and the Bhils revolted against the British rule ?
2. How did Maharashtra respond to the outbreak of the revolt of 1857?
3. Critically evaluate the revolt of Vasudev Balwant Phadke
4. Write Short notes on
 - 1)The peasants revolt in Maharashtra.
 - 2) Deccan Riots.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MAHARASHTRA (1861-1920)

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Agriculture
- 13.3 Transport and Communication
- 13.4 Industry
- 13.5 Trade and Commerce
- 13.6 Rise of Labour Movements
- 13.7 Summary
- 13.8 Questions

13.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1) To understand the condition of agriculture during the period.
- 2) To realise the condition of transport and communications
- 3) To know the situation of Industry.
- 4) To observe the condition of trade and commerce.
- 5) To study the rise of Labour movements.

13.1 INTRODUCTION :

In the preceding unit, we surveyed the rising discontent among the common people of Maharashtra and that the condition of the farmers throughout the nineteenth century was utterly unsatisfactory and that it was the primary cause of the so-called "Deccan Decoities." In this unit, let us make a survey of developments in the economic front. At the outset, you have to understand that within a few pages it is not possible to give a detailed treatment to all aspects of the topic. Therefore, you will do well to consult some standard works on the economic history of India and Maharashtra (we have indicated titles of some books in the bibliography). Nevertheless, we have attempted to present as succinct a picture of the developments and communication in Maharashtra during

the period 1861 - 1920, as possible. A brief review of developments before 1861 is given to enable you to have clear picture of the economic development in Maharashtra.

13.2 AGRICULTURE :

Until about the middle of the nineteenth century, as noted earlier, agriculture passed through sustained depression. Prices and output were low and large tracts of land in several districts of Maharashtra were deserted by peasants. The Ryotwari system had led, until 1835, to the weakening of the solidarity of villages and undermined the position of the headman and other village officials. There was widespread agreement in the official circles that the Deccan suffered for more than two decades from over assessment; the people were impoverished villages dilapidated and land were out of cultivation. The new system called "Bombay Survey of 1835", brought some relief, and together with the growth of cities and improvement of transport, increased the area under cultivation and widened the markets for food crops. After 1850 for nearly two decades the picture of agriculture in Maharashtra was bright.

The 1850s and 60s saw a series of good harvests. The reduction in land revenues in many districts encouraged cultivation. Expansion of agriculture was greatly facilitated and stimulated by the American Civil War which began in 1861. Demand for Indian cotton increased, and a large part of it was supplied by Khandesh. A large part of public works programme in Western India in railways and irrigation helped exports. The output of cotton nearly doubled, and the output of foodgrains also showed a marked increase between 1860 and 1869.

However, the first beneficiaries from the agricultural boom were traders and money lenders though the prosperity lasted long enough to help some cultivators also. District after district reported increase in cultivation, the number of ploughs, carts and livestock increased appreciably upto 1870. The Gazzettier for Sholapur asserted that "in contrast to 1839, bulk of the people were prosperous and independent of money lenders in 1871, the only exception being those who paid less than Rs. 10 lakhs in land revenue." (The Cambridge Economic History of India, Volume II, PP. 194). The total revenue of Bombay Presidency increased by 37% between 1857 and 1871.

The years after 1870, however, witnessed reversal of the agricultural prosperity World economic trends also affected Indian economy. By now, the American Civil War was over and Americans had recaptured the market for their agricultural products, mainly cotton. Consequently, prices of agricultural products had fallen to the 1860 level.

The Government was forced to scale down the assessments but did not reduce them enough. Once again, the peasants went to the greedy moneylenders for loans to pay the land revenues (against security of the crop). But the money lenders, who themselves were hit by the fall in prices, were not always willing to lend.

As discussed earlier, agrarian distress led to agricultural riots in the Deccan in 1875, with serious repercussions to the sahumars and vanis. The Government tried to stop the peasant discontent by introducing the Deccan Agricultural Relief Act of 1879. The Act, which became two remedies: in order to protect the legal peasants. restrictions were imposed on money-lenders, and provisions, were made (though inadequate) for alternative sources of credit. The Act had some success. The number of court cases declined sharply and more cases went for conciliation (though the outcome was not always satisfactory). The violence against them coupled with the legal restrictions on their operations made a majority of the money-lenders to move out of the rural areas to Bombay. But this did not reduce the peasants' woes; fears of the burden of agricultural debt were substituted by the opposite fear of finding enough credit. They were now forced to mortgage and even sell their lands.

The 1880s saw the second wave of railway building, and this gave stimulus to agricultural output and agricultural exports. In several districts of Maharashtra, artisans, who otherwise would have gone into agriculture, turned careers out of business, though small artisans, unable to compete with foreign and domestic manufacturers may have gone into agriculture. There was an extension of cash cropping not only for exports but wherever there was sufficient irrigation to provide food for the cities. For example, sugarcane cultivation in the Deccan, groundnuts in Satara, cotton in Khandesh and elsewhere in the Deccan, and other cash crops increasingly found favour with the cultivators. Some cultivators made large profits and ploughed them back into agriculture. They also bought carts to take their grains to markets where they could get better price, instead of giving it to the local sahumkar. For instance, when the southern Maharatta Railway began operating in the 1880s in Satara and a new settlement arose there in the 1890s, it was found that carts owned by peasants (ryots) had increased several fold since the settlement. This showed that no longer did the moneylenders and vanis monopolised agricultural commodities market and dictated prices.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the prices of land shot up, and continued to rise in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The land was bought by the neo-rich farmers who had been able to seize the new market opportunities. What is of more interest is

the fact that rich land owners came to replace the money-lenders as sources of credit in the villages. Official inquiries in thirty-seven villages in poor famine prone regions of the Deccan in 1892 revealed that the money lenders were the new rich farmers. An official report mentioned that in 1899, “non—agriculturists” owned only one-quarter of the land, but this category of land-owners included many inamdars. Alien money-lenders held about 15% of the land in 1890. In 1911, the Government of Bombay estimated that “non-agriculturists” did not hold more than one-sixth of the total area, though they held the more valuable land, and paid about one-fifth of the total assessment.

However plague and famine continued to haunt Maharashtra. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, several districts were hit by famine and plague. During the famine years (1899-1902). the Government had to cancel over one-third of its revenue demand; and in 1904, a policy of “automatic remission” was framed.

The first two decades of the twentieth century were years of mixed fortune for agriculture; in many years epidemic killed men and cattle; in others the rising demand for agricultural commodities, particularly cotton, and good seasons brought fairly general prosperity. During the First World War the prices of crops and land grew rapidly. But this created a problem when resettlements were made after the War - the problem of inflated wartime price of land. Thus, by “the end of the nineteenth century, there was little uncultivated land in Maharashtra, but disease and famine kept population down till 1921.

According to some economists, during the period under review, number of rich farmers rose rapidly resulting in the increasing stratification of the peasantry in the twentieth century. According to them, the widening of markets and the commercialisation of agriculture enabled those with resources, enterprise or luck to flourish, often by buying up lands of small cultivators. But others are of the view that this trend was not uniform in all areas of rural Maharashtra. For instance, in 1880, in Ahmednagar, a few men held over 400 acres of land, and twelve to twenty bullocks, but the vast majority had less than twenty acres, and one pair of bullocks. In two villages of the Deccan. surveyed in 1917, it was seen that while the large holdings above twenty acres gradually decreased, the number of medium and small holdings greatly increased. This suggests that stratification in the rural areas differed from areas to areas .

13.2.1 Irrigation

From the sixties of the nineteenth century the Bombay Government began to pay more attention to the irrigation needs of the Deccan.

Between 1868 and 1885 there was considerable activity for building canals. The first of the large modern irrigation schemes was built in the Mutha River Valley near Poona, consisting of the Khadakwasla Dam and Mutha Right and Left Bank Canals. This project was completed in the year 1879. The Pravara system consisting of the Ojhar Canal Scheme and Ojhar Weir, were completed in 1893. The Bhatgar Dam near Poona, and the Nira Left Bank Canals were completed in 1896. This was followed by other irrigation projects, like the Godavari project, which were completed in 1916. Other small projects such as Kadwar River works, were also completed in the first decade of the twentieth century.

In spite of the developments discussed above, the dawn of the twentieth century saw an economically exhausted rural Maharashtra. The fluctuating seasons, prices and general trend of events that followed the scarcity of 1899 till 1902 made the life of the poor peasantry extremely difficult. As R. D. Choksey writes, the decade which ended with 1910 was a period of indifferent rainfall. But there was no acute shortage of grain and abnormal rise in prices. Labour had become more mobile and the labourers more independent. A spirit of enterprise, which was previously dormant, caused not only the labouring classes but also smaller cultivators to seek, whenever there was local failure of the harvest, employment out of their villages at good wages. This attitude rendered them independent of Government aid during times of scarcity. This was considered one of the most remarkable developments of the decade.

The twentieth century witnessed Government officials play a sympathetic role to help the rural poor. Special attention began to be paid to land problem by the establishment of various departments devoted to issues concerning land and agriculture. But these efforts were not 'keeping with the demands made by the time and the needs of progress. The worst enemy of development and the progress was insufficient finance. Hence, all the efforts were in the nature of experiments. Consequently, agriculture in the Daccan remained backward and under developed, and the peasant continued to be poor, debt-ridden, ignorant, and more or less indolent!

13.2.2 Check your progress

Q.1. Define the important features of Agriculture

13.3 TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION :

In Western India, even after fifty years of the British rule, transport facilities were more meagre and expensive than in any part of the country. This severely affected not only the cotton economy but the process of agricultural development as a whole. It is true that the Peshwa Government did not pay adequate attention to the development of transport and communication and therefore, Maharashtra was badly served with roads, or, to that matter, any mode of cheaper transport. The British showed interest initially in the growth of transport and communications primarily for the purpose of defence, military movements, and some other political and administrative conveniences. Economic welfare of the people mattered little.

13.3.1 Carts

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, transport of goods was generally done by professional carriers with a large number of pack animals. Bullock Carts, until 1836, were very cumbersome and heavy, with wheels of solid wood or of stone. In that year, a British revenue officer designed a cart with spoked wooden wheels-which are in use even to this date. A Parsi entrepreneur set up at Tembhurni, in Sholapur district, the first factory for this new type of cart. In course of time the new light cart replaced the old heavy one in almost all part of Maharashtra. When the construction of roads began and railway lines were opened in the 1850s and thereafter, transport by pack, animals and massive carts started diminishing. Since the new cart could carry more load and was cheaper and quicker, pack animals were released for agricultural work.

13.3.2 Roads

It is important to note that until the 1850s there were no roads of modern type but only pathways. Moreover, since there were no navigable rivers there was no water transport either. Until 1830, there was only one road across the Sahyadris suitable for carts - between Belgaum and Vengurla at Ram Pass. The road building activity began only in 1840 when work on a Bombay-Agra Road commenced. According to V.D. Divekar," by 1850, for a population of about 16 million souls and an area of about 3,50,000 km, there were in all about 2,000 km. of roads suitable for carts in Western India.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, pressure began to be exerted on the Government by Lancashire and European trading interests to extend and improve the means of communication. They were particularly interested in the improved communication system between the cotton growing districts and the coast. Partly as a result and partly due to the change in the public work policy of the government. internal

communication began to improve. Nevertheless, in the 1860s, the only roads worth mentioning were: the Bombay-Agra Road which passed through the Nasik district to Sholapur; and two others, over Khandala through the Poona district to Sholapur, and two others, leading to Ahmednagar and Satara. But even these trunk lines were neither “bridged nor metalled.” Moreover, adequate funds were not provided for the construction and maintenance of roads on a regular basis.

Road building activity increased in the 1880s and thereafter. In 1912, the total mileage of Roads, in Bombay Deccan stood at 10,664 of which 4049 were good metalled road. But the means of communication in the villages and between them were completely neglected. This clearly shows that the British were least interested in the welfare of the masses of people living in villages.

13.3.3 Railways

A great advance was made in communications when, in 1853 a 32 km. railway-line between Bombay and Thana opened for traffic. Thereafter, the railway system expanded rapidly. The laying out of the railways in Maharashtra began in 1857. By 1899, the Southern Maharashtra and Madras Railway covered a distance of about 900 km. Another railway-line, called G.I.P. which connected the Deccan with the United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa was built. Subsequently, it was extended upto Bengal, Hyderabad and Madras. A number of other lines also came into existence, including, the B. B. and C.I. By the end of the First World War, four different railway-lines were operating in the region, covering an area of about 24,000 km. The railway lines covered all districts of the Deccan, except Ahmednagar.

Thus, the roads and railroad linked the important towns and cities of Maharashtra with each other and important places outside the Bombay Province. Communications became easier, quicker, cheaper and efficient. The development of transport and communication, though meant primarily for the transportation of military personnel and goods, government officials and sub-ordinate staff and their families, European merchants and their merchandise, it also helped the development and expansion of domestic trade, particularly the cotton and grain trade. But for several years railways in India “were a heavy drag on the economy of the country. The backward economy and poor industrial progress of rural Maharashtra prevented the masses from getting the benefits of the improved transport and communication system.

Another drawback of the Indian railways was that the lines were operated by the Government in some areas, by the Princely States in their respective states, and even by district boards. The result was a

complex system of ownership and management. While some railway-lines made profits, others ran in loss, especially those operating in the South, Poona and Nagpur and other parts of Deccan. In 1902, for example, railways in India, as a whole, were being operated by thirty-three separate administrations including twenty-four private companies, four government agencies, and five princely states.

13.3.4 Posts and Telegraph

For several centuries, some kind of postal arrangement existed in India, However, it was the promulgation of Indian Postal Act in 1834 that marked the beginning of the postal organisation on a modern footing. The first telegraph line from Bombay to Thana was completed in 1854. By 1858, all important towns in the Bombay Presidency were linked with each other by telegraphic communications. The opening of the Suez canal was a great boon as it reduced the time and expense for sea voyage and transportation of exports. Likewise, it also, facilitated quicker communication with the Western world. Industry, trade and commerce immensely benefitted from these developments, and the city of Bombay emerged as the most important centre of trade and commerce, besides textiles.

13.3.5 Check your progress:-

Q.2. Write in brief the Situation of Transport in Maharashtra.

13.4 INDUSTRY :

13.4.1 Decline of Traditional Textile Industry.

Even before the British conquest of Western India, small-scale urban industry operated under freer and competitive conditions. There were, of course, no indigenous capitalist employers; but there did exist master craftsmen who employed fellow artisans and trained apprentices. Poona, Sholapur, Pandharpur and some other places were well-known for their varieties of cloth. However, owing to foreign competition, the old, widespread and well organised urban industry began to decline in the nineteenth century. Even in the rural areas there were cottage industries; they, too, began to decline. For instance, the dumping by English merchants or by their agents of their machine-made dhoties and other cloth, naturally led to fall in demand for Indian cloth and the local textile industry declined. The extensive use of European clothes by the Indian middle classes everywhere naturally threw out of employment

a large number of weavers and spinners at various centres. A few communities like the Parsis altogether abandoned their weaving trade.

The silk industry of Poona and other places suffered a similar setback in the first half of the nineteenth century. The demand for India silk declined as a result of generally depressed conditions and by the disappearance of several princely states who were the main consumers of silk. Moreover, the rise in the prices of raw silk and increased foreign competition, especially, the increasing preference shown by women for China Silk, sounded the death knell of the local silk cloth manufacturers. The English merchants also resorted to unethical business practices and sold Indian made goods at cheaper prices, thereby ruining the trade of Indians and decline of native manufacturers

13.4.2 Cotton Textile Mills :

The cotton textile industry, however, was an exception. In fact, the foundations of the modern textile industry were laid in Bombay. It was largely controlled by Indian investors, and increasingly administered by native managers and technicians. Cotton textile industry flourished despite the fact that it confronted the most important, the most internationally aggressive and politically most powerful industry in Britain. But unlike other cities in Maharashtra, Bombay had the advantage of being the trading centre of the British since the 18th century. But the sea-trade of the east and the west was shared by the native businessman (Shetias) of Bombay with the Europeans. With trade came prosperity and multiplication of facilities, institutions and influence necessary to sustain the advantages thus gained. Besides, an educated middle class also emerged in Bombay in the first half of the nineteenth century.

All these favourable factors enabled a group of ten Indian and fifteen European merchants to organise in 1836 the "Bombay Chamber of Commerce." By the early 1850s, some Indians were already involved in modern banking, steam shipping, steam ginning and hydraulic pressing enterprises. Moreover, a lot of export trade in raw cotton and opium, primarily with China, and the re-export trade of British products was also being handled by the Indians, especially by Paris. This gave them a good knowledge about the supply of cotton from the 'desh' and its export to international markets as well as an insight into the intricacies of marketing of Lancashire yarn and Cloth.

With the advantages gained, it did not take the aggressive and successful merchants long to recognise the possibility of starting mill for the production of cotton yarn and cloth. Among these men was C.N. Davar, a Bombay merchant, who was active in several enterprises in Bombay. In 1851, he tried to establish a cotton mill but did not succeed

in collecting enough funds for this purpose. Finally, in July 1854, he floated a spinning company, which started formally functioning in February 1856. In 1854 two other mills were also promoted: By 1860, at least ten mill companies had been organised in the city, though all of them were not constructed. The American Civil War and the non-availability of 'American cotton during the years 1861-65 encouraged several adventurous businessmen of Bombay to form mill companies; however once the American cotton market recovered in 1865, only ten mills remained in business in Bombay. But in the early 1870s, great expansion of the textile industry began and Bombay mills remained the industry's 'pacesetters' until 1914. By then eighty-five mill companies were in operation. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce reported in 1865 that 75% of all mill-made cloth sold in Bombay Bazaars was locally manufactured. The expanding Far East yarn market particularly influenced the development of the Bombay city mills.

In Sholapur, Malegaon, Ahmednagar, Bhiner, and other places handloom cloth production picked up in the 1880s. Sholapur was the biggest centre of the manufacture of coloured saris. In fact, handloom weaving of cotton was a very common industrial activity of the Deccan farmers over many centuries. Since the 1880s and 1890 were period of self-sufficiency in every sphere of life, the demand for handloom cloth was substantial. Demand also increased for silk. Consequently, in 1883-84 there were more than 900 looms in Yeola and about 800 in Poona.

13.4.3 Silk Cloth Industry :

The Deccan silk weaver continued to produce fabric which foreign manufacturers could not supply. However, they had to increasingly face competition from silk manufacturers of Coimbatore, Banaras, Ludhiana and other places. Moreover, by the close of the nineteenth century, the fall in demand had rendered the Deccan producers of silk and silk cloth poor. Consequently, the silk weavers, because of their poor economic conditions, became a prey to money-lenders and came under the capitalist control. The capitalist control gave rise to what is called the Karkhana system in which contract work came into prominence and gave rise to a class of stockists called 'padamsali'. Those who independently did work for the karkhanas were either paid fixed wages or a price of manufactured articles. As a result as the twentieth century advanced, the small section of independent silk weavers gradually disappeared. The workshops came to be controlled by "Bania" dealers in Poona and by "Kasars" in Nasik.

In the early years of the second decade of the twentieth century small scale powerloom factories were introduced at several places in Maharashtra. Both the handloom weavers and the Karkhandaras were

adversely affected as they had to face competition from the new factories. Japanese textiles also entered the market. Moreover, shortly before the war, textile industry was affected seriously by high prices of cotton and silk. For some time the cotton mills in Khandesh and Sholapur and silk mills in Poona weathered the storm, and even new mills were constructed at Sholapur and Barsi; but by the end of the First World War, the mills and factories found it unprofitable to continue operations. Markets were glutted with huge stocks of cotton and yarn for which there was little demand. During the war years, demand for Indian textiles had gone up due to the stoppage of English imports, but some cotton and silk mills were closed down. However, on the whole, the cotton industry in Poona, Sholapur, Bombay and Khandesh fared well during the war, though its workers did not benefit from the Industry's prosperity.

13.4.4 Other Industries :

In Nasik and Poona copper and brassware industry continued to develop, especially after the introduction of the railway which enabled the manufacturers to transport raw materials and finished goods at a reasonable cheaper cost. Apart from the metal industry, there were other lesser industries such as leather handicraft, woollen goods, paper, dyeing and calico-printing. At the close of the nineteenth century, however, decline set in these industries owing to the rise of mechanised factories and the competition from factory products. In the second decade of the present century, the leather industry of the Deccan was replaced the goods from Bombay, Kanpur and Calcutta. Paper, dyeing and printing industries also declined.

Shipbuilding industry progressed throughout the nineteenth century Deep-sea trading vessels and warships were built in several shipyards not only in-Maharashtra, including Bombay, but in Western India as a whole. Bombay maintained its position as one of the most important shipbuilding centres in India, due mainly to the availability of fine teak, expert Parsi ship- builders and fine docks.

In 1914, the Tata Hydro-electric Power Supply Company was organised to generate and sell energy to enterprises in the Bombay region. Initially, Indian Investors, including the Native states, were not enthusiastic about the project. It was only when the Governor of Bombay came out openly in support of the scheme did local financiers and 'the ruling princes of some Native States came forward to support it. Technically modern and cheaper in cost, the Tata power supply company began developing rapidly and had become a major source of supply.

13.4.5 Check your progress:-

Q. 2. What were the reason of Decline of traditional textile Industry.

13.5 TRADE AND COMMERCE :

After the middle of the eighteenth century and until 1818 Poona was a prosperous city in Maharashtra. But with the British occupation, its commercial importance declined. However, it regained its position, along with cities like Nasik and Sholapur after 1850 and soon became a leading commercial centre of Maharashtra. Meanwhile, Bombay's spectacular growth as a prominent commercial centre and political head quarters of the East India Company in Western Indian continued. It took the position of Surat as the leading port of foreign trade in Western India. Indian merchants in Bombay handled a great deal of the exports of the British trade in raw cotton and opium, primarily to China. Likewise, they also handled the reexport trade of British products throughout Asia. Further, the introduction of the railroads, opening of the Suez Canal and establishment of cotton textile mills and subsequently the use of machines in other industries also helped in the trade of cities, particularly of Bombay, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

As far as internal trade was concerned, most important commodities involved were grain, pulses, raw cotton, oil seeds and ghee. Also involved in internal trade of Maharashtra were cotton piece goods, yarn. Silk and handloom products, building materials brass and other metal wear. Saris, lungis and dhotars were also in demand within the region as well as in other parts of the country. The "gold thread industry and silk goods of Poona and Nasik enjoyed ready markets all over the country, until the cheap machine-made European cloth – displaced Indian textiles. With the opening of the railways, the export of perishable products such as pan, vegetables, fresh fruits and potatoes increased. Bombay received from several districts of Maharashtra large quantities of hides, horns and bones. During the First World War, there was a significant increase in external trade, groundnuts being one of the important articles of export from the Deccan.

Weekly and annual fairs were an important feature of the commercial activity of rural Maharashtra. In these fairs various agricultural and industrial products were sold and often exchanged on the basis of barter trade. At the annual fairs, merchants came from different parts of

the region as well as of India with their wares. Business was transacted on the large scale, especially in cloth, copper and brass pots, sweetmeats, fruits and fineries. The largest fairs were held at Pandharpur, the ancient town of pilgrimage, where people came in a large number both for pilgrimage and business .

After the construction of railways, different parts of Maharashtra came to be linked with each other, and several places acquired commercial importance. For example, Nandurbar, Chalisgaon, Jalgaon, Igatpuri, Kopergaon and Ahmednagar. These and several other railway stations-cum-towns enhanced the trade and commercial activity their respective districts. Thus, from the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Improved transport and communication systems greatly helped in the development and expansion of domestic trade.

13.5.1 An Overview :

The developments in agriculture, transport and communication industry and trade in Maharashtra during 1861 to 1920, thus, show that agriculture did not improve much; local, traditional village and urban industries suffered decline and the economic condition of the rural masses became worse. However, transport and communications developed, Modern industry, particularly cotton textile, expanded and the City of Bombay witnessed a spectacular growth in wealth and influence. But the British land revenue laws, their industrial policy and system of tariff - all were harmful to the economic growth of India. Consequently, during the period under review, pauperisation of the rural masses and dependence on European-made goods had increased. Maharashtra was starved of capital and lacked modern industries, except cotton textiles. This was the price Indians had to pay for allowing themselves to be conquered and ruled by alien masters.

In the nineteenth Century, England had become the richest country in the world, and India the most precious jewel in the British Crown. But the Indian people had to pay dearly for Britain's greatness. India's rulers from the 'Nation of Shopkeepers' carried out a skillfully organised and systematic policy of exploitation of India and impoverished the country to the core. Referring India's exploitation, the 'Deccan Star', an English periodical, published from Poona, wrote:

“From the earliest times England has always been a poor country and as such It has always been under the necessity of encroaching upon the resources of its neighbours, and this has been the cause of its wars with France, Scotland, and other powers. As the population increased, England was put to the necessity of finding out bread and butter for her sons; she was therefore put to the necessity of turning her attention

towards the East, wherein the sun of prosperity was in the ascendant. This she did in the 17th century.

Ever since the time Englishmen first landed on the eastern shores, they had been robbing India, the richest country in the East, and paying off the demands of England. Now that they have fed themselves gluttonously we hear the cry 'Why keep India? She has ever been a source of trouble to us. Now that the milch-cow has been milched to the last drop, now that it is found difficult to eke out money from the Indians, now the extremely selfish object of governing India has begun to be known, Englishmen have on their part begun to spread odium about India". (6.11.1880).

Another weekly, 'Arunodaya', published from Thana, wrote in its issue of 30.6.1880.

"... .In India the sources of industry have actually been diminished as people have multiplied. The Indian Government has become a great commercial concern, which draws to itself all the advantages resulting therefrom and wherever it does not interfere, private English companies step in and appropriate to themselves the profits which may accrue Government complains that the growth of revenue has not kept pace with the increase of the people, but it does not occur to the rulers of India to open new careers for them. It is the duty of the Government to see that its subjects are not hindered from obtaining employment".

Castigating the Government for its taxation policy 'Arunodaya' further commented: "...The people have been reduced to destruction. The exports and imports of India are no criterion of its prosperity. The advantages derivable from the increase of commerce go to benefit Englishmen, who have got the trade in India in their own hands".

The weekly concluded, "It can be clearly demonstrated that the wealth of India is really diminishing instead of increasing, and hence the load of taxation is severely felt."

Dadabhai Novroji Wrote: "... impoverishment and destruction of India was mainly caused by the unnatural treatment it received at the hands of its British rulers in the way of subjecting it to a large variety of expenditure upon a crushing foreign agency both in India and England, whereby the children of the country were displaced and deprived of their natural rights and means of subsistence in their own country ..."

The Indian nationalist leaders like Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Justice Ranade, Pherozeshah Mehta, and K. T. Telang held that the destruction of indigenous industries was the main cause of India's poverty. They accepted with near unanimity the need for rapid industrialisation of the country as the primary goal of their economic policies. They called upon the Government to take immediate steps towards this end and also initiate the policy of impart in technical education to young Indians to become proficient in the modern knowledge of science and technology.

13.5.2 Check your progress:-

13.6 RISE OF LABOUR MOVEMENTS :

The Ryatwari Land Revenue system and its enforcement by unsympathetic officials both English and the Indian gave rise to a greedy class of money-lenders and ever increasing law-suits in the Revenue courts. Many farmers had to sell their lands and seek jobs in the cities. These landless labourers roamed the streets of Bombay and other developing cities. The machine made goods had ruined many crafts and a change of taste and an increasing demand for imported goods forced them to seek jobs in factories and industries.

13.6.1 The Problems of Textile workers

1) Uncertainty of work: There was no guarantee that the worker would get a continuous employment. It was all a contract for some period.

(2) Low wage. : The unskilled workers were treated as slaves and the amount paid to them was low. The workers could not complain about it as there were many unemployed persons seeking jobs.

(3) Long hours of work: There were no Laws to regulate the working hours of the labourers.

(4) Unhygienic conditions: The factories and the Textile mills were not properly maintained. There was no proper ventilation and the lighting inside was very poor. The long hours of work in such unhealthy conditions affected the health of the workers. Many developed breathing troubles and became victims of tuberculosis (T.B.) and other ailments.

(5) No insurance against accidents: The managers of the factory or a Textile Mill were apathetic to the welfare of the workers. If the mill-hands or labourers met with an accident there was no help forthcoming from the employers.

Besides these problems in the working conditions, their living conditions were horrible. Most of these uprooted village-folks who were attached to their family in the native village suffered from malnutrition and evil habits due to high tension and frustration. Most of them sought accommodation in dirty chawls and developed bad habits.

The Company's Government in India passed certain laws ostensibly to alleviate the working conditions of the workers. But in reality to restrict the competition of the Indian manufacturers with the home industries. The factory Act of 1881 limited the working hours of women to eleven hours and those of child-workers to seven, men had to work for more than twelve hours. They were to get a weekly holiday and factory inspectors were appointed by the government to inspect working conditions.

13.6.2 Workers Unions: The workers were not organized and collective bargaining was not known to them until the last quarter of the 19th century.

The first demand for better wages came from the workers in Nagpur in 1877. But the real movement started in Bengal in 1895 with a month and a half long strike in Calcutta Jute Mills. The Bombay Mill workers had formed an organization in 1890. In 1897 Railway workers formed a Union and the postal workers and Press workers formed their Unions in 1907.

The Labour Movement began to gain momentum during the agitation against partition of Bengal, that is from 1905 to 1911. World War I halted the progress of the Labour Movement but the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 encouraged movements for the welfare and rights of the proletariat. The Indian National Congress under the leadership of G. K. Gokhale had taken up the case of indentured labour or labourers on contract to work in South Africa, Malaya, Burma and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Gandhiji had organized them in South Africa. India was given membership on the International Labour Organization in 1919 and N. M. Joshi established the All India Trade Union Congress in 1920. Thereafter the Labour Movement made great strides under national leadership.

13.5.2 Check your progress:-

Q. 4. Write Short notes on Trade and Commerce.

13.7 SUMMARY :

Thus the causes of the sufferings of the people were more economic than socio-political in nature. The long-range view will show that the landed aristocracy and the merchant princes demanded a share in the government and the educated elite co-operated with them during this period.

13.8 QUESTIONS :

1. Survey the economic condition in Maharashtra from your study period.
2. Examine the important Stages of development of trade and commerce in Maharashtra.
3. What were the problems of textile workers? Explain their united agitation.
4. Comment on the Transport and Communication situation in Modern Maharashtra.
5. Discuss the agricultural situation in Modern Maharashtra.

TOWARDS SWARAJYA

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Gopal Krishna Gokhale
- 14.3 Bal Gangadhar Tilak (Extremist)
- 14.4 V.D. Savarkar and Militant Nationalism
- 14.5 Summary
- 14.6 Questions

14.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1) To acquaint with the contribution of G.K. Gokhale and Moderates.
- 2) To understand B.G. Tilak and Extremist Politics.
- 3) To know the Contribution of Savarkar as Revolutionaries.

14.1 INTRODUCTION :

The memory that their ancestors had wielded political authority over most part of the country was still fresh in the minds of the people of Maharashtra. Their forefathers had fought for the ' Hindvi Swarajya'. This motivated leaders like G.K.Gokhale and B.G.Tilak to lead the nation towards self government. Their goal was the same but their methods differed. Gokhale wanted to pursue constitutional methods. Tilak while remaining within the constitutional framework wanted to expose the defects in the system of Government and defy oppressive measures. His activities inspired revolutionary nationalism among young leaders. We shall now discuss the efforts of these men with different political views to attain the goal of Swarajya.

14.2 GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE (1866-1915) :

Like Ranade he was also born in Kokanastha Brahman family. Ranade was born in Nasik District whereas Gopal Krishna Gokhale

was born in Chiplun in Ratnagiri District in 1866. He was educated at Kolhapur, Pune and Bombay. He had also the privilege of studying at the Elphinstone College like Ranade and Dadabhai Naoroji. He was appointed Professor at the age of twenty in the Fergusan College, Pune. He was elected life member of the Deccan Education Society on June 7, 1886. He was welcomed to the Fergusan College by Lokmanya Tilak and the great social reformer Agarkar. The cordial relations between Agarkar and Gokhale were strengthened with the passage of time but Tilak's social and political views were too strong for Gokhale, the disciple of Ranade to accept. Tilak and Gokhale clashed in the Deccan Society over the policy matters and Tilak resigned his life membership of the society in 1890. The hostility between Gokhale and Tilak was to cloud their political and social vision and create impediments in the progress towards their identical goal with different approaches.

Gokhale regarded Ranade as his Guru (Preceptor) and always sought his advise on many important matters political, social and economic. The Manifesto of the Deccan Sabha which Ranade had drafted moulded Gokhale's liberalism and moderation in public life.

14.2.1 Extended view of Liberalism

He had spelled out his ideas of constitutional means for achieving any political goal. In one of his speeches he said that all means, are constitutional except three They are :-

- (a) Rebellion against the established authority.
- (b) Lending support to foreign invasion and
- (c) Committing atrocities on the people.

14.2.2 Moderates

The first Congress President, W.C.Bannerjee had made a special plea for, 'Consolidation of National Unity. The second President Dadabhai Naoroji in December 1886 inc session at Calcutta set the pattern of moderation and restraint. "What is it for which we are now met?" he asked. "Is this Congress a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British Government ?(Cries of 'No! No!') Is it another stone in the foundation of the stability of the government? (Cries of 'Yes! Yes !) Let us speak out like men and proclaim that we are loyal to the backbone". This will give us an outline of the policies and programme followed by the Congress till the partition of Bengal. As this concerns the national history in general we shall restrict our attention to Maharashtra and see what the 'Prince of Indian Liberalism' Gopal Krishna Gokhale, said and did to promote nationalism in Maharashtra.

14.2.3. Gopal Krishna Gokhale and the Moderates

Ranade, Gokhale's guru, Dadabhai Naoroji and Phirozeshah Mehta were very much impressed by the English Liberal tradition. Gokhale had established close contacts with these stalwarts of the nineteenth century. He was also in personal contact with English liberals and had imbibed the humanism and liberalism from the writings of Edmund Burke and John Stuart Mill. Gokhale was inspired for social and public life by the examples of Lokmanya Tilak and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar. He was associated with Mahadev Govind Ranade during his professorship at the Ferguson College, Pune.

Gokhale like other liberals believed in agitating for piecemeal reforms. He wanted reform in the administration; representative Legislature, separation of the executive and judicial function. The programme of the moderates who led the Congress was primarily conceived in the interest of the upper and middle classes.

The moderates desired gradual reforms of the councils, Indian Civil services, local bodies and the Defense forces. They reposed their faith in constitutional method Gokhale laid great stress on representing the grievances of the people to the government. He thought that if the British rulers were convinced of the justice of their demand, the British had the sense of justice and fair play to grant them their legitimate demands. He conceived his role as a mediator between the people and the government.

Gokhale like Ranade had somehow or other uncritically placed his faith in the British justice. These moderates believed that the British rule was for the good of the Indian people. It was a Divine Providence that the British were sent to India at the right time. Indian people should be grateful for the blessings of peace and stability of their government. They wished to forget the bad dream of 1857 and wanted to focus the attention of the people on the English literature, the systems of education and justice; the improvements in transport and communications and the rule of law which they regarded as blessings of the British Rule.

The test of their legitimate belief in the political wisdom of the rulers came when the Indian Councils Act of 1892 was passed. The moderates had entertained high hopes about the reform and expansion of the supreme and existing Provincial legislative Councils. The first session of the Indian National Congress had passed a resolution containing such aspiration as admission of a considerable proportion of elected members and the granting of right to the members to interpolate the executive in regard to all branches of the administration. They were sadly let down by the British Rulers when the Indian Councils Act of 1892 was

published. There were too many limitations on the power and functions of the councils. The constitutional methods of Prayers and Petition did not bear any fruit. The people's faith in the sense of justice of the Englishman received a great jolt.

A group of young men began to look inwards and explore the glories of ancient India. The Hindu revivalist movements began. Gokhale however was firm in his belief in the good intentions of the British.

14.2.4 Gokhale And The Indian Expenditure Commission

A Royal Commission to inquire into the India expenditure was appointed on May 24, 1895 under the chairmanship of Lord Welby. The commission began its enquiries about financial administration in 1896. In that year monsoon failed in the Deccan which resulted in a serious famine. The Deccan Sabha was founded by Ranade during that year to undertake the relief and other social work and render social service as the Sarvajanik Sabha had done before.

The Welby commission consisted of all seasoned statesman and there were Wedderburn and Caine with Dadabhai Naoroji to present the Indian point of view. The witnesses were to be called from India to give evidence before the commission and as Ranade could not be released by the Bombay Government, Gokhale was chosen in his place to go to England with Wachha. This was a great breakthrough for Gokhale. Wachha held Gokhale in high esteem and was happy that Gokhale came forward to shoulder the responsibility. Ranade coached Gokhale rigorously for weeks to show him the nuances of Indian finance. Ranade gave a letter of introduction to Wedderburn asking him to guide the young man on the right lines. Gokhale presented the Indian point of view with great authority and confidence. Wedderburn was frank enough to praise the young man in these words "Your evidence will be much the best on our side. Let me congratulate you on the signal service which you have rendered to your country. Our minority report will be based practically on your evidence".

14.2.5 The Plague And Famine Administration 1897

In 1896 there was a famine, and in the next year bubonic plague broke out in Bombay and Pune. Schools and businesses were closed and the Government appointed W.C. Rand as plague Commissioner for Pune. He was keen on enforcing health regulations and had ordered police to inspect homes harboring victims. All those who were infected by the disease were removed to the quarantine hospitals. The authorities also sent a band of officials to take measures to prevent the spread of the epidemic. There were protest by the local people regarding the quarantine hospitals as death hospitals. The rumours began to spread

that the police were violating the sanctity of women's quarters. A series of memorials was sent to the Bombay Government under the leadership of Lokmanya Tilak. They denounced police oppression.

The criticism of the Plague Administration and its Commissioner Rand became more bitter. Gokhale who was in England in connection with the Welby Commission received letters from his friends in Pune reporting excesses by the famine police. It was reported that several women in their Pune homes were molested. Gokhale told a small committee of members of the House of Commons about the barbarity. 'The Manchester Guardian' carried the news. The Bombay Government denied such atrocities. Gokhale was challenged to reveal the sources of his evidence. Gokhale had to retreat and he publicly apologized for the charges.

The real fact was that Gokhale feared police reprisals to the informants. His mentor, Ranade persuaded him not to pursue the course of going all out against the government. "In effect Ranade asked Gokhale to risk his public career to avoid a disastrous conflict in Pune" Gokhale like an Obedient disciple did what Ranade told him to do. Ranade tried his best to prevent breakdown of relations between British and Indians especially when he found that the criticism of the famine administration had caused the resignation of Principal Welby of Deccan college. It was a very sad affair. Gokhale could have exposed the British authorities and Ranade could have adopted a bold stance but in the long run it would have produced evil consequences.

Ranade's efforts however could not conciliate the ardent nationalists. The sixtieth year of Queen Victoria's accession was being celebrated in the country. The governor had held a party in Pune to celebrate the occasion on June 22, 1897. The storm of famine and plague administration seemed to have subsided. But as Commissioner and Lieutenant Ayerst were coming out after the celebrations they were attacked by Chaphekar brothers and they murdered them. Lokamanya Tilak, was arrested after five days for his provocative articles in the 'Kesari' and charged with disaffection against the government. The nationalism in Maharashtra was taking a different turn from what Gokhale and the moderates had contemplated.

14.2.6 A True Patriot

The 'Apology incident' had infuriated some extremists. The orthodox among the extremists took the opportunity to excommunicate Gokhale for his foreign travel. Gokhale took all such disabilities and reverses in his stride. The death of Ranade in 1901 created a vacuum in his life. However he had dedicated his services to the nation. He

scaled new heights in public life when he was nominated as a member of the Imperial Legislative Council in 1902. During the first four years of his tenure he had to struggle against the autocratic policy of Lord Curzon. Gokhale had become a truly cosmopolitan economist of his generation and according to informed circles he was the greatest authority on Public Finance of his time in India.

The partition of Bengal in 1905 was another severe blow to the moderates in the Congress who had reposed their trust in the political wisdom of the British rulers. Gokhale was elected President of the Banaras Congress that year. He showed exemplary courage to justify the use of boycott as a political weapon under certain conditions. He visited England in the following year to represent the popular opinion in India to the British authorities and the public. The moderates were losing ground as the victory of Japan over Russia had produced a wave of nationalism throughout India. Lokmanya Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Roy and Aurobindo Ghosh were leading the boycott movement. The extremists split the Congress at the Surat session in 1907 and the moderates sustained the Congress until 1916.

14.2.7 His Achievements

Gokhale never faltered in his dedication to the service of his people. He wanted to create a band of self-denying workers and patriots and therefore founded the 'Servants of India Society'. He believed in self-government within the British Empire. He advocated the association of India with the British even after full independence and sovereignty. It was desirable for the progress of India. He always adhered to the constitutional means to achieve his goal. The rules of the Servants of India Society would reflect the hard discipline that he demanded of the members of that Society. The main guide lines laid down in its preamble were as follows :-

- (a) Every member of the Servants of India Society must endeavour to arouse intense national feelings among the people by his own example.
- (b) They should lead campaigns for political education of the people.
- (c) They should strive to promote co-operation and understanding among the people.
- (d) They should promote education especially scientific and industrial education among the people.
- (e) They should encourage industrial movements.
- (f) The members should consider as their moral duty to ameliorate the condition of the backward people.

Gokhale by his disciplined behaviour had set a great example of a dedicated servant of India. He was not worried about the praise or ridicule from the people. He disregarded his personal comfort and aspiration while serving the national cause as he saw it fit. He supported the boycott movement and also the non-violent resistance to autocratic policies. However, in the interest of the nation he co-operated with the British Government in the framing of Morley Minto Reforms of 1909. In 1912 he visited South Africa as requested by Ghandhiji. He fully supported Ghandhiji in his movement against the colour bar. Gokhale requested Ghandhiji to return to India in 1914, and serve India which needed, a dedicated worker like him. Gokhale was preparing a scheme for reforms in the years to come. It was published after his death in 1915. It was known as the 'Political Testament of Gokhale.'

The method of the moderates was derisively called 'Political mendicancy'. The piece-meal reforms and the constitutional means advocated by Gokhale, Dadabhai, Pherozshah Mehta, Wachha, Bannerjee and others was taking the Indian National Congress at the snails pace towards the cherished goal of 'dominion status' within the British Empire. Dr. Rash Behari Ghose however recommends "some kindly thoughts for those who too, in their day strove to do their duty however, imperfectly through evil report, with it may be a somewhat chastened fervour, but a fervour as genuine as that which stirs and aspires younger hearts".

Gokhale's devotion to Motherland was total and complete. His uncritical trust in the fair sense and justice of the British rulers might not be accepted by many. His patience with the obstinate British administration even when the public, pressure was mounting against his moderation. might not appeal to the younger generations. His deep influence on Gandhiji's policies and the constructive work that he did to free nationalism from narrow-mindedness entitles him for a high place in the regional as well as the national history. Lokamanya Tilak has aptly described him as 'the diamond of' India, the jewel of Maharashtra and the Prince of Workers',

14.2.8 Check your progress :-

Q.1 . Write in brief Gopal kirshna Gokhle's achievements

14.3 BAL GANGADHAR TILAK (1856-1920) AND EXTREMIST POLITICS :

The Indian National Congress from the date of its foundation was demanding an effective voice of the Indian people in the administration of their country. In its annual sessions the Congress passed resolutions, reporting these demands. The British Government ignored all those demands which provoked the younger members in the Congress to doubt the intention of the rulers. The Indian Councils Act of 1892 disappointed even the Moderates. Gokhale and other moderates called those restless youngmen led by Tilak as 'Extremists'. The latter demanded more grit in the Congress. Besides Tilak there were three men who commanded everybody's attention.

They were Laia Lajpat Rai of the Punjab, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh of Bengal. These young men were dissatisfied with the slow and delaying measures of the British Government to give the Indian people their legitimate share in the administration of their country.

14.3.1 Extremist Politics

The programme outlined by the founders of the Indian National Congress aimed at promoting better understanding between people and the government. However, the events that followed by foundation of Congress, disturbed even tenor of the line of action visualised by the liberal leaders. The Indian Councils Act of 1892 as already pointed out above disillusioned many young members. There was also a feeling of uneasiness among them at the band wagon of Western superiority in every field of life. Some of the more dynamic personalities like Swami Vivekananda, Lokmanya Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Arobinda Ghosh began to take a serious link to the ancient glories of India. Swami Vivekananda unfolded the true nature of Indian culture and Hindu religion before the parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893. This revived the interest in the India's past. Aurobinda Ghosh declared "Independence is the goal of life and Hinduism alone will fulfill this aspiration of ours".

The other factors which encouraged Extremist politics in Maharashtra were the outbreak of famine in 1896 and the plague epidemic within Bombay Government and the celebration of the 61st anniversary of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne in the midst of the misfortunes reminded of Lord Lytton's policies. The policy of prayers and petitions of the moderate leaders exasperated the young men who wished to accelerate the progress towards responsible government.

Lora Curzon's obstinacy to partition the Bengal provided the fuel for the fire of Extremist politics. Lokmanya Tilak was quick to perceive the opportunity to denigrate the British supremacy in the wake of Japan's

victory over a European nation, Russia in 1905. The repressive policy of Lord Curzon created a favourable ground for Tilak's extremist politics and the Swadeshi Movement.

14.3.2 A Brief Life Sketch of B.G. Tilak

Tilak was born on July 23, 1856 a year before the 'Indian Mutiny of 1857. His name is intimately connected with the new awakening of the Hindu Society in Maharashtra and in the whole of India. Like Gokhale he hailed from Ratnagiri district and dominated the political field at Pune in 1873. He joined the Deccan College in Pune and took his B.A. degree in 1876 and LL.b. degree in 1879. He was a born journalist. He along with Agarkar and others founded the Deccan Education Society and started New English School in 1880 and Fergusson College in 1884. In 1881, Tilak and Agarkar jointly started the "Kesari" and the "Maharatta" journals in Marathi and English respectively. The difference of opinion between the two brought about a separation between them. In 1891, Tilak became the sole proprietor of both the Kesari and the Maharatta.

Tilak with a view to reviving the pride of the Hindus in Maharashtra started Shivaji and Ganpati festivals in 1893. Hindu Muslim riot had broken that year. Earlier the Panch Howd mission tea-party and the 'Age of Consent' controversy had filled the whole atmosphere with tension. Then came the famine in 1896 and the Plague in 1897. Tilak took every opportunity to castigate the Government and he was imprisoned on the charge of sedition in 1897, 1902 and 1908. He died on 1st August 1920.

14.3.3 Nationalism of B.G. Tilak

Tilak was, a born fighter and his nationalism had that militant approach. Like Ranade, Gokhale and Dadabhai he appreciated the contribution of the Western civilization and the benefits of the British systems of education and administration. However he did not want the British to be their rulers. It was for this reason that he had talked of complete independence. He had declared in 1887 "Swarajya is my birth-right and I shall have it." This was the guiding principle of his life. He could not have any patience with the procrastination of the constitutionalism of the Moderates.

His idea of Swarajya which he expressed in Kesari is as follows :

"Independence (Swarajya) is nothing more than managing my home affairs myself. Swarajya is simply the people's rule replacing that of the foreign bureaucracy. Collectors, Commissioners, Governors are capable, we want such officers but we want them under our control. They should work as servants and not as masters". Tilak although leading the extremist politics wanted to retain ties with the British Commonwealth but not as master and servants.

Tilak was a pragmatic politician and wanted to follow constitutional methods towards the goal of independence. His life was a continuous struggle against the foreign rule. He suffered much as no other politician of Maharashtra or the whole of India had suffered for his country during that period. He was imprisoned for eighteen months in 1897 for suspected instigation for assassination of Rand, the plague commissioner of Pune and Lieut Ayerst. He wanted to move a resolution condemning the governor of Bombay Lord Sandhurst. The partition of Bengal sharpened his criticism of the British Government. Tilak soon assumed the leadership of a substantial number of extremists. His political stature began to grow fast. The pressure of the extremists compelled the Indian Congress to pass radical programme of Swaraiya, Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education in 1906.

In 1908 Lokmanya had to stand trial against the charge of sedition. The British government regarded him as the greatest danger to their rule in India. He was deported to Mandalay for six years to serve the sentence of rigorous imprisonment there. He returned from Mandalay on June 16, 1914.

Before his conviction, in the sedition case of 1908 the Congress had split at Surat in 1907 as the Moderates thought they could not work with him. His radical programme had frightened them. They were able to keep Tilak away from the Congress for about nine years for his extremist politics. He entered the Congress in 1916 again and the Moderates went out of the Congress Tilak participated in the Home Rule 'Movement' started by Mrs. Annie Besant after his release in 1914. He was again sentenced to six months imprisonment in 1916.

14.3.4 Tilak and Gokhale

Tilak was older than Gokhale by ten years. But both had to work with two different set of people in the Congress and outside. Gokhale enjoyed the esteem of the British rulers (rajmanya). Tilak was acclaimed as their hero by the masses (Lokamanya). Tilak was called 'the uncrowned King of Maharashtra' and later of India during the Home Rule days. Both had imbibed the same spirit of liberalism and dedicated service to the country. Both believed in the constitutional method to achieve the goal of 'Diminion Status' within the British Empire. One emphasised persuasion of the rulers; the other preferred to fight against the rulers for achieving the goal. The difference in approach was due to the difference in the making of their personalities.

Tilak had lost faith in the sense of justice and fairplay of the British. When Gokhale talked about constitutional means Tilak made a scathing attack on the ineffective method as follows:

“The moderate claim that they adhered to constitutional method of agitation. We wish to put a straight question to these confused people to come out with any constitution of the government of India in their possession. We searched for such a record in the history of India after the transition to British Rule, we failed to lay our hand on anything like the British constitution for India. If Hon Gokhale had filed it in the records of his “Servants of Indian Society, he should better display it”. His forceful language and the logic of his arguments disarmed his opponents.

These two great patriots from Maharashtra had rendered selfless service to the nation. Gokhale wanted to win the British rulers as Tilak wanted to replace them Gokhale excelled in the council chamber and impressed the Royal Commission. Tilak made a powerful appeal to the masses. His forum was a public platform. Tilak would prefer to win the hearts of the people and undergo any personal discomforts for his speeches, writings and activities. Gokhale was ready for any sacrifice but would prefer to remain within the limits of the law. Tilak also liked to carry on his activities within the limits of the law. But once he found that justice, morals and progressive thoughts support his action he did not bother about the limits of the law laid down by the British. The violation of the laws would entail punishments and he was fully prepared for the punishments that the foreign masters would pronounce.

Dr. Pattabhi Sitaram has given a comparison of the outlook and personalities of these two sons of Maharashtra who worked for the same cause but followed two different paths usually in opposition to one another. He says -

“Gokhale’s plan was to improve the existing constitution; Tilak’s was to reconstruct it Gokhale’s ideal was love and sacrifice. Tilak’s was service and suffering”.. Gokhale’s objective was self-government... Tilsk’s objective was Swarajya which is the birthright of every Indian and which he shall have without let or hindrance from the foreigner”.

The revival of the Hindu Society attempted by Tilak and others had inspired many young men to assert their rights against the foreign rulers. Tilak had fought constant wars against the British authorities whenever he found an occasion to fight against them in defence of the weak and the oppressed be it the victims of the famine and plague disaster or the Revenue Commissioner Crawford’s sinister money transactions. Tilak never allowed any opportunity to slip to castigate the government. Nevertheless he never resorted to armed rebellion against the government. The government could never prove any charge of rebellion against Tilak. He always preferred to stay within the limits of the law and adapted constitutional means to resist the government’s evil policies.

14.4 V.D.SAVARKAR AND MILITANT NATIONALISM (1883-1966) :

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar who was born in 1883 of a Chitpavan Brahman family in the Nasik District, was cast in a different mould. He was a staunch Hindu and was proud of his religion and the ancient culture. While in School he had formed a society with his friends to serve the nation. It was named 'Rastrabaktimandala' (Society of Patriots). He was very much influenced by Paranjape's nationalism. Savarkar was especially attracted to the philosophy of Herbert Spensor. The appeal of full national freedom advocated by Shivram Mahadev Paranjape's another patriot, inspired Savarkar and his comrades to act. They started in 1904, 'Abhinav Bharat' (New India) for undertaking revolutionary activities in Maharashtra and rouse the people of other provinces also for similar movements

After his B.A. examination he was selected for the Shivaji scholarship offered by Syamji Krishna Varma who was carrying on the freedom struggle from outside India. He was very much influenced by the 'Risorgimento' of Joseph Mazzini and exploits and sacrifices of Garibaldi in the great work of unification of Italy in 1870. He wrote three books all dedicated to the subject of struggle for freedom and national unity. His first book 'The Indian war of Independence of 1857' was written in Marathi. Subsequently it was translated in many languages by the Ghadar party, Sardar Bhagat Singh and later on Subhash Chandra Bose secretly managed its publication in India

Savarkar also wrote the 'history of the Sikhs' and a book on Joseph Mazzini (Atmasharitra Ani Rajkarana i.e. An autobiography and Politics) He disarmed similarities in teaching of Ramdas and Mazzini.

14.4.1 Revolutionary Activities

The British government had kept Savarkar under strict surveillance when he returned from France after his short sojourn there. The news of Jackson's murder in a theatre in Nasik led to the investigation of the 'Nasik Conspiracy. Anant Laxman Kanhere, a young man of eighteen had murdered the collector of Nasik on the night of December 12, 1909 in the Vijayanand Theatre. The accused admitted his crime and told the court that he had killed the collector not out of any personal enmity but because the collector represented the oppressive government of the British. He had done his duty and was ready to die at any moment.

In 1910, Savarkar was arrested in England as he was suspected as an agent provocateur. He was to be taken to India. On his way to India the ship carrying him called at the port of Marseilles in France. He escaped through the porthole and swam to the shore. He was

apprehended by the French police and was handed over to the British. After bringing him back to Bombay he was tried for treason and involvement in the Nasik conspiracy. He was condemned to transportation for life to the Andaman islands. There he underwent the rigorous imprisonment and later was brought to Ratnagiri. He was under detention in Ratnagiri for thirteen years and was not allowed to participate in politics. Only in 1937 he could enter public life once again after his unconditional release.

14.4.2 Savarkar's Militant Nationalism

Savarkar's life in imprisonment and the intense nationalist fervour that he expressed through his writings would always stir the hearts of every Maharashtrian of whatever political leanings he might be. His emphasis on Hinduism and Hindu-nation might appear anathema to our secular nationalism Savarkar defined Hindu as a person who "looks upon the land that extends from Sindhu (the Indus) to the seas as the land of his forefathers ... he is a Hindu to whom 'Sindhusthan' is not only a 'Pitrubhumi' but also a 'Punyabhumi' (Holy Land).

14.4.3 His Revolutionary Zeal

Savarkar was not much impressed by the struggle led by the Indian National Congress either under the leadership of the moderates or the extremists. To him even the radicalism of Lokamanya Tilak seemed ineffective to deliver the goods. He was convinced that only armed revolts could shake off the foreign yoke. He worked out the intellectual justification for armed insurrection. Savarkar and other revolutionaries believed in the cult of the bomb.

The terrorism in India did not end with the transportation of Savarkar to the Andamans. The revolutionaries abroad encouraged the insurrection in India during the world war. Whatever attractive the exploits of the revolutionaries might be it was not through insurrection that India won freedom; it was won without boldshed by the Act of the British Parliament (Indian Independence Act) passed in July 1947.

14.4.4 In Retrospect

The growth of nationalism in Maharashtra as well as in other parts of India after the 'War of Independence of 1857' was a matter of great concern for the British authorities in India. The foundation of the Indian National Congress, although welcomed in the initial stages by the rulers, upset their calculations at the growing unity of Hindu Muslim communities. Proselytising activities of the Christian Missionaries had met with a great setback by the 'Sepoys Mutiny'. Pandita Ramabai's statement made to the 'Christian weekly' of the U.S.A. in December 1889 that 'Sharda Sadan' was a Christian institution created a great furore in Maharashtra.

The British authorities therefore pinned their hopes on the Muslim community to re-strain the march of the Indians towards independence.

The British authorities in India persuaded Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and other Muslim leaders to keep away from the Indian National Congress. The Anglo-Muslim alliance against the growing strength of the Congress weakened the united move and created obstacles in the path of unity.

The starting of two public festivals in Maharashtra by Lokamanya Tilak (Shivaji Jayanti and Ganesh Chaturthi) created uneasiness among the Muslims in Bombay and Pune. In 1893 the first Hindu Muslim riot took place in Bombay and thereafter communal riots became frequent. Some of the Muslim police officers in Bombay showed partisan attitude and H.H. Aga Shahabuddin Shah the head of the Shila Imani Ismail Seet was disturbed. The partition also added to the misunderstanding and strained the relations. Veer Savarkar's talk of Hindu-Rashtra impeded the growth of secular nationalism the dream of many a moderate Congressman including Gandhiji. The growth of nationalism became uneven thereafter.

14.2.8 Check your progress :-

Q.3 . Describe in brief the contribution of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar?

14.5 SUMMARY :

Gokhale's devotion to motherland was total and complete. His uncritical trust of the British rulers not be accepted by many. Though Tilak aptly described him as the diamond of India and the Jewel of Maharashtra. Tilak was called "the uncrowned king of Maharashtra and later of India during the Home Rule days.

Veer Savarkar's talk of Hindu-Rashtra impeded the growth of secular nationalism the dream of many a moderate congressman including Gandhiji.

14.6 QUESTIONS :

1. Analyse the view of Gopal Krishna Gokhale about the British Rule in India and point out the events in his political career which upset his convictions.
2. Review the activities of the Extremist Tilak
3. Critically evaluate revolutionary activities in Maharashtra with reference to V.D.Savarkar.

EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS-I

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 15.0 Objectives
- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 Trends in Educations
- 15.3 Trends in Marathi Literature
- 15.4 Historical Research
- 15.4 Summary
- 15.4 Questions

15.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1) To understand the condition of education and Literature in modern Maharashtra.
- 2) To know the Historical Research.

15.1 INTRODUCTION :

In this lesson we shall review the cultural trends as witnessed through the different walks of life such as Education, Literature, Historical Research and Fine Arts. We have already referred to the general state of religious sentiments and philosophical ideas during the course of our narration. They evidently constitute the real inspiration and the motive force for the developments in the different areas of cultural life. We shall now consider intellectual pursuits and artistic activity in this lesson.

Maharashtra after the defeat of the Maratha Chiefs and finally the Peshwa, was struggling through gloom towards the light of modern times. The Society in Maharashtra was standing on the threshold of imminent change, and that was to be unpleasant one. Whether that change was to produce regeneration or push the nation towards further degeneration could not be predicted at that time. Edward Gibbon's reflections on the decline and fall of the Roman Empire would be instructive in this context He writes:

“The improvement of Society may be viewed under threefold aspect (1) The poet or philosopher illustrates his age and country by the efforts of a single and spontaneous production (2) The benefits of law and policy, of trade and manufactures of arts and sciences are more solid and permanent, and many individuals may be qualified, by education and discipline, to promote in their respective stations, the interest of the Community.... (3) Fortunately for mankind, the more useful, or at least, more necessary arts can be performed without superior talents or national subordination, without the powers of one or the union of many Private genius and public industry may be extirpated, but these hardy plants, survive the tempest, and strike an everlasting root into the most unfavourable soil.”

The Maratha political and military power was eclipsed and the culture of Maharashtra was in the shadow of the growing Imperial rule of the East India Company of England, however it survived most unfavorable circumstances.

Looked at against this background, the cultural trends in dependent Maharashtra were to filter through the smoke screen drawn by the Western thought and institutions. We shall now try to catch a glimpse of these changes as witnessed through Education, Literature, Historical Research and Fine Arts in that order.

15.2 TRENDS IN EDUCATIONS :

Maharashtra was not illiterate and ignorant when the Englishmen started their government in that region. There was a tradition of learning and ‘pathshalas’ were being conducted at many places. The report of Mountstuart Elphinstone in this respect would give the impression that.... there were more schools in the towns and villages on the eve of the British than when they left. No doubt education was confined to the Brahmanas, banias and agricultural classes as had to do with accounts.

The thought uppermost in the minds of the Maratha rulers and their people was the usefulness of education. According to their business like system, reading, writing and arithmetic was the minimum need for the majority of the people; higher learning in religious texts, medicine and astronomy was to be the monopoly of a few, The disproportionate emphasis on this spiritual learning by the Peshwas created a class of indolent scholars. The annual feasts and gifts for men born in the Brahman community brought the administration into disrepute. It is interesting to notice that the Sanskrit Pathshalas started in Pune in 1821 could hardly attract students and an English class had to be attached to it to increase the number. Western learning became popular among the traditional cultured classes mostly the Brahmins, and the new trend was towards

learning the English language and western science through English in preference to Sanskrit and Marathi.

15.2.1 The Policy of the English rulers

Among the officials of the East India Company who governed the Bombay Presidency the Governor who could take a dispassionate view of the educational needs of the conquered people, was obviously Mountstuart Elphinstone. He was not obsessed with ideas of superiority. He wanted to improve the native schools and wished to retain the useful restraints of religion. The Directors of the Company also felt that all learning must be useful and it might be given through Hindu or Mohammedan media. The real problem before the administrators in Maharashtra was that of acquiring more funds and finding more devoted workers for the plan of education.

The Charter of the East India Company came up for renewal in 1833, fifteen years after the Maharashtrian People had lost their independence. In that Charter Act, the policy to improve the administrative systems in India was clearly laid down. The important provision which was to affect the intellectual life of the Indian people was the declaration that No native of the said territories (Companies territories in India) nor any natural born subject of His Majesty, resident therein shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of these be disabled from holding any office or employment under the Company. This gave an impetus to the aspirants for government employment.

It was now clear that the work of administration was to be conducted in the English language. The old fashioned instruction in India could not provide suitable candidates for responsible appointments. That consideration alone was enough to determine that the higher education must be imparted chiefly through the English language. The Governor-General in Council issued the Resolution dated March 7, 1835. It stated "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promoting of European literature and science among the natives of India, and that the funds appropriated to education, would be best employed in English education 'alone'". The word 'alone' was thought unreasonable by many. However, in the subsequent legislation there was a provision to encourage vernacular tongues and classical languages of the East.

The Charter Act of 1853 went one step further as the Indian Civil Service Examination was thrown open to the public and entry to that service was to be given through an open competition. The famous education Despatch sent by Sir Charles Wood in 1854 was another inducement for the educated people for setting their sights still higher. The Despatch laid down the foundation of the existing systems of

Vernacular schools. There was rapid development of vernacular schools in the villages and the setting up of the University of Bombay in 1857 acted as a powerful stimulus for academic pursuits. V. A. Smith regarded "The foundation of the three Universities in the very year of the Cawnpore massacre and the siege of Delhi- as a symbol of the birth of a new India".

15.2.2 India under the crown

The educated elite in Maharashtra as elsewhere in India had regarded the Sepoys Mutiny of 1857 as a retrograde step towards restoration of feudalism in India. Much progress in the spreading of Western education was made upto the outbreak of the revolt in 1857. The trend clearly noticeable in the 1850s was towards broadening the base of education. Female education was receiving more attention. Jyotirao phule had broken a new ground by opening schools for girls as well as for untouchables in Pune. This was to affect the future course of academic activity.

The training institutes for teachers and the provision of grant- in-aid code for private Schools and colleges provided a tremendous stimulus to private individuals and societies to open schools.

The Bombay Government established a Department of Public Instruction and the Director of Public Instruction was to conduct periodical inspection and recommend the deserving schools and colleges for the grant-in-aid from the Government. A new enthusiasm was evident in the academic world on the even of the transfer of the Government of India from the Company to the Crown.

After the transfer there was no fundamental change in the educational policy. The Degrees from the University of Bombay had created new 'hopes and expectations in the minds of the young graduates. The I. C. S. examinations were now open for the competition by Indian candidates. Mr. S. B. Thakur was the first student from Maharashtra to undertake the voyage to England in 1868. It was during this time that more private schools were started not only in the two cities of Bombay and Pune but in many district towns; high schools were started. Government did not compete with the private schools and private schools were given equality with the Government schools.

15.2.3 National Schools

The Hunter (Education) Commission of 1882-83 recommended that Local Boards should take up the responsibility to set up schools everywhere within their purview. There was a new awakening that the sentiment of nationalism should be cultivated through the schools and colleges. New English School in Pune was established in 1880. Eminent

teachers like Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak were teaching at that school. The Deccan Education Society was founded in Pune in 1884, and shortly after that Fergusson College came into existence. Ahmednagar Education Society, and Shikshan Prasarak Mandal, Pune and Aryan Education Society in Bombay started their academic activities.

This ushered in a new era of setting up of Private high schools, and colleges free from the influence of ambitious men struggling to secure lucrative government employment. These institutions inspired young graduates to work for the uplift of the nation in every respect.

15.2.4 Trend towards the Legal Profession

The two streams of education namely the classical and general system began to develop fast after taking over the Government of India by the Crown. In the general system the medical studies and the technical courses were also becoming popular. The founding of the Grant Medical College in Bombay created powerful interest among the non-Hindu students in the beginning. However gradually the Brahman students overcame the sentimental restraints about defilement by touching animal corpses etc and they completed with other candidates for admissions to medical courses.

The real rush for the legal studies began after the enactment of the Indian High Courts Act of 1861 and the issuance of the first edition of the Criminal Procedure Code in the same year. It is worthwhile pointing out that the political leaders of India in the second half of the 19th Century and the first quarter of the 20th Century were men of legal profession. As already pointed out M. G. Ranade was the first LL.B. from Bombay in 1866. His career as a jurist created an urge among ambitious young men to establish a successful legal practice. The developments after the establishment of the Indian National Congress encouraged legal studies.

15.2.5 Indian Universities Act of 1904

The establishment of the three original universities in, the year of the Mutiny has been commended by English historians as a brave act indicating that the men in authority were free from malice towards the people who rose against their political power. The real fact however is that the three centres of higher learning namely Bombay, Calcutta and Madras were not affected by the upheaval in the Gangetic plain, and the educated men considered the revolt as reactionary and unnecessary.

Another factor that needs clarification is that the much trumpeted claim that the universities served as bridge between East and West needs some modification. These universities modeled on the London

University were merely examining bodies. The essential functions of universities in the Western World were teaching and research. This deficiency lingered on for year producing high hopes and expectations in the minds of young graduates with degrees from the university. It was quite obvious that the British Government was reluctant to offer them higher positions which although they were educationally equipped for the high offices.

The uniform system of education emphasising “literary than the Scientific stream created frustration in the minds of young men. The Universities Act of 1904 restricting the autonomy of the Universities added fuel to the flame of discontent in the minds of these young men. Lord Curzon’s interest in making the Universities more useful as research and teaching centres was not objectionable. What was objectionable was the contempt in which he held the Indian educated class, imputing motives for opposing his autocratic policies. It was this supreme contempt for the sentiments of the Indian people that compelled him to partition Bengal to undermine the Influence of the Hindu Lawyers, and the intelligentsia.

It is a sad commentary on the educational policy of the British Government during the period of our study that the Government wished to keep the people under the euphoria of degrees. It did not apply itself to the hard task of removal of illiteracy or equipping the younger generations for industrial progress. Of course an alien government would hesitate to adopt such a programme. The World War I changed the attitude of the people of Maharashtra as the vocal element increased and young men were attracted to political activities.

15.3 TRENDS IN MARATHI LITERATURE :

While discussing the role of the Press we have pointed out the variety of subject matters that had attracted the attention of the journalists. The Christian Missionaries had led the way in publishing religious books. They had helped Marathi literature to develop as they compiled dictionaries, wrote translations and prepared grammar books. P. G. Sahasrabuddhe while acknowledging the debt of the Christian Missionaries to the growth of Marathi literature observes. “The Christian Missionaries wrote 69 books on Christianity, 15 to 20 books criticising Hindu religion, about fifteen instructive manuals and twenty books on secular matters in Marathi in a short space of time. We can thus say that they were the pioneers of the modern Marathi literature”

In the initial period of the British rule the eminent writers like S. K. Chatre, H. K. Pathare, B. G. Jambhekar and G. N. Madgaonkar wrote on many simple subjects with a view to providing information.

Jambhekar, Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar, Lokahitwadi, R.G. Bhandarkar and others wrote on serious matters as they wished to share their new ideas gleaned, through English literature, with the Marathi readers. This wave of journalistic writing however did not much affect the traditional pattern of writing poetry, fiction, dramas and stories. The pattern more or less remained the same.

15.3.1 New trends in Poetry

Like our own times there was no dearth of poets in the period under review. It would be a formidable list of these poets but we can single out Bhaskar Damodar Palande who wrote devotional poems; Parshuram Ballal Godbole who wrote on the themes from the epics and Shivram Krishna Nijsure who wrote narrative poetry. The other poets more or less wrote in imitation of the Sanskrit and Prakrit literature. They were devoid of 'spontaneous outburst of emotions' and lacked the emotional appeal. The poets either emphasised the moral through their narration or gave drab description of the subject. Their language was clumsy and they were bound by the metre and rules of rhythm. None of them wrote emotional songs nor did they choose themes of social content.

The only poet inspired by the western ideas was 'Keshavsut'. He revolutionised Marathi poetry and is regarded as father of modern Marathi poetry. His focus was on self-expression. This pioneer of Marathi Renaissance poetry wrote 'Tutari, Sphurti, Gophan, Nava Shipai', and other explosive verses. He defied the restrictions on composition of poetry. This defiant attitude influenced many poets. Some of the famous poets with such awareness were Rev. Tilak, Vinayak, Govindagraj, B. R. Tambe, Poet B, 'Balkavi' Thombre and Veer Savarkar. This School of Keshavsut came to an end by 1920 and a new era of Ravikiran Mandai began. The famous poets of this school were Madhav Julian, Yeshwant and Girish. They focussed their attention on personal life rather than on social problems.

15.3.2 The trends in Fiction

The first half a century of fiction writing treaded the off beaten path by the Sankrit and, Prakrit writers, Baba Padmanji Wrote 'Yamuna Paryatan' in 1857. This was the first social novel depicting the miserable life of a widow. This was the only plus point of the composition otherwise it lacked the essential qualities of literary aesthetics. However, the real beginning of social novels was made by Hari Narayan Apte. His novels- 'Pan Lakshat Kon Gheto', (who really is concerned) and 'Me' (Myself) have become immortal in Marathi literature. The first reflects the woes of a widow and the second presents a combination of high idealism and stark realities of his life. H. N. Apte devoted his writings to the social

life of the middle class through which the inner life of a man in general finds expression. The next important writer is Waman Malhar Joshi. He wrote five novels each of which contains discussion of serious subjects like materialism, asceticism, spiritualism and God Almighty. Joshi's language might lack the beauty which was the main feature of the subsequent writers of the 1930s like Phadke and Khandekar but Joshi's novels became popular in spite of the indifferent style. It was the gripping subject that mattered.

15.3.3 Dramas and dramatist

The most popular form of literature in the latter half of the nineteenth century as of now was drama. Historian Rajawade traced a Marathi drama 'Laxminarayan Kalyan' to the year 1604. However the man who patronized performing of dramas was the chief of Sangli Principality. His protegee Vishnupant Bhave composed the first known Marathi drama 'Sita Svayamvar'. (Sita's choice of her life partner) in 1843. In the decade after that many mythological plays were written and staged.

The Marathi drama showing characteristic of the modern traditional type was written in 1857 for the first time. Upto that time it was more or less an imitation of the Sanskrit plays. During the 63 years from 1857 to 1920 about nine hundred plays were written. No other Marathi literary form could boast of such a large scale production. It was not merely the staggering number of plays that is impressive but the variety of themes and the categories of forms that is so captivating.

In the period between 1857 and 1860 there dramas translated from Sanskrit were written, between 1861 and 1879 twenty dramas were translated either from Sanskrit or English. They were mythological as well as imaginary in content.

In the decade from 1871 to 1880 thirty-eight dramas were written but the next decade was most prolific in the production of, dramas as more than two hundred dramas were written. The main forms of these dramas were prose, musical, farce and thematic plays.

The staging of the popular dramas began in earnest from 1880 when Kirloskar Dramatic Company was formed. Never in the history of the Marathi stage in the period from 1880 to 1920 were so many dramas staged during a single decade as between 1880 and 1890. The playwrights of the prose dramas who attained great fame were Kirtane, S. M. Ranade, N. K. Kanitkar, Prof. Vasudev Kelkar, K. P. Khadilkar, V. R. Shivalkar, V. S. Khare and N. C. Kelkar. Among them Khadilkar and Kelkar were the leading lights of Marathi drama.

However, Trilokekar, Kirloskar, Dongre, Deval and Kolhatkar and in the later period Ram Genesh Gadkari superseded the prose writers

by their musical dramas. The opening two decades of 20th century witnessed the staging of mythological, romantic, historical, social and religious types of dramas.

Kirloskar enjoys the place of pride among the producers and directors of the dramas between 1896 and 1910. Khadilkar's staging of Bhau Bandaki (Civil war) was an epoch making event as it handled a political theme. The mythological drama 'Keechak Vadh' (Killing of Keechak) was so ably handled by him that it made a direct and a relentless hit at the oppression of Lord Curzon. Gadkari an eminent playwright used humour and compassion in such an exquisite combination that the audience would love and hate the characters at the same time. His famous drama 'Ekach Pyala' (A single peg) has a social theme. The evils of drinking are exposed in such a devastating manner that even an alcoholic would be moved to tears.

15.3.4 Other forms of literature-Essays

The most popular form of literature inspired by the imitation of the English literature of the 19th Century was the essay writing. It is a rational and a systematic presentation of the different aspects of a subject and the logical conclusion arrived at by the writer from the facts presented in such a discussion. This form was used in order to explain points of views or theories and principles underlying an event or a phenomenon. This form was developed in France by Michael Montagne in the 16th Century and became popular throughout Europe. In Maharashtra, this was borrowed by the first generation of graduates of the Elphinstone College. Bal Shastri Jambhekar, Gopal Hari Deshmukh, and Bhau Mahajan. This form was most effectively used by Vishno Shastri Chiplunkar in his series the 'Nibandhamala'. Tilak's articles in the 'Kesari' and Agarkar's writings in the 'Sudharak' are the best specimen of forceful presentation of their points of view. N. C. Kelkar in his imitable style presents both the sides of the problem and leaves the drawing of the conclusion to the readers. Essay writing is most suitable of the conclusion to the readers. Essay writing is most suitable for discussion of serious subjects and the real test of the writers' faculty is on trial in this form of Literature. Lokmanya Tilak surpasses his contemporaries in the most effective adoption of this form. The influence of Macaulary on most of these essayists is undeniable.

The popularity of essay writing was so great that there were hardly any successful writers who had not tried their hand at it. V. K. Rajwade, C. V. Vaidya, V. V. Mirshi, Dr. S. V. Ketkar and S. M. Paranjape who were eminent in their respective fields also favoured this form for their serious writing. The third generation of essayists included V. R. Shinde,

V.D.Savarkar, S. M. Sathe, and others. In style, diction and relentless arguments, Savarkar surpasses most of them.

15.3.5 Short Essays and Short Stories

Those who did not prefer to discuss serious problems and perform intellectual acrobatic resorted to a less serious form, they were not after any serious doctrine or theory. They just wanted to share their experiences of life with the readers in a friendly way. With the same idea short stories were written not to bring out moral of a story and instruct the readers but to entertain them by telling them about personal experience. This form was developed by N. S. Phadke and V. S. Khandekar, Phadke's short stories were a craze in the later period.

The light literature also became popular after the rise of serious writings like essays and biographies and research articles. S. K. Kolhatkar wrote his Sudamyache Pohe (light meal of Sudama-literary-pounded rice). The humour that filled the narration was enjoyable by all those who cared to read. In a short time this form became very popular and the disciples of Kolhatkar, Gadkari, and Balakram developed the form to a high level of art. C. V. Joshi and later on N. D. Tamhankar gave it a high place in the intellectual life of Maharashtrian middle- class.

Poetry, novels, essays, dramas and other forms of literature more personal in approach brought out the latent talents of the middle and high class educated man into full play. The literature of the West was percolating, through these different forms. The writing of treatises and philosophic volumes was not new to Indian people as their ancestors had made a substantial contribution to world thought. The borrowed forms of literature however had a limited appeal and the base of the experience of the writers narrowed down to the social and a cultural life of an enlightened class only. The light literature during this time was taken lightly by the general public.

The other forms of literature such as travel accounts, discourses on spiritual matters, dialogue between master and his disciples or narration of adventures were not developed as was done in the case of essay writing and dramas.

15.3.6 Check your progress:-

Q.1. Give a brief sketch of the education and Literature progress in Maharashtra.

15.4 HISTORICAL RESEARCH :

The study of Indology and Historical Research broke new ground when Bal Gangadhar Tilak published his two epoch-making treatises. 'Orion' and 'The Arctic Home in the Vedas'. This gave a new turn to the study of the past. His research was more or less based on philology and knowledge of the astronomical phenomena. He put the Indian scholars and research workers on a new tract. Dr. Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar must be mentioned as the first great researcher who systematically presented the picture of the ancient times to common readers. He wrote on the life in the ancient times. His Wilson memorial lectures on the philological studies is a permanent tribute to his memory. His book on 'Early History of the Deccan' is a sterling contribution to the historical studies of India South of the Narmada. His book on Shaiva and 'Vaishnava' sects is considered as a standard book on the subject. His contribution to historical research was duly acknowledged by the establishment in 1917 of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. Among the founders of these Institutes were such eminent scholars as Prof. R. D. Ranade, Dr. Gune, Dr. Belwalkar and Prof. V. K. Rajwade. After its establishment they started an annual journal 'Annals' for continuing the research work.

15.4.1 History Of The Marathas

The first systematic history of the Marathas written by Grant Duff was published in three volumes in 1824. Thereafter, the British writers made Shivaji as the Central figure of their research work. They portrayed him as a plundering opportunist and more or less reiterated the thesis that the Maratha Swarajya of Shivaji was like a conflagration on the spurs of the Sahyadri which they tried to equate with a robber state. The Scholars of Maratha history began their work of systematic collections of history of the Marathas. M. G. Ranade tried to arouse the public interest in the tradition of the Maharashtrian, so he undertook the repairs of the samadhi of Shivaji at the fort of Raigad which was in a miserable condition. He made a representation to the Government and organized a meeting of the sardars and leading citizens. The response was disappointing.

Lokmanya Tilak was another leading figure interested to revive the historically rooted patriotism of the Marathas. In May 1895 he convened a meeting of the citizens to raise funds for the repair of the Samadhi. Lokmanya started an annual festival like the Ganapati celebration. The Shivaji tradition started by Tilak led to some fears among the officials of the Government. This encouraged Ranade to undertake, an academic effort to study the Maratha history and clear the fog of

ignorance that had gathered around Shivaji and his Swarajya. This resulted in his celebrated work 'Rise of the Maratha Power' which was published in 1900. It was the first attempt by a Maharashtrian to write a regional history of his own region with the declared objective to remove many misapprehensions which detract much from the moral interest and the political lesson of the story.

The merits of the history of Marathas written by Ranade might be debated, it may not stand the rigorous test of historiography but he was successful in reviving historically rooted patriotism in the subsequent generation. The work of V. K. Rajwade and later on of G. S. Sardesai inaugurated a new era of historiography of the Marathas.

15.4.2 Rajwade And Sardesai

M.G. Ranade during the last eighteen years of his life collected enough historical material to throw light on the so far unknown aspects of the history of the Marathas. His thesis of 'Maharashtra Dharma' as the ultimate goal of Shivaji's Swarajya got wide publicity. He brought into broad focus the nation building activities of Shivaji and his followers. This led Bengali Historians J.N. Sarkar and S. N. Sen to devote much of their attention on the history of the Marathas. In Maharashtra V. K. Rajwade, who was in the opposite camp and criticised Ranade's Moderatism and service under the British Government was inspired to continue Ranade's work. Like Ranke and Mommsen the German historians of the preceding generation Rajwade in an astonishing feat of collecting historical documents and intellectual effort to edit twenty two volumes of the source material, left a legacy of historical research to the Maharashtrian scholars.

He wrote an introduction to the twenty two volumes that he edited. The introduction is a volume in itself. There we find his critical analysis of the documents collected by him. However it must be admitted that his criticism of Ranade regarding the role of saint poets in Maharashtra appears one sided.

Another Historian of great reputation is G. S. Sardesai who wrote the history of Maharashtra from 1600 A. D. to 1846 in three volumes. He revised his volumes in the light of new documents discovered by him. First he wrote the volumes in Marathi and then translated them into English. Sardesai's style might be deficient in literary flash which we find in Gibbon's works but the authenticity of his statement of facts cannot be disputed. The historical research was carried out by many able scholars like D. V. Potdar, Vasudev Shastri Khare, D.V. Parasnis, D. V. Apte and others. The foundation of the Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal, Puna and its first publication of a quarterly journal in 1920 marked the beginning of an organised research work in History of Maharashtra.

15.3.6 Check your progress:-

Q.2. Write in brief Historical research in Maharashtra ?

15.5 SUMMARY :

The uniform system of education emphasizing literary rather than the scientific stream created frustration. Even though Christian missionary laid the foundation of western education and some of the benevolent Britishers contributed in spreading education in Maharashtra, British East India Co. and Crown government did not apply to the hand task of removal of illiteracy.

The Christian missionaries had led the way in publishing religious and non religious books. They were pioneers of the Marathi literature. Historians Rajwade and Sardesai wrote the history of Maharashtra.

15.6 QUESTIONS :

- 1 Give an outline of the educational and literary progress in Maharashtra during your study period.
- 2 Give a resume of Historical research in Maharashtra with special contribution of Rajwade.
3. Examine the Historical Research in modern Maharashtra

EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT-II

UNIT STRUCTURE

- 16.0 Objectives
- 16.1 Introduction
- 16.2 Development of performing Arts
- 16.3 The development of Press
- 16.4 Summary
- 16.5 Unit End Questions

16.0 OBJECTIVES :

- 1) To understand performing arts in Maharashtra.
- 2) To study development of Press in Maharashtra.

16.1 INTRODUCTION :

The actual contribution of Maharashtra during the Maratha period is yet to be ascertained. The later Peshwas and their administrators were known to be patrons of fine arts and music. The names of Naro Appaji Bhave and Balaji Pant as instrumentalists were wellknown in Maharashtra. In later years Raja Ravi Varma a Keralite by birth settled in Maharashtra and like the great vocal musician Alladia Khan identified himself with the people of Maharashtra,

During the Maratha period the Performing Arts were limited to **Tamasha, Lalita, Gondhal** and **the Powadas**. The folk dances and the **Dashavataras were staged on religious occasions**.

16.2 the development of performing arts :

16.2.1 Drama

The dramas were staged by English troupes who visited Bombay after the British settled here to rule. Students from Elphinstone College used to invite English actors to stage the famous English dramas. This inspired many to translate plays of Shakespear and stage them before small groups in the beginning.

It was only in 1880 that Annasaheb Kirloskar first staged the musical drama 'Shakuntal'. The Kirloskar Natak Mandali was the first dramatic company to enlist the services of singing actors. The great actor and singer Bal Gandharva (Narayan rao Rajahamsa) was serving in that company in the beginning. Later on he started his own Gandharva Natak Mandali. Shankarrao Patkar and Deval founded 'Aryodharak' dramatic institution in 1880 and 'Maharashtra Natak Mandali' was established in 1904. Most of the dramatic company's wanted to equip themselves with the latest know-how about the theatre – the curtains, scenes, musical instruments and wanted the best talent to enrich their troupe.

The great stage actors specialised in certain roles. Ganpatrao Joshi as Hamlet and Ganpatrao Bhagvat as Keechak dominated the stage. The other famous actors of the last decade of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century were Ganpatrao Bodas, Nanasaheb Phatak, Dinkar Kamanna Keshavrao Date and of course Bal Gandharva. During the fifty years from 1880 onward the several dramatic companies entertained the Maharshtrian audience with their extraordinary skills in acting. Bal Gandharva used to play female roles and it is said that he used to set fashions to the ladies, such was his success as an 'Actress'.

The special type of music called the Natya Sangeet (Dramatic Vocal music) was popularized by the great singing actors like Bal Gandharva, Keshavrao Bhosle. Master Krishnarao and Dinnath Mangeshkar. They did not developed this form of Semi-classical vocal music but also enriched the technique of the stage and improved the accessory material like the scenes and the curtains, the dresses and the make-up for the actors. They set new trends in staging the old dramas and presented new dramas with social themes as tragedies and comedies. The Marathi stage was a highly developed stage even in the 1920's and today it ranks among the best in India.

16.2.2 Motion Pictures

It is a well known fact that Dadasaheb Phalke was the pioneer in the field of motion pictures in India. He staged 'Raja Harishchandra' as the first motion picture in Marathi. He became famous overnight. His second picture was 'Bhasmasur Mohini' and the third was 'Savitri'. These pictures were also shown in England and Phalke received recognition from the Western film makers. Another great film producer of the time was Baburao Painter of Kolhapur. His motion picture 'Sairandhri' became so popular that Lokmanya Tilak gave him the title of 'Cine Kesari'. In the later years Prabhat Motion Picture company created

history in India. The present state of Marathi movies is miserable; a sort of fall from the high position.

16.2.3 Classical Music - Vocal and Instrumental

Like the stage, and the movie pictures Maharashtra had done pioneering work in popularising Hindustani Music. Those who brought the Hindustani Music from the North and popularised it in the South were many. The most outstanding among them were Pandit Balkrishnabuva Ichalkaranjkar, Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande, Pandit Bhaskarbuva Bakhle, Khansaheb Abdul Karim Khan, Ramkrishna Buva Vaze and Alladia Khan. The pioneer of Hindustani Music in Maharashtra was Balkrishnabuva Ichalkaranjkar. The disciples of these master singers predominated in the later period.

Abdul Karim Khan was not only perfect in the technique of the vocal music but with his melodious voice entertained the audience throughout the country. Alladia Khan came to Maharashtra in 1893 and was a singer at the court of Shahu Maharaj at Kolhapur. Abdul Karim Khan belonged to the 'Kirana Gharana', both of them intensely loved Maharashtra and the people of Maharashtra responded to their divine music magnificently.

It was not only in the vocal music that Maharashtra was leading the nation but in instrumental music also. Govindrao Tembe on Harmonium and Ahmed Jan Tirkhwa on the Tabla were the foremost artists In Maharashtra. In the 1920's Maharashtra's contribution to the composite culture of the nation upto 1920 is simply spectacular.

16.2.4 Check your progress:-

Q 1. Write in brief about Maharashtra Arts.

Q 2. Comment on Vocal Drama.

16.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRESS :

In lesson No. 2 we have referred to the pioneering work of Bal Shastri Jambhekar and Bhau Mahajan in Marathi journalism. 'Mumbal Darpan' and 'Prabhakar' were intended to propagate views on social matters rather than reporting news from various quarters. These periodicals in the first half of the 19th century wanted the people to imbibe the spirit of enquiry and know more about modern science and the World.

After the second half 'of the 19th Century there was a change in the perspective. They furnished information and provoked thinking on current affairs. We shall mention the work of three periodicals —

“Dnyanodaya”, “Dnyan Prakash” and “Induprakash” which initially were periodicals. But later on became daily newspapers. We shall also discuss the role of the press after the second half of the 19th century and the two decades of the 20th century in the following pages.

16.3.1 Dnyanodaya

The challenge to the slumbering people of Maharashtra however came from a Marathi periodical ‘Dnyanodaya’ published by American Christian missionaries from Ahmednagar. They started the publication in 1842. The periodical was dedicated to the spread of Christianity. It severely exposed the defeats of the Hindu society and criticised the customs and practices of the Hindus. It was a challenge that forced the so called guardians of Hinduism to resist such assaults on their religion and social structure. In 1844 a periodical “Upadeshchandrika” was published to counteract the propaganda. Earlier two or three periodicals held the stage to promote moral, social and religious advancement. They were Danyanasindhu, Mitrodaya, ‘Saduktiratna’ and ‘Dnyanachandrodayay’. Some of them were motivated by the Idea of protecting Hindu religion. Thus a new force emerged in Maharashtra in the middle of the 19th century in the form of social reforms and the protection of Hindu religion. The struggle between the two was to produce new visions and perspectives.

16.3.2 Dnyanaprakash

The Impact of journalism outside Bombay was deeply felt in Pune. ‘Dnyanaprakash’ began publishing from Pune in 1849. Krishnaji Trimbak Ranade’ was its first editor. This periodical like Bal Shastri’s ‘Darpan’ was an Anglo-Marathi periodical. In the initial stages it was issued on every Monday but subsequently it began issuing twice a week on Monday to Thursday. The contributors to this periodical were such eminent writers like Krishnashastri Chiplunkar, Lokashitavadi Deshmukh, Taty Chhatre, Mr, Justice M.G. Ranade and many other scholars of high standing. ‘Dnyanaprakash’ in a short time captured the hearts of the reading public whose number went on increasing. The periodical had set its sight higher than that of contemporary periodicals in Bombay. It not only reported internal news from different parts of the country but also furnished Information about world affairs.

Its coverage was extensive. It devoted a few columns for reform programmes especially the female education, indigenous industries trade and taxes and similar themes of public Interest. It emphasis was on ‘radiating knowledge’ as the title of the periodical Indicated. In 1904 the periodical became a daily newspaper. This was the second periodical to be turned into a dally newspaper. The first was the “Induprakash” published from Bombay.

16.3.3 Induprakash

This periodical began its publication in Bombay, from 1862. This was managed and edited by Visnushastri Pandit. It was printed as a bilingual weekly. It laid emphasis on social reforms. The burning issues of public interest like child marriage, female education and tonsuring of the widows were discussed through the columns of this paper. Its main purpose was to provoke thinking on the social evils and create a public consciousness favourable for reform. It achieved tremendous popularity. It began daily publication from 1902 and the daily continued its career till 1935.

16.3.4 Periodicals In the Mofussils

The periodicals and magazines that were being published in Bombay and Pune were mostly in the two languages - English and Marathi. They aimed at attracting the readers from Marathi speaking and non-Marathi people. They showed their interest in various matters. However, the main objective was to educate the public; the motive of profit making was a secondary one. The spread of the idea of publishing periodicals in the mofussils clearly indicated that the movement to enlighten the people in many important matters was now flowing out. This was to gain momentum as result of many events in the country and outside.

The Inam Commission, famines the "Sepoys' Mutiny of 1857", the end of the rule by the East India Company and the American Civil war had shaken the people out of their complacency. They were eager for news and guidance in conducting their business and other affairs of practical importance. The Thane "Arunodaya" and "Hindupanch" started in 1866, contained serious discussion of world affairs. The 'Hindupanch' used caricatures to highlight certain events. Both these periodicals edited by Kashinath Dhondi Phadke inclined towards political extremism. This might be an effect of the 'war of Independence' that failed in 1857-58. A serious magazine was started in 1868 in Thane with a title 'Vidyakalpataru'. This was obviously to be a pocket encyclopedia.

The emphasis in issuing magazines from mofussil areas was mostly on providing information and knowledge about useful matters not necessarily the current political events. In this respect the 'Stridnyanapradip' published from Thane deserves a special mention, similarly the 'Dnyanasangraha' published from Berar and the first Marathi Magazine from Goa published in 1872 requires to be remembered. Earlier even Ratnagiri began publishing a magazine named 'Sumargadarshak' in 1868. Thus during the 1860's and 1870's the magazine and newspaper consciousness was growing.

16.3.5 The Role of the Public Libraries

There were many newspapers and periodicals in the cities. The copies of these were made available in the mofussils. In order to sustain the interest of the people there were language periodicals in the district places not far away from Bombay and Pune. However the real encouragement was provided by what may be called a library movement. The literary society of Bombay founded in 1804 was incorporated into the Bombay Branch of the Royal society in 1830. This gave an impetus to intellectual activity among the well-to-do people in Bombay. Raghoba Janardan Gawankar-Vasaikar, an employee in the Military Board Office in Bombay in co-operation with the government officials and some well wishers was able to organize the first general library at Dhobi Talav on June 7, 1845. Those who could not buy their copies of the newspapers or magazines could now have a free access to that public library. The news about such facilities did not remain a secret for long. In Pune a city library (Nagar-Vachan-Mandir) was established in 1848. In 1850 a general Library was opened in Kolhapur and a city library in Amravati in 1867. Libraries were gradually coming up in many district capitals. In the Konkan, Alibaug, Ratnagiri, Vengurla, Sawantwadi and Malwan also displayed keen interest in establishing city libraries and starting tabloid newspapers. In the Berar (Vidarbha) Amravati was active in this field and in the eastern districts Ahmednagar under the influence of the American Christian Mission was showing signs of intellectual activity.

16.3.6 The Role of the Press in the Last Quarter of the 19th Century

The overview of the development of news consciousness among the literate people scattered throughout the region would convey the impression that Maharashtra was gradually coming under the influence of renaissance thought. The people of Maharashtra did not go all out for the new ideas emanating from Europe. The majority community in Maharashtra was generally speaking an illiterate community. It was therefore apathetic to the storm in the tea cup of the educated elites in Bombay and Pune. This was also true of the intellectual conflicts of the 'Satyashodhak Mandali' led by Jyotirao Phule against the arrogance of the priest community in major cities. The hold of tradition on the minds of the uneducated people could not be weakened by wordy ears in the columns of newspapers and magazines. The news and views might be eagerly received but actual action in response to them in a tradition-bound society was not easy.

16.3.7 Press as a New Force in Maharashtra

With the spread of education and opening up of libraries the newly educated people in the mofussils were eager to read about secular

matter not merely the stories from the Hindu mythology. The magazines like 'Vividhadnyanavistar' started by A. B. Gunjekar in 1867 acquired wide readership in Maharashtra. Like the 'Shatapatre' of Lokahitavadi, the 'Nibandhamala' (A garland of essays) of Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar created a lot of sensation in the educated community in Maharashtra in the seven years from 1874 to 1881. He opposed western reformers and adorned Marathi literature. He propagated the idea through his essays that the centre of India's resurgence must be the Hindu civilisation. He incurred the hostility of pre-British educationists and social reformers like Jyotirao Phule who he said were stooges of British imperialism.

Chiplunkar's vehement attacks on all that smacked of western origin including the British administration provoked many admirers of the Western civilisation. His arguments were not always rational and convincing but his style of writing attracted everybody's attention. Due to his classical style he adopted the title of "Shivaji of Marathi Language". Vishnushastri founded in January 1880 the "Kavyetihasa Sangraha" with an objective of rediscovering the classics of Sanskrit and Marathi poetry. In the same year he founded the Chitrashala press to publish works promoting nationalism. His writings while strengthening orthodoxy dismayed the social reformers and his critical essays generated much heat between the majority community and the Brahmin Community. But the fervour of his patriotism appealed to the intelligentsia if not during his life time but at least after his death in 1882. It was Vishnushastri Chiplunkar who was one of the founders of 'Kesari' along with G.G. Agarkar and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He left a legacy of self-pride and reverence for Indian culture.

Jyotirao Phule had also started a periodical 'Sarita' (River) in 1885 to spread the ideas which led him to organise "Satyashodhak Samaj". This periodical was short-lived. The views of Phule as contained in his book 'Gulamgiri' (Slavery), were propagated in this periodical. Jyotirao's contribution to the concept of liberty of the individual, expressed by him in his rather uncultivated literary style deserved better treatment than the supercilious attitude displayed by his contemporary educated elites. The mutual bitterness was reflected in the periodicals and magazines of the 1880s. The only magazine edited by non-Brahmin was 'Deenabandhu' of Kolhapur which was founded in 1877. It was edited by Bhalekar.

The events that exasperated the masses were more economic rather than political and social. The dispatch of four representatives of the raja of Satara to plead his case in England in 1840 or even the annexation of his state in 1848 did not stir the people to action. The

revolt of 1857 did not produce repercussion. The Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 hardly raised a ripple in the mind of the masses as it was unrelated to their style of living but the famines of 1832-33, 1845-46, and 1876-77 stirred the society as never before. The ordinary people to realise their real condition what was important to them was not the form of reform but the content of reform. They needed amelioration of their economic miseries.

16.3.8 The Vernacular Press Act, 1878

The outbreak of famine in Maharashtra in 1876-77 and also in many parts of India created an explosive situation. Lord Lytton in his anxiety to compel the Amir of Afghanistan to receive a British Agent at Heart precipitated war with Afghanistan, in November 1878. His failure to deal with the famine was heightened by a magnificent Darbar held by him at a time when millions were dying of hunger and disease. He held the Darbar to mark the completion of forty years of assumption of power by Queen Victoria. She now assumed the title of 'Kaiser-e-Hind' i.e. 'Empress of India'. This provoked the people to criticise the governor-general's policies against the background of Afghan policy and the famine.

By 1877, the press in India had become very powerful. There were about 644 newspapers in India out of which about a hundred were in Maharashtra. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 and the consequent control of the Indian government had inaugurated an era of paternal government. The British government acted as guardian of the people of India. But such governments are tolerated by ignorant and politically lazy people. The Indian press had enjoyed freedom since 1835 and therefore was not slow to expose the deficiencies of the government in the matter of foreign policy as well as in the internal administration. Lord Lytton therefore managed to pass the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 in order to silence the opposition to his policies. The Act was condemned as a gagging Act. Indian nationalism derived its vigour and strength through the Vernacular press and therefore the Vernacular Press had to put up a stiff fight. Lord Lytton's Press Act was not applicable to the journals conducted in English. This discrimination was resented throughout India.

16.3.9 The Protest of Vernacular Press Act, 1878

In Maharashtra the Sarvajanik Sabha submitted a memorial to the Government of India in February 1881. The Sarvajanik Sabha in that representation to the Government of India pointed out that the Vernacular Press Act had cast undeserved suspicion upon the loyalty of the Vernacular newspapers and prevented the free discussion of official measures. It reminded the British rulers that in the interest of both the

governed and the governing classes such limitations would only demoralize the Indian people who are being ruled by foreigners.

It is clear that Lord Lytton's challenge to the Indian press had mobilised the public opinion of the vocal and non-vocal elements throughout the country the 'Grand Old Man of India' Dadabhai Naoroji had already discussed the problem of poverty of India in his paper in 1876 and brought the true nature of the British administration before the discriminating audience of the East India Association. The famine of 1876-77 had stimulated serious thinking on the matter.

After the famine and the gagging Act came the Ilbert Bill controversy in 1883. It exposed the true nature of the British bureaucracy in India. The principle of racial equality of the English and the Indians had become the subject of controversy. The Ilbert Bill sought, to remove the disqualification of Indian Judges in the mofussil from trying Europeans. The English Community seriously objected to this; the Indian journalists organized support for the bill. 'The Times of India' strongly opposed the Bill and published a series of articles criticising Indian Judges.

The militancy of the Vernacular press could not be checked now that the fear of being humiliated and insulted by the determined bureaucracy became manifest when Lord Ripon had to bow down before the European Community. The controversial Bill intensified the unity of the Indian people. Lord Ripon abolished the Vernacular Press Act and had allowed the flame of Indian nationalism to burn more vigorously.

16.3.10 Militant Journalism

The 1870's 'Nibandhamala' had aroused the people to a sense of national pride; it was defensive not offensive patriotism and thus was free from the vices of chauvinism as was practiced in some of the European nations during this period. It was inspired not by Western philosophy but by ancient literature of the country. Tilak and Agarkar came under the influence of Vishnushastri Chiplunkar the veteran journalist of Maharashtra. These three men founded the two periodicals 'Kesari' in Marathi and 'Maharatta' in English in 1881. Chiplunkar died in 1882 and Agarkar separated to found another journal 'Sudharak' in 1891. From that time onwards Lokamanya became the sole proprietor of both the Kesari and the Maharatta and the centre of gravity for journalism shifted from Bombay to Pune.

In the first year of the publication of the two weeklies, 'Kesari' and 'Maharatta' the two young editors Agarkar and Tilak had to stand trial for the charge of defamation. The two were inspired by the idea of political patriotism and wished to uphold the dignity of the rulers of the native states. The Sarvajanic Sabha had defended Malharao Gaikwad of

Baroda in 1875 but the British bureaucracy had conspired to depose him. This precedent had weighed on the minds of the two young editors when they were involved in the dispute about the Kolhapur throne. 'Kesari' and 'Mahratta' found some letters alleged to be written by the Dewan Mr. M. V. Barve conspiring to remove the Raja from his throne on the grounds that he was insane. The two young editors raised funds to defend the prince. At a public meeting Barve was accused of many wicked deeds including suppression of the freedom of the Press. The letters were reprinted in the issue of Mahratta in January together with a denunciation of Barve's treachery. The Dewan instituted a defamation suit against the editors. They were convicted on the grounds that the letters were not genuine and the editors failed to verify their authenticity. They were given four month simple imprisonment for the offence. They overnight became the heroes in the eyes of the public as the unfortunate Raja languished in a fortress at Ahmednagar and died a miserable death. The people were not convinced about the innocence of the Dewan and' hailed the editors as the spokesmen of public opinion.

16.3.11 The Famine and Plague Epidemic 1896-97

The relief measures during the famine in the Deccan were unsatisfactory but the people were struck with terror by the epidemic of plague. Tilak organised campaigns to instruct the people about the precautionary measures to be adopted during the critical period. Tilak had protested to the government about the inadequate measures and wrote a series of articles about what the government should do.

In the beginning of 1897 the governor issued the declaration that the Sarvajanik Sabha was the thereafter not to be treated as a recognized body to address government on questions of public policy. The police and the plague commissioner for Poona were severely criticised for excesses in the act of house to house search for victims and the experiment of preventive measures like the 'inoculation' against plague. Tilak had challenged the advisability of the hasty measures. The 'Inoculation' was yet to be tested properly as the evil effects on the health of those who were administered the dose were yet to be known.

Tilak, had taken a leading part in protecting the interest of the people against the oppression of the government. The assassination of the plague commissioner W.C.Rand had provided a great provocation to the government officials to take stringent measures against the conspirators. 'The Times of India' declared that the assassination of Rand was a beginning of a deep conspiracy of Brahmins of Poona. The district collector of Poona held a public meeting and told the audience that such acts of violence were the result of the mischievous activities of

the young men spoiled by education, the celebration of public festivals like that of Ganapati and the sedition spread by some radical journalists. On the next day the government passed a resolution to station additional police for security arrangements in Poona for two years. The heavy expenditure imposed on the city meant that the people would have to pay through their nose and also lose the management of municipal affairs.

Lokmanya Tilak in the true spirit of freedom of Press and as a spokesman of the public opinion boldly condemned the irrational policy. In the issue of July 6, 1897 'Kesari' he wrote an editorial under the caption 'Sarkarche Doke Thikanavar Ahe kay?' (Has the government lost its sense of proportion). He wrote, as the government after the murder of the plague commissioner announced a reward of Rs. 20,000/- for helping to apprehend the culprit, Why should it now seek such a desperate measure of fining the whole community ? He pointed out that on the Jubilee day itself a gazhi shot a European in broad daylight but the government of Punjab did not give the crime the colour of a conspiracy or treason. He observed that instead of the assassin of Rand getting intoxicated by the murder, the same has gone to the head of the Government". On July 27, 1897 the government prosecuted Tilak for sedition. He was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for one and half years. This was the first case of treason. The Natu brothers were detained without enquiry. 'Modavritta', 'Pune Vaibhav' 'Pratod' and other periodicals were also charged with treason. The editors were arrested and except the editor of 'Pune Vaibhav' they were all sentenced to various terms in jail. The freedom of Press was upheld by these stalwarts even at the cost of their own freedom.

The turn of the century saw more repressive measures when Lord Curzon enacted the Calcutta Corporation Act of 1899, Indian Universities Act of 1904 and the Official Secrets Act. His unpopular autocracy climaxed when he partitioned Bengal in 1905. He threw a challenge to the Indian people about whom he had a very poor opinion.

It was at this time that Ranade's book 'Rise of the Maratha Power' was published and Lokamanya Tilak was inspired to fight against the repressive policies of Lord Curzon. He toured Bengal and large cities in India had wrote many articles exhorting the people to pursue the policy of boycotting British goods and patronising home-made goods, the Swadeshi. It was during this period that Japan's victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 sent thrills of joy in the hearts of all Asians and Lord Curzon's vainglorious proclamation of 'whiteman's supremacy' received a serious blow.

16.3.12 Heightened Mood of Nationalism

The opening years of the 20th century and especially the period from 1905 to 1910 represent a rising wave of national sentiment in the vernacular press in leading the assault on the autocracy of Lord Curzon and was breaking new ground for the march of political freedom. The articles published in the 'Kesari' stand out as specimen of high quality journalism. Tilak's criticism was not negative and he was ready to make constructive suggestions also. He explained the idea of boycott in his article in Kesari on September 5, 1905 under the caption 'Bahishkar Yoga' and made a constructive suggestion in another article 'Sutacha va Vinkamacha Dhanda' (Weaver's trade). He controverted the objections on 'Swadeshi' (Indigenous manufacture) and supported Swadeshi. His vitriolic criticism of the 'Times of India' editor who called Surendra Nath Bannerjee 'a clown king of Bengal' reminds us of the Philippics of Demosthenes, (Mumbaichya Timescha Besharampana) Kesari, dated September 11, 1906. His assessment of Curzon's administration (Kesari dated August 29, 1906) displays his uncanny insight into the international politics and his penetrating mind exposes the weakness of his opponents. His summing up of his assessment is worth remembering "As there are planets, satellites and also meteors in the solar system, similarly in the council of ministers which revolves round the Emperor, there are some men like the meteors, Lord Curzon is the top-stone among such human meteorites."

16.3.13 Suppression of the Press

The Indian National Congress Split in 1907 and the Extremist wing had to face the hostility of a determined bureaucracy. It was clear to the young nationalists that the faltering resistance to the autocratic government offered by the moderates was no answer to the problem. Some of the extremists inclined towards the cult of the bomb. The government exploited the situation after the the partition of Bengal and decided to crush the extremists by force. Early in May 1907 Lala Lajput Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh were deported to Mandalay without trial. The Newspaper (Incitement of Offences) Act of 1908 was passed to suppress the Press which had shattered the image of the Imperial government and created an awakening. Many young leaders were deported out of India under the Regulation III of 1818. The articles published in the Kesari were an eye-sore to the government. Lokamanya Tilak was convicted for the offence of incitement to violence and treason and was sentenced to six years rigorous imprisonment in 1908. He was deported to Mandalay.

Tilak's exile to Mandalay did not silence the voice of opposition to the autocratic government. In 1908 the editors and proprietors of several periodicals and newspapers were convicted for sedition. Among them were the editors of 'Kal' of Pune, 'Vihari', 'Arunodaya' of Bombay, 'Pratod' of Islampur, 'Swaraja' of Sholapur, 'Harkishore' of Yavantmal and 'Hindu Kesari' of Nagpur. The murder of Jackson again stepped up the repressive activity of the government. The Press in Maharashtra even in the absence of the lion hearted Lokamanya, the ace journalists, kept up the tempo and did not wither away as was expected by the British Rulers. Tilak and the spokesmen of the public opinion from other parts of India especially from Punjab and Bengal had convinced the people that the journalists should put up a brave fight against the British rulers. There could not be any substitute for freedom of nation. Breaking the laws which the foreigners had made for preserving their empire in India is no offence at all; every nationalist journalist has to keep his one foot in the jail. It was his sacred duty to serve the nation in that manner.

16.3.14 The Non-political Role of the press

The sound and fury of the first decade of the 20th century was not all that was contributed by the Press in Maharashtra. This was only one side of the picture. The other side displays the sterling character of the contribution of the Marathi Press.

We have already referred to 'Vividhnyana Vistar' (extension of knowledge in different fields). In 1890 Hari Bhau Apte (H.N. Apte) founded a weekly 'Karmanuk' (Entertainment). It was devoted to serialising his novels, instructive biographical sketches, critical essays and useful information on different matters. During the period from 1891 to 1900 there were many magazines started by various individuals and associations. Out of them 'Gdranthamala' from Kolhapur edited by Vijapurkar deserves special mention. Many learned scholars contributed essays on different themes to this magazine. In 1908 'Itihasa Samgraha' (Compilation of History) magazine was started in Bombay and in 1910 'Bharat-Gaurav Granthmala' (literary series in praise of India) so also in 1911 Shrutibodh (Vedic-knowledge) magazine were published.

The thought provoking essays articles and critical appreciations of different themes and facets of life written during this period were published in the newspapers and periodicals. The role of the Press in promoting knowledge among the ever-increasing readers of the popular dailies, weeklies and magazines cannot be denied. Thus we can say that the Marathi Press not only promoted enlightenment among the people but also enriched the language and emerged as a great single force to mould public opinion in Maharashtra.

16.2.4 Check your progress:-

Q 3. What is the importance of the press in the Freedom struggle ?

16.4 SUMMARY :

From the Maratha period, in Maharashtra they were famous performing arts like Tamasha, Gondhal, Powadas and Dashavataras.

English stage and actors inspired local people to translate good Dramas into local Languages.

The press was the third eye of the public. The press created awareness among the people and contributed in not only freedom struggle but all sought of life. It played very important role in the history of Maharashtra.

16.5 QUESTIONS :

1. What are the outstanding achievements of Maharashtra in the field of performing Arts?
2. What important role did the press play in the promotion of Liberalism of Nationalism.
- 3 Explain the significance of press in Freedom Struggle

M.A.I. HISTORY PAPER NO. I
OLD QUESTION PAPER- 2008
HISTORY OF MODERN MAHARASHTRA (1818-1920)

REVISED COURSE

(3 Hours)

Total Marks : 100

- N..B.:** (1) Attempt any **four** questions,
(2) **All** questions carry **equal** marks.

1. Review the political and social conditions in Maharashtra on the eve of the British conquest of Maharashtra.
2. Analyse the emergence of early economic nationalism in Maharashtra with special reference to the thoughts of Ramkrishna Vishwanath.
3. Write an essay on Lokhitawadi Gopal Hari Deshmukh's critique of contemporary society as reflected in his writings.
4. Assess the role of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and V. R. Shinde in emancipation of the downtrodden.
5. Describe the contribution of the servants of India Society in promoting the nationalism in Maharashtra.
6. What methods and programme was pursued by the Moderates towards attainment of Swarajya ?
7. What role did the press play in the promotion of nationalism ?
8. Comment on any two of the following :—
 - (a) Students literary and scientific society
 - (b) Universal Humanism
 - (c) G. G. Agarkar
 - (d) Vasudev Balwant Phadke

M.A. PART - I PAPER - I : (OPTION A)

HISTORY OF MODERN MAHARASHTRA(1818-1920)

Syllabus

1. **Maharashtra on the Eve of British Conquest: Political, Economic and Socio cultural conditions.**
2. **New influences and Transition Under British Rule: (1818-1861)**
 - a) Land Tenures, Revenue Settlements.
 - b) Education and Press
 - c) Law and Administration
 - d) Transport and Communication ,
 - e) Christian Missions.
 - f) Student's Literary and Scientific -Society.
3. **Beginning of Reform and Resistance :**
 - a) Bal Shastri Jambhekar: Pioneer of Maharashtra's Resistance
 - b) Early Intellectual Resistance to British Colonial Rule, and the Rise of Nascent Economic Nationalism, Bhaskar Tarkhadkar, Ramkrishna Vishwanath, Bhau Mahajan.
4. **Religious Dissent and Social Protest:**
 - a. Dadoba Pandurang and the Paramhansa sabha
 - b. Lokahitwadi Gopal Hari Deshmukh
 - c. Prarthana Samaj.
5. **Social Reform:**
 - a)
 - i) Issues concerning Emancipation of Women and the Efforts made towards it realization
 - ii) Justice M.G. Ranade and the Indian National social conference.
 - b)
 - i) Mahatma Joytirao Phule and the Satyashodhak Samaj Universal Humanism
 - ii) Gopalbaba Valankar and Anaryadosh parihar Mandal.
 - iii) Vitthal Ramaji Shinde and Depressed Classes Mission of the India.
 - iv) Shahu Maharaj and Vedokta Episode.
6. **Growth of Liberalism and Nationalism: ,**
 - a) Promotion of Economic Nationalism : Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G. Ranade Ganesh Vyanktesh Joshi.
 - b) Triumvirate of Liberal School : Phirozeshah Mehta, Badruddin

Tayabjee, K.T. Telang.

c) Growth of Rationalism:: Gopal Ganesh Agarkar.

7. Institutionalized Nationalism:

a) The Bombay Association.

b) Poona Sarvajanik Sabha

c) Indian National Congress and Maharashtra.

d) Servants of India Society.

8. Revivalism and Militant Nationalism.

a) Vishnubava Brahmachari.

b) Vishnushastri Chiplunkar.

c) Arya Samaj, Theosophical Society, Ganapati and Shivaji Utsav.

9. Resistance and Insurrections

a) Ramoshi, Bhil and Koli Uprisings

b) 1857 in Maharashtra.

c) Revolt of Vasudev Balwant Phadke

d) Peasant Unrest.

10. Economic Development (1861-1920)

a) Agriculture

b) Transport and Communication.

c) Industry Rise of Labour Movements.

d) Trade and Commerce.

11. Towards Swarajya :

a) G. K. Gokhale and Moderates.

b) B.G. Tilak and Extremist Politics.

c) Revolutionaries.

12. Educational and cultural Developments :

a) Education and Literature

b) Press

c) Performing Arts



M.A. Part - I

History Paper - I

**HISTORY OF MODERN MAHARASHTRA
(1818-1920)**

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Dr. Vijay Khole
Vice Chancellor

Dr. Dhaneswar Harichandan
Professor Cum Director, IDOL
University of Mumbai

Dr. Arun D. Sawant
Pro. Vice Chancellor

Programme Coordinator

: **A.R. Bankar**
Lecturer- Cum-Assistant Director in History
I.D.E., University of Mumbai.

Course Writer : **Dr. G. T. Sawant**
Prof. F. Sequeria
Prof. K.S. Gaikwad

Edited by : **Prof. Afegine Tuscano**

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